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Soviet Translations of Latin American Literature, 1956–1991

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

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Michael Anthony Lavery

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Soviet Translations of Latin American Literature, 1956–1991

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Doctor of Philosophy in Slavic Languages and Literatures

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Professor Ronald W. Vroon, Chair

This dissertation is a study of the translation and publication of Latin American literature in the post-Stalin era Soviet Union. During the Thaw, the Soviet cultural authorities sought to use literary translation for propagandistic purposes, targeting Latin America as the latest front to emerge in the Cold War. State publishing houses embarked on a massive undertaking to publish a representative canon of contemporary Latin American writing in Russian translation. This canon expanded to include a diverse range of writers whose political and aesthetic positions increasingly diverged from official Soviet values. I examine how the translators, editors, critics, and party officials on the front lines of this encounter mediated between the state's ideological demands and their own personal motivations to domesticate Latin American novels for the mass reader. In doing so, I analyze translators' strategies in grappling with these novels' modernist content as well as the crucial role of literary criticism in imposing interpretations that sanctioned their entry into the shifting boundaries of the post-Stalin literary environment.

Chapter One presents an overview of the Soviet reception of Latin American literature from its origins in the proletarian internationalist movement of the 1930s through to its flourishing in the wake of the Cuban Revolution. I provide a detailed account of the state publishing industry, the official censorship apparatus, and the development of translation methods and literary criticism in the post-Stalin era. Chapter Two examines the reception of the writer Miguel Ángel Asturias as emblematic of the growing focus on Third-World liberation struggles in official rhetoric during the Thaw. In Chapter Three, I discuss the Soviet encounter with the Latin American "Boom" by focusing on the Russian translation (1965) of one of its key texts, the novel *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* (1963) by Carlos Fuentes. In Chapter Four, I analyze the troubled publication history of the Russian translation (1970) of Juan Rulfo's novel *Pedro Páramo* (1955) and reconstruct the internal negotiations over how to translate and present the text to readers. The concluding chapter discusses the end of the Soviet translation industry and its consequences for Latin American literature in Russian today.

The dissertation of Michael Anthony Lavery is approved.

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NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION AND TRANSLATION

All Russian names, titles, and short quotations that appear in this dissertation follow the modified Library of Congress system for transliteration (without diacritics). I make exceptions for proper names that have widely accepted standard forms in English: Maxim Gorky (rather than Maksim Gor'kii), Ilya Ehrenburg (rather than Il'ia Erenburg), Korney Chukovsky (rather than Kornei Chukovskii), etc. All translations are my own unless otherwise specified.

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Writing during a pandemic has presented special challenges. The University of California Office of the President awarded me a Dissertation Year Fellowship, giving me the time and resources to finish this project. I must thank my wonderful family and friends, whose support and good company (even if from afar) sustained me through the bleakest of days. Finally, I would like to thank my dear Polina, who has always believed in me.

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Chapter One

Introduction

The Thaw is remembered as a time when the Soviet Union "opened up" to the outside world after the cultural isolation of late Stalinism. For most Soviet people, and in the eyes of the authorities, translated literature occupied a privileged position as the most direct medium for encountering foreign cultures. The establishment of the journal *Inostrannaia literatura* [*Foreign Literature*] in 1955 was one of the most conspicuous gestures in this respect, supplying readers with an official venue for translations of foreign literary works. Two years later, the state publisher Goslitizdat began its series "The Foreign Novel of the Twentieth Century," a massive undertaking that persisted until the end of the communist regime, publishing over 200 titles in print runs ranging up to 150,000 copies. The robust new discipline of translation studies produced an officially-supported "socialist realist" method of translation, designed to subject foreign works to the same ideological control as domestic Soviet literature.

These developments in literary translation were part of a determined effort on the part of party officials and the intelligentsia to re-integrate the Soviet Union into international cultural trends. However, they also reflected aspirations on the part of the USSR for hegemony by promoting itself as a broker of world literature. In his "secret speech" at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union that initiated the Thaw, Khrushchev announced that the Soviet Union would support national liberation struggles in developing countries under the banner of the "friendship of peoples" and preserving the "peaceful coexistence" of the capitalist and socialist world systems in the bipolar Cold War. Vacillating between fraternalism and paternalism, the Soviet Union provided ideological and material support in an effort to foster and shape the cultural production of the anti-colonial movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

In the aftermath of the 1959 Cuban Revolution, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union issued a decree ordering publishing houses to print translations of Latin American literature in order "to satisfy the interest of Soviet readers in the lives of the peoples fighting the heroic struggle for national independence."[1] The Soviet state sought to use literary translation for propagandistic purposes, targeting Latin America as the latest front to emerge in the Cold War. But here the cultural authorities faced a dilemma, as Latin American writers' aesthetic and political positions did not always conform to the Soviets' hopes. There was a contradiction at the heart of the project to form and monitor a canon of translated contemporary Third-World literature that conformed to official ideological demands and yet still remained broadly representative. This contradiction was evident in the evolving processes of selecting, translating, editing, and contextualizing foreign literary works, all of which were shaped by and at the same time subtly redefined the limits of official discourse on the Third World. On the "front lines" of this encounter, translators and editors mediated between official ideological demands and their own personal motivations in devising creative interpretations to "package" foreign literature for publication. Literary criticism played a crucial role in this process by imposing officially-approved interpretations on foreign works in translation, thus sanctioning their entry into the shifting ideological boundaries of the post-Stalin literary field.

This dissertation examines the Soviet reception of Latin American literature as a case study of the Third-World orientation of the postwar world literature project. I examine how translators, editors, and party officials negotiated to form a canon of twentieth-century Latin

[1] Zapiska otdela kul'tury TsK KPSS (February 23, 1960), in *Ideologicheskie komissii TsK KPSS 1958–1964. Dokumenty,* ed. E. S. Afanas'eva et al. (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 1998), 232.

American writing in Russian translation.[2] In doing so, I analyze both the way translators rendered foreign texts as well as the crucial role of literary criticism in contextualizing and presenting them to Soviet readers. Contrary to the assumption that Soviet institutions were simply repressive, I argue that the subjective deliberations behind the reception of Latin American literature demonstrate that cultural exchange during the Cold War was not always directly dictated by political developments. Far from being predictably monolithic, the Soviet cultural "offensive" was a complex phenomenon involving creative interpretative acts on the part of translators, editors as well as critics.[3] Ultimately, however, the formation of the canon of Latin American literature in the Soviet Union mirrored its efforts to appropriate national liberation movements in the name of socialist internationalism, both better reflecting aspirations for the imagined "blazing continent" than a genuine intercultural dialogue.

Literature Review

Soviet translation theories versus practice

With few exceptions, the Russian and Soviet contexts of translation were long neglected in the fields of Slavic literatures and Translation Studies until recent years.[4] The last decade has witnessed an explosion of interest in the theory, practice, and culture of translation in various

[2] My dissertation discusses only Russian-language translations, which comprised the overwhelming majority of translations of Latin American literature in the Soviet Union. The "competing" translations that appeared in other national languages with strong translation traditions and institutions (such as Ukrainian) deserve a separate study.

[3] For an example of the Cold War-era characterization of Soviet cultural diplomacy, see Frederick C. Barghoorn, *The Soviet Cultural Offensive: The Role of Cultural Diplomacy in Soviet Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960).

[4] These include Maurice Friedberg's books *A Decade of Euphoria: Western Literature in Post-Stalinist Russia, 1954-1964* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977) and *Literary Translation in Russia: A Cultural History* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997). See also Lauren G. Leighton, *Two Worlds, One Art: Literary Translation in Russia and America* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1991). In Russia, Soviet translators have occupied a prominent position in post-Soviet cultural commentary. See Elena Kalashnikova, *Po-russki s liubov'iu: Besedy s perevodchikami* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2008).

periods of the history of Russia and the Soviet Union. A number of articles and books examine the theoretical foundations of the "Soviet school" of translation within the context of Translation Studies, focusing first and foremost on Ivan Kashkin's method of "socialist realist translation."[5] Although these studies help provide an account of the culture of Soviet literary translation, there are few examples that evaluate the extent to which Soviet translation theory was actually put into practice. Some scholars have examined the role of individual translators and their engagement with the "norms of translation" as they were institutionalized in the Soviet context, such as censorship, translators' close collaborations with editors.[6] Others have explored the myth of the dissident poet-translator forced to translate due to a lack of ability to publish his or her original works.[7] A recent monograph on post-Stalin era translations explicitly situates translators' activity in terms of resistance to the ideological pressures of the state publishing enterprise.[8] This "dissident model" of translation, which informs much of the study of Soviet translation,

[5] Andrei Azov provides the most comprehensive account of the establishment of Soviet translation theory in his monograph *Poverzhennye bukvalisty. Iz istorii khudozhestvennogo perevoda v SSSR v 1920-1960-e gody* (Moscow: Izdatel'skii dom Vysshei shkoly ekonomiki, 2013). Several edited book collections of articles devoted to different aspects of Soviet translation theory and practice have appeared over the last decade: Brian James Baer, ed., *Contexts, Subtexts and Pretexts: Literary Translation in Eastern Europe and Russia* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2011); Leon Burnett and Emily Lygo, eds., *The Art of Accommodation: Literary Translation in Russia* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2013); Andrea Ceccherelli, Lorenzo Costantino and Cristiano Diddi, eds., *Translation Theories in the Slavic Countries* (Salerno: Università degli Studi di Salerno, 2014); Larisa Schippel and Cornelia Zwischenberger, eds., *Going East: Discovering New and Alternative Traditions in Translation Studies* (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2017); Brian James Baer and Susanna Witt, eds., *Translation in Russian Contexts: Culture, Politics, Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

[6] Samantha Sherry's book *Discourses of Regulation and Resistance: Censoring Translation in the Stalin and Khrushchev Era Soviet Union* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015) is the most comprehensive study of censorship in Soviet translation practice in the Stalin and Khrushchev eras. Emily Lygo gives an overview of late Soviet translation practice in her article "Between Ideology and Literature: Translation in the USSR during the Brezhnev Period," *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology* 24, no. 1 (2016): 48–58.

[7] Maria Khotimsky, *A Remedy for Solitude: Russian Poet-Translators in the Soviet and Post-Soviet Eras,* Ph. D. diss. (Harvard University, 2011); Susanna Witt, "Byron's *Don Juan* in Russian and the 'Soviet school of translation'," *Translation and Interpreting Studies* 11, no. 1 (2016): 23–43.

[8] Natalia Kamovnikova's study *Made Under Pressure: Literary Translation in the Soviet Union, 1960–1991* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2019) provides valuable extensive oral history accounts from the translators themselves. These firsthand accounts are not supplemented with archival materials, however, providing an incomplete and potentially misleading impression of translators' engagement with state institutions.

recognizes the agency of the translators, but only to a certain extent: the social category of "dissident" reinforces its opposite, "collaborator," creating a dichotomy that often fails to meaningfully account for the difficult choices dictated by Soviet reality. Drawing upon Translations Studies scholarship and studies of the Soviet experience of late socialism, this dissertation provides a more nuanced account of the translator's role in mediating between official ideological discourse, the source text, and his or her personal motivations. In examining the mindset of the translators and editors involved in this process, my dissertation will avoid the reductive dichotomies of freedom/repression and dissidence/collaboration that mark much of the literature on the subject.[9]

Abandoning these dichotomies does not suggest that translators were somehow "outside" the system, however. Scholars' accounts of translation in the West have conventionally relied on idealized characterizations of translators as a hybrid figures occupying a neutral liminal space between two cultures; the Soviet translator, in contrast, was by necessity neither impartial nor meaningfully "in-between."[10] The official support for "free translation" (including the implicit sanctioning of censorship) and the need to "package" texts with the proper ideological reading made every Soviet translation a "domesticating" one that privileged the target context.[11] The translators, editors and censors at the center of this dissertation were intimately implicated by the

[9] Alexei Yurchak's *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006) is the central study for any discussion of late Soviet subjectivity.

[10] Maria Tymoczko, "Ideology and the Position of the Translator: In What Sense is a Translator 'In Between'?," in *Apropos of Ideology: Translation Studies on Ideology, Ideologies in Translation Studies*, ed. María Calzada Pérez (Manchester: St. Jerome, 2003), 181–201.

[11] Lawrence Venuti proposed using the terms "domestication" and "foreignization" to denote contrasting translation strategies. The former is "an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target language cultural values, bringing the author back home," while the latter, a "dissident cultural practice," generally uses "a discursive strategy that deviates from the prevailing hierarchy of dominant discourses." See his book *The Translator's Invisibility* (London: Routledge, 1995), 20, 148. On the term "packaging" in this context, see Richard Watts, *Packaging Post/Coloniality: The Manufacture of Literary Identity in the Francophone World* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005).

official ideology in their role as ideological gatekeepers: they were in direct contact with foreign writers and collectively negotiated the processes of selection, translation, and presentation of the Soviet canon of Latin American literature.[12]

Soviet internationalism and Latin America in the Cold War

My dissertation analyzes Soviet translations of Latin American literature as a component of a wider project that ebbed and flowed over the course of the Soviet Union's history. The first flourishing of this internationalism in the 1930s saw the Soviet Union promote itself as a guarantor and mediator of a wider platform for cultural exchange between leftist intellectuals and artists.[13] Katerina Clark has analyzed the role of translation as a means of securing cultural prestige, building a canon of "world literature" that overlapped with this socialist internationalism.[14] This internationalist project waned in scope and importance during the Second World War, but it re-emerged during the Thaw. With few exceptions, however, scholars' accounts of the cultural universalism of the Thaw-era internationalist project have tended to focus on interactions between the Soviet Union, the socialist bloc, and the "West," excluding the

[12] This dissertation thus also builds on the relatively few studies of the impact of individual translators in shaping the gestalt of Latin American literature in other languages. For an account of English-language translations, see Jeremy Munday, *Style and Ideology in Translation: Latin American Writing in English* (New York: Routledge, 2008), and María Constanza Guzmán, *Gregory Rabassa's Latin American Literature: A Translator's Visible Legacy* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2010). For a comparative overview of translations in various Western European languages, see Maarten Steenmeijer, "How the West Was Won: Translations of Spanish American Fiction in Europe and the United States," in *Voice-overs: Translation and Latin American Literature*, ed. Daniel Balderston and Marcy Schwartz (Albany: SUNY Press, 2001), 144–155.

[13] For a general overview of this early internationalism, see Ludmila Stern, *Western Intellectuals and the Soviet Union, 1920–1940: From Red Square to the Left Bank* (New York: Routledge, 2007) and Michael David-Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment: Cultural Diplomacy and Western Visitors to the Soviet Union, 1921–1941* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). Steven S. Lee offers interesting comparative perspectives in *The Ethnic Avant-Garde: Minority Cultures and World Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

[14] See her landmark study *Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture, 1931–1941* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 169–209.

considerable Soviet efforts to form contacts with the Third World. [15] This is perhaps a lasting bias from the Cold War mentality in the study of Soviet culture and foreign policy, in which the primacy of the East-West conflict erased the importance and agency of actors in the ideological battlegrounds of the Third World. Scholars have only recently begun to focus on what David C. Engerman has termed the "Second World's Third World," with several notable studies of Soviet engagement with Africa and Asia appearing in the last few years.[16] In the field of global history, Tobias Rupprecht has written extensively on the Second World's encounter with Latin America, opening up avenues for further research on different aspects of this cultural exchange.[17]

At the intersection of internationalism and Soviet translation, there have been several studies of the translation and reception of individual authors in the Soviet Union.[18] With few

[15] Eleonory Gilburd's impressive account of the Thaw in *To See Paris and Die: The Soviet Lives of Western Culture* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018) is symptomatic in this regard.

[16] David C. Engerman, "The Second World's Third World," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 12, no. 1 (Winter 2011): 183–211. Rossen Djagalov's research reveals the little-known history of the Soviet mediation of anti-colonial discourses from the late 1950s to the 1970s, fading away just as postcolonial studies took off in the Anglo-American academy. See his recent book *From Internationalism to Postcolonialism: Literature and Cinema between the Second and the Third Worlds* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2020).

[17] Rupprecht's monograph *Soviet Internationalism after Stalin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015) contains a wealth of information on an incredibly diverse range of types of cultural exchange between leaders, intellectuals, artists, and everyday citizens in Latin America and the Second World. Rupprecht briefly discusses Soviet translations (pp. 104–110), but rather superficially, resulting in several factual and typographical errors.

[18] Deming Brown paved the way for such studies in his book *Soviet Attitudes Toward American Writing* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962). Emily Tall discusses the reception of Franz Kafka, Albert Camus, and James Joyce: "Who's Afraid of Franz Kafka?: Kafka Criticism in the Soviet Union," *Slavic Review* 35, No. 3 (September 1976): 484–503; "Soviet Responses to Albert Camus, 1956–76," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 22, no. 3 (September 1980): 319–337; "Behind the Scenes: How Ulysses was Finally Published in the Soviet Union," *Slavic Review* 49, no. 2 (Summer 1990): 183–199. More recent case studies of note include the reception of Hemingway, Jean-Paul Sartre, Italo Calvino, and Kurt Vonnegut: Ekaterina Kuznetsova, "Hemingway's Transformations in Soviet Russia: On the Translation of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* by Natalia Volzhina and Evgenia Kalashnikova," in *Translation in Russian Contexts*, 159–173; Charlotte Bollaert, "The Russian Thick Journal as a Discursive Space of Negotiation: Jean-Paul Sartre's Reception in the Soviet Union During the Thaw Era," *Translation & Interpreting Studies* 14, no. 2 (2019): 198–217; Ilaria Sicari, "Paratext as Weapon: The Role of Soviet Criticism during the Cultural Cold War," *Translation and Interpreting Studies* 15, no. 3 (November 2020): 354–379.

exceptions, all of these concern the reception of Western "modernist" authors,[19] and I argue that the critical lack of studies of the Soviet encounter with the Third World (and Latin America in particular) through translation has left us with an incomplete understanding of how the translation industry functioned. The existing scholarly accounts tend to focus on the specificities of the writer and miss how these individual cases relate to wider trends in literary criticism. My dissertation will help supplement our understanding of Soviet translation as a whole, as the reception of Latin American literature can be compared with Soviet engagements with other Third-World literatures (a topic that generates more interest in postcolonial studies each year) and with the aforementioned studies on the reception of Western writers. Two important precursors to this current study deserve mention here. William Rougle's dissertation on the Soviet reception of Latin American literature provides a comprehensive overview of the criticism in both the pre- and post-war eras (up to 1975). Dina Odnopozova's more recent dissertation includes discussions of the Soviet and post-Soviet reception of Argentine literature.[20]

Historical Overview

Early encounters with Latin American literature

The story of the modern Russian-language reception of Latin American literature begins immediately after the revolution.[21] In 1918, the writer Maxim Gorky helped establish the

[19] Notable exceptions include the reception history of Jorge Amado: William Rougle, "Soviet Critical Responses to Jorge Amado," *Luso-Brazilian Review* 21, no. 2 (Winter 1984): 35–56; Marina Darmaros, "Zhorzhi Amadu i SSSR. Zametki k teme," *Literatura dvukh Amerik* 5 (2018): 230–282; Elena Beliakova, *"Russkii" Amadu i brazil'skaia literatura v Rossii*. Moscow: ILA RAN, 2010. The reception of Julio Cortázar's work has also attracted interest; see Ekaterina Eremina, "Traducciones al ruso de *Rayuela* de Julio Cortázar en la época soviética y postsoviética." PhD diss. (Universitat Pompeu Fabra, 2017).

[20] William Rougle, "The Soviet Reception of Latin American Literature (1917–1975)," PhD diss. (University of California, Santa Barbara, 1980). Dina Odnopozova examines these two topics in Chapters 3 and 4, respectively, of her dissertation: "Russian-Argentine Literary Exchanges," PhD diss. (Yale University, 2012), 120–185.

publishing house Vsemirnaia literatura [World Literature], an official venue for his ambitious plan to translate major works of world literature into Russian for the education of the masses. In the short lifespan of the publishing house, only 120 titles out of the roughly 4000 planned for publication were actually published. The publishing plans included nineteen works by Latin American writers that comprised a somewhat representative canon of major works from the nineteenth century, such as Domingo Faustino Sarmiento's *Facundo* (1845), Jorge Isaacs' *María* (1867), Machado de Assis's *Memórias Póstumas de Brás Cubas* (*The Posthumous Memoirs of Brás Cubas*, 1881), and a volume of Rubén Darío's poetry.[22] The only work by a Latin American author from these plans that actually appeared in print was a curious choice: *La Gloria de don Ramiro* (*The Glory of Don Ramiro*, 1908), a historical novel by the conservative Argentine writer Enrique Larreta set in sixteenth-century Spain during the reign of Phillip II that illustrates the protagonist's inner conflict between the flesh and the spirit. This choice reflects the long-standing Russian fascination with the culture and history of Spain, but it was hardly representative of contemporary trends in Latin American literature.[23] The central publishing house Gosizdat closed the Vsemirnaia literatura offices in 1924, but Gorky's idealistic project lived on thanks to another publishing house, Academia, which persisted until 1937. For the time being, the Soviet map of "world literature" largely excluded Latin America: Academia published no titles by Latin American writers, and until the late 1920s the few critics and scholars who knew Spanish and Portuguese remained focused on the Iberian Peninsula.

[21] The Russian reception of Latin American literature prior to 1917 was generally unsystematic and fragmentary, with no sustained effort to comprehend the cultures of the region as a whole. The few works that were translated served primarily political purposes as tools to criticize the tsarist regime. For a detailed overview of this topic, see Rougle, "The Soviet Reception of Latin American Literature," 23–51.

[22] Cited in Rougle, "The Soviet Reception of Latin American Literature," 117.

[23] Ibid., 54.

By the end of the decade, however, the governments of Mexico and Uruguay had established political and economic relations with the Soviet Union, paving the way for increased cultural exchange. In 1925, Vladimir Mayakovsky toured Mexico, where he befriended the muralist Diego Rivera. When Rivera visited Moscow two years later, he was warmly received as a celebrated artist. He helped introduce Mexican literature to Soviet readers by writing a short critical article for Anatoly Lunacharsky's journal *Vestnik inostrannoi literatury* [The Herald of Foreign Literature] to accompany a partial Russian translation of *Los de abajo* (*The Underdogs*, 1915), Mariano Azuela's fragmentary account of the Mexican Revolution.[24]

Proletarian internationalism and translation

These early encounters were soon subsumed in the wider politicization of all realms of culture under the new official ideology of socialist realism, which coincided with the arrival of an international proletarian movement among leftist artists and writers during the 1930s. Following the establishment of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers at the Second World Congress of Revolutionary Writers held in Kharkov in 1930, the Soviet state began to foster and mediate a growing international leftist literary field. These aspirations were further consolidated with the creation of the International Association of Writers for the Defense of Culture, a popular front effort to band together leftists and liberals under the antifascist cause. In 1933, the establishment of the literary journal *Internatsional'naia literatura* [International Literature], published in five languages in addition to Russian, placed Moscow at the center of the leftist literary world.[25] The cosmopolitan nature of the journal, through which readers encountered the

[24] William Harrison Richardson, *Mexico Through Russian Eyes, 1806–1940* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1988), 130. Mariano Asuela, *Uragan*, translated by T. A. Glikman, *Vestnik inostrannoi literatury* 4 (1928): 3–69; D. Rivera, "Mariano Asuela," *Vestnik inostrannoi literatury* 4 (1928): 159.

likes of Kafka, Joyce, Dos Passos, and Malraux, sharply contrasted with the consolidation of socialist realism in domestic Soviet literature. The proletarian movement reached its peak in the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939), which was a galvanizing moment for Soviet cultural exchanges with Latin American writers, artists, and intellectuals. Soviet involvement in the war created a sudden demand for Spanish-speaking interpreters, launching the careers of a generation of translators and scholars specializing in Latin American literature. The war also produced fateful meetings between Soviet writers such as Ilya Ehrenburg and their Latin American counterparts.

During this era, the study of Latin American literature was spearheaded by two enterprising figures, David Vygodskii (1893–1943) and Fedor Kel'in (1893–1965), who published some of the first anthologies and major critical articles on Latin American literature.[26] The selection of works for translation reflected the values of the proletarian internationalism of the time. In such novels as José Eustasio Rivera's *La vorágine* (*The Vortex,* 1924; translated 1935) and Jorge Icaza's *Huasipungo* (1924; translated 1935), critics valued the authors' treatment of the injustices of the economic exploitation of the region and the suffering of the local indigenous population.[27] The criticism of the few novels that were translated was often

[25] The journal was the continuation of previous journals, Vestnik inostrannoi literatury (1928-1930) and Literatura mirovoi revoliutsii (1931-1932), headed by Lunacharsky and RAPP, respectively, reflecting the evolution of the internationalist project. For more on *Internatsional'naia literatura*'s importance during this period, see Aleksei Mikheev, "Mezhdu dvumia ottepeliami," *Inostrannaia Literatura* 10 (2005): 297–312; Nailya Safiullina and Rachel Platonov, "Literary Translation and Soviet Cultural Politics in the 1930s: The Role of the Journal *Internacional'naja literatura*," *Russian Literature* 72, no. 2 (August 2012): 239–269; James Murphy, *The Proletarian Moment: The Controversy Over Leftism in Literature* (Urbana & Chicago, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 85–104.

[26] Vygodskii edited the first Russian-language anthology of Latin American short stories: *Latinskaia Amerika* (Leningrad: Priboi, 1927). He also wrote the first major work of criticism on Latin American literature: David Vygodskii, *Literatura Ispanii i ispanskoi Ameriki. 1898–1929* (Leningrad: Krasnaia gazeta, 1929). Kel'in edited (along with Giovanni Germanetto) an extensive anthology titled *Iuzhnaia i Karaibskaia Amerika* (Kharkiv: Ukraïnskyi robitnyk, 1934).

[27] For more bibliographic details on the translations mentioned here, see the bibliography provided by Rougle in "The Soviet Reception of Latin American Literature," 516–715. For translations up to 1959, see also L. A. Shur, ed. *Khudozhestvennaia literatura Latinskoi Ameriki v russkoi pechati 1765 –1959* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Vsesoiznoi knizhnoi palaty, 1960). Two more bibliographies cover the years 1960–1964 and 1965–1980, respectively: idem, ed., *Khudozhestvennaia literatura Latinskoi Ameriki v russkoi pechati. 1960–1964* (Moscow: Kniga, 1966) and V.

reductively partisan. Kel'in's appraisal of César Vallejo's social realist novel *El tungsteno* (*Tungsten*, 1931; translated in 1932) is typical in this respect: although he approves of the author's realistic depiction of the conflict between the indigenous laborers and the mining company, he argues that the work fails as a true proletarian novel and comments on the lack of a comprehensive critique of US imperialism.[28] The Mexican proletarian novelist José Mancisidor was treated more favorably. According to Kel'in, his evolution from *La asonada* (*The Uprising*, 1931; translated 1933) to *La ciudad roja* (*The Red City*, 1932; translated 1933 and 1934) was evidence of his proper internalization of the socialist realist model, as he improved in his depiction of the relationship between the exemplary positive hero and the masses.[29]

Stalinist repressions and literary "monopolists"

The Stalinist purges of 1936–8 were the beginning of the end for the internationalist movement and severely attenuated the reception of Latin American literature for nearly two decades. In one of the several waves of repression against Soviet intellectuals who facilitated cultural exchanges with foreign writers, the state arrested Vygodskii under false pretenses as part of the so-called *delo perevodchikov* ("the case of the translators") and gave him a brutal sentence in a forced labor camp in Kazakhstan, where he perished.[30] The Second World War effectively curtailed the

G. Gin'ko, T. V. Balashova and V. N. Kuteishchikova, eds, *Khudozhestvennaia literatura Latinskoi Ameriki v russkoi pechati. Ukazatel' russkikh perevodov i kriticheskoi literatury na russkom iazyke. 1965–1980* (Moscow: Vsesoiuznaia gosudarstvennaia biblioteka inostrannoi literatury im. M. I. Rudomino, 1992).

[28] See Rougle, "The Soviet Reception of Latin American Literature," 100–101.

[29] Ibid., 102–107.

[30] For more on Vygodskii and the *delo perevodchikov*, see Harriet Murav, *Music from a Speeding Train: Jewish Literature in Post-Revolution Russia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 289–291, and V. Kuteishchikova, *Moskva – Mekhiko – Moskva. Doroga dlinoiu v zhizn'* (Moscow: Akademicheskii proekt, 2000), 86–90.

internationalist movement, as evidenced by the decision to disband the journal *Internatsional'naia literatura* in 1943.

The imposition of Zhdanov's doctrine after the war's end placed the reception of Latin American literature under highly oppressive ideological control. In the first postwar decade, only seventeen original titles by Latin American writers appeared in Russian translation. Nearly ninety percent of these titles were translations of just three communist stalwarts, the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda, the Cuban poet Nicolás Guillén, and the Brazilian novelist Jorge Amado.[31] This small circle of writers enjoyed official patronage as what Rossen Djagalov has termed "literary monopolists" within a new, highly centralized international literary formation oriented around the Moscow-backed World Peace movement that defined the contours of the socialist camp in the emerging Cold War world.[32] The Soviet cultural authorities awarded each of the three Latin American monopolists with the International Stalin Prize and courted them with lavish receptions on official visits to the Soviet Union, where they became literary celebrities. The state publishing houses released translations of their works in prestigious editions. The three played an important role in supplying Soviet publishing houses with up-to-date information on literary developments in Latin America, and their personal tastes largely determined publishing plans during the first half of the 1950s.[33]

[31] Rougle, "The Soviet Reception of Latin American Literature," 138.

[32] Following Pascale Casanova's concept of the "World Republic of Letters," Djagalov asserts that Moscow served as the literary capital of the "People's Republic of Letters" in the post-war leftist camp. Rossen Djagalov, "Literary Monopolists and the Forging of the Post-World War II People's Republic of Letters." In *Socialist Realism in Central and Eastern European Literatures under Stalin: Institutions, Dynamics, Discourses*, ed. Evgeny Dobrenko and Natalia Jonsson-Skradol (London: Anthem Press, 2018), 25–37.

[33] The few works not authored by the trio that appeared in this period included denunciations of US economic imperialism, such as the Costa Rican writer Carlos Luis Fallas's novel *Mamita Yunai* (1941; Russian translation 1952), which attacked the tyranny of the eponymous United Fruit Company in the region.

The Thaw, Cuba, and socialist internationalism

A series of momentous events in the 1950s definitively changed the story of the Soviet encounter with Latin America. The Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party in February 1956 and the "Thaw" that followed brought an end to the cultural isolation of the preceding decade. Publishing houses soon flooded bookstores with an unprecedented quantity and variety of foreign literary works in translation. Latin America was relatively low on the list of foreign policy priorities when Khrushchev announced the new phase of socialist support for the Third World: the 1955 Bandung Conference had delimited the boundaries of the anticolonial movement to Africa and Asia, and Latin America remained too clearly in the shadow of the United States. The victory of Castro's forces in the Cuban Revolution in 1959 forever changed this arrangement, transforming Latin America into a new front of the Cold War.

The romance of the Cuban Revolution ignited new enthusiasm for Latin America on the part of the Soviet cultural authorities, which promoted an image of Latin America as a "blazing continent" rising up against its imperialist oppressors.[34] In December 1960, the editors of the high-profile journal *Inostrannaia literatura* dedicated an entire issue to "the peoples of the countries of Latin America, their struggle for freedom, and their culture," featuring pro-revolutionary statements from a wide range of Latin American writers and artists. Soviet leaders recognized the value of supporting anti-imperialist and anti-colonial national liberation struggles despite their lack of socialist orientation.[35] Under this new framework, the cultural authorities

[34] For more on official and popular enthusiasm for revolutionary Cuba in the Soviet Union, see Rupprecht, *Soviet Internationalism after Stalin*, 110–123; Anne E. Gorsuch, "'Cuba, My Love': The Romance of Revolutionary Cuba in the Soviet Sixties," *The American Historical Review* 120, no. 2 (April 2015): 497–526; Petr Vail' and Aleksandr Genis. *60-e: Mir sovetskogo cheloveka*, 2nd ed. (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 1998), 52–61.

[35] This was the case with revolutionary Cuba, which was not an explicitly socialist country until 1961. Whereas the pre-war internationalism was strongly tied with the rhetoric of socialist world revolution, the Thaw-era version was more pragmatic and less overtly ideological, aimed at a wider audience beyond communist intellectuals. In his study of Soviet engagement with Africa and Asia during the Thaw, Constantin Katsakioris contends that the official

took a new approach in engaging with Latin American writers and intellectuals. They largely abandoned the Stalinist "monopolist" model in favor of a more pragmatic, less overtly political system of cultural diplomacy. Critics hailed the leading writers from countries striving for self-determination as "national" writers first and foremost.[36] These national writers spoke on behalf of their people and their literary works were contextualized as expressions of national identity and folklore. In the case of figures such as Miguel Ángel Asturias, for example, Soviet criticism appropriated writers' advocacy for indigenous cultures in a wider strategy of criticizing the injustices of US capitalist imperialism.

This shift in criticism from proletarian internationalism to celebration of the "national" can also be understood as a response to Latin American writers' and intellectuals' changing attitudes toward the Soviet Union. Many members of the generation that had been receptive to Soviet overtures before the Second World War found themselves disillusioned by the recent revelation of Stalin's crimes. As Havana emerged as a new pole of the Cold War, however, the younger generation of writers that came of age after the war no longer viewed the Soviet Union as the beacon of world revolution. The brutal repressions of the popular uprising in Hungary in 1956 and, more definitively, the Prague Spring in 1968 curtailed whatever enthusiasm remained among the few intellectuals who still harbored cautious hopes for the Thaw.[37]

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rhetoric of the new internationalism consciously avoided any references to the Soviet internationalism of the 1930s. See his article "The Soviet-South Encounter: Tensions in the Friendship with Afro-Asian Partners, 1945-1965," in *Cold War Crossings: International Travel and Exchange across the Soviet Bloc, 1940s-1960s*, ed. Patryk Babiracki and Kenyon Zimmer (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2014), 134–165.

[36] Brian James Baer argues that in contrast to the internationalism of the 1930s, in the post-Stalin era, "national and cultural particularity" became a "defining feature in the packaging of translated literature." Brian James Baer, "From International to Foreign: Packaging Translated Literature in Soviet Russia," *Slavic and East European Journal* 60, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 62.

[37] Neil Larsen has argued that the 1956 denunciation of Stalin was the definitive turning point for Latin American literature, as writers retreated from narrating history as a grand narrative in a realist mode in favor of political disengagement. See his article "The 'Boom' Novel and the Cold War in Latin America," *Modern Fiction Studies* 38, no. 3 (Fall 1992): 771–784.

Nevertheless, for an aging set of committed leftist (if not explicitly communist) writers and intellectuals, the Soviet Union and the socialist East more broadly remained an important source of ideological and material support. The cultural authorities throughout the socialist bloc courted writers with a kind of ideological tourism, inviting them to extended stays in historic castles and sanatoriums while showcasing the achievements of socialist society.[38] There they were received enthusiastically and had the opportunity to gain audiences of millions of people through translations with massive print runs that dwarfed what was possible in their home countries or realistically attainable in the West.[39] Political refugees in exile could find a new, if often temporary home; some, like the Honduran writer Ramón Amaya Amador, stayed for good. They could secure much-needed financial support in the form of travel stipends for writers' congresses and, more importantly, literary prizes.[40] The communist Costa Rican writer Carlos Luis Fallas, alias "Calufa," traveled to Moscow in 1954 and returned a decade later for medical treatment of what proved to be a fatal case of kidney cancer.[41] Other writers occupied official political posts in the socialist East: the indigenist Ecuadorian writer Jorge Icaza settled in Moscow in 1974 and served as his country's ambassador to the Soviet Union, Poland, and East Germany.[42]

[38] For more examples of this kind of political tourism in the socialist bloc, see Michal Zourek, *Československo očima latinskoamerických intelektuálů 1947–1959* (Prague: Runa, 2018).

[39] Publishing plans were, to a certain extent, coordinated among the socialist bloc countries. The Bolivian writer Jesús Lara wrote about the struggles of the Quechua people in his indigenist novel *Yanakuna* (1952). Following his visit to the Soviet Union in 1953, the novel was translated into Polish, Czech, Russian, and Hungarian within a six-year span. His next novel, *Yawarninchij* (1959) was another success in the socialist east: by 1964, it had been translated into Hungarian, Russian, Czech, and Romanian. Neither work has been translated into English or French.

[40] Thirteen laureates of the International Lenin prize (renamed in September 1956) originated from Latin America.

[41] For more on Latin American visitors to the USSR, see Rupprecht, *Soviet Internationalism after Stalin*, 128–190.

[42] César Chávez Aguilar, "Marina Moncayo de Icaza, escenas de una vida," *Guaraguao* 14:33 (Spring 2010): 184.

Socialist or magical realism? The "Boom" in the Soviet Union

The revitalized Soviet translation industry quickly focused its efforts on Latin American literature in the 1960s, resulting in an explosion of literary translations. Between 1917 and 1959, 108 books by 43 Latin American writers were published in various languages of the Soviet Union; during just the six years between 1960 and 1965, more than 100 books of almost 80 different writers were published in Russian alone. Central publishing houses began including more and more Latin American titles in the plans for book series such as Zarubezhnyi roman XX veka [The Foreign Novel of the Twentieth Century].[43] Another key development was the formation of a group of translators who dedicated themselves to translating Latin American poetry. In 1962, the central publishing house Goslitizdat began publishing books of poetry translations, often in the form of anthologies dedicated to the poetry of individual Latin American countries, through the book series Biblioteka Latinoamerikanskoi poezii [The Library of Latin American Poetry].[44] The translators involved in this task benefited from the support of the Institute of Latin America, established as part of the Academy of Sciences in 1961, as well as the formation of specialized Latin American editorial boards at central state publishing houses.

The study of Latin American literature became a well-organized scholarly discipline. Beginning in the late 1950s, three major critics of Latin American literature began largely singlehandedly to redefine the discipline by reevaluating past criticism and emphasizing the need to analyze the specific historical and cultural conditions under which these literatures emerged. These three critics, Vera Kuteishchikova, Lev Ospovat, and Inna Terterian, were also deeply

[43] An artifact of the Thaw era, the series began in 1957 and continued until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Over the course of its existence, twenty-one different titles by Latin American authors were published. Print runs of each title in the series ranged from 50,000 to 150,000 copies.

[44] Twenty-five titles were published as part of this series.

involved in the selection and publication of a surprisingly representative canon of contemporary Latin American literature.[45] Their insistence on the specificity of Latin America allowed them to discuss a wide range of literature as peculiar local examples of "critical realism," sanctioning defects that would have been more harshly judged in the works of Western writers.[46]

In discussing the cultural specificity of Latin America, Soviet critics articulated a nascent form of postcolonial rhetoric. In one of the first popular reference books on Latin American literature that appeared under this new framework, Ospovat frames his discussion of the topic by referencing Daniel Defoe's novel *Robinson Crusoe*: "What if the narrator of this story were not Robinson, but Friday? Not the colonizer, not the master, but the slave?" If the novel were narrated from Friday's perspective, Ospovat contends, the establishment of the colony would appear in an entirely different light and Friday's transformation into Robinson's slave would perhaps not be portrayed as a voluntary act.[47] As the entire continent seemed to brim with revolutionary potential, critics presented Latin American literature as the voice of the oppressed who were rising up against their oppressors. This enabled the publication of an expanding canon of translations of works by previously untranslated writers.

By framing Latin American writing in this way, such criticism also effectively suppressed any notion that it was connected to modernist trends in Western literatures. This had

[45] Kuteishchikova (1919–2012) and her husband Ospovat (1922–2009) were trained as historians before becoming scholars and critics. Their landmark monograph *Novyi latinoamerikanskii roman* (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1976) remains the most important Russian-language work on the post-war "new Latin American novel." Terterian (1933–1986) was an authority on Brazilian and Spanish literature.

[46] See, for example, their landmark article "Sud'by kriticheskogo realizma v sovremennoi literature Latinskoi Ameriki," *Voprosy literatury* 5 (1958): 69–95, in which they return to criticism from a decade earlier that condemned the pessimism of such writers as Jorge Icaza, Graciliano Ramos, and Miguel Ángel Asturias. Kuteishchikova and Ospovat consider "the dark character" of their works as an expression of "the reality they reflect—the inhumanly difficult, monstrous conditions of the lives of the oppressed peoples of Latin America." (81)

[47] Lev Ospovat, *Govorit Latinskaia Amerika (O sovremennom latinoamerikanskom romane)* (Moscow: Znanie, 1961), 7. Ospovat's commentary anticipated the kind of critique later developed by the Cuban critic Roberto Fernández Retamar in his essay "Calibán," *Casa de Las Américas* 12, no. 68 (September–October 1971): 124–151.

particular consequences for the reception of the new "Boom" generation that emerged in the early 1960s and quickly became the first to gain international renown. The writers of the "Boom"—Carlos Fuentes, Mario Vargas Llosa, Julio Cortázar, and Gabriel García Márquez—internalized the techniques of Western modernism and applied them in their depictions of Latin American reality. Although their novels diverged from the social realist aesthetic preferred by the authorities, refusing to translate them at all would have lowered the prestige of the Soviet world literature project as an obvious sign of parochialism. Translators and editors thus had to take risks in choosing which novels to translate and how to package them in such a way that they would not prove too controversial for the authorities. By the middle of the decade, several of the landmark novels of the "Boom" were already accessible to Soviet readers. In 1965, translations of both Fuentes's novel *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* (*The Death of Artemio Cruz*, 1962) and Vargas Llosa's *La ciudad y los perros* (*The Time of the Hero*, 1963) appeared, marking some of the most intensive efforts to rapidly translate new Latin American writers.

The unprecedented global popularity of García Márquez's novel *Cien años de soledad* (*One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 1967) cemented the importance of third-world literature and made magical realism its trademark signifier. The Russian translation of the novel by Nina Butyrina and Valerii Stolbov, which first appeared on the pages of *Inostrannaia literatura* in the summer of 1970, was a watershed moment in the Soviet reception of Latin American literature. The wildly popular Russian translation of the book necessitated a shift in critical discourse, allowing translators and editors to justify the translation of Latin American literary works for their aesthetic merits rather than political utility. Over the course of the 1970s, the canon of Latin American literature in Soviet translation expanded to include many works that had been deemed unpublishable in previous criticism due to divergences from "realism." By 1980, the Latin

American editorial board at the central publishing house Khudozhestvennaia literatura had published over 130 books over twenty years, amounting to around 14 million copies.

Translating Latin American literature: the publication process

The canon of translated foreign literature in the Soviet Union was established book by book. The practices of translating, reviewing, editing, and contextualizing Latin American literature all took place within the confines of the official publishing system. I provide a comprehensive overview of each step of the publication process here in order to contextualize the closer examinations of individual translations in the chapters that follow.[48] My overview of the publication process is based on my findings (archival materials and oral history) relating to the central state publishing house for literature, first known as Goslitizdat [Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury; the State Publishing House of Fiction], later renamed Khudozhestvennaia literatura [Fiction] in 1963.[49] There were three main stages in this process: selecting texts for translation; translating the chosen texts into Russian; and presenting them to readers. At each of these stages. translators, editors, and party officials negotiated how to mediate this cultural exchange.

Selecting texts for translation

The first step in the publication process was to decide which Latin American books were suitable for translation. At the start of the Thaw, this was far from a straightforward process. The first major obstacle was the lack of specialized knowledge of contemporary trends in Latin American literature. Following the death of Vygodskii, only Kel'in remained from the first generation of

[48] Boris Ivanovich Gorokhoff describes the publication process at major Soviet publishers prior to the Thaw in great detail in his book *Publishing in the U. S. S. R* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1959).

[49] See the Bibliography for more information on archival sources.

Latin Americanists; he trained a second generation of specialists that began their careers after serving as volunteers in the Spanish Civil War.[50] By the mid-1950s, Moscow State University hosted a small cadre of historians, linguists, and philologists who studied Latin American culture, but they had few opportunities to travel abroad.

Another major obstacle was the limited access to contemporary Latin American books in the Soviet Union. The publishing industry in Latin America was severely underdeveloped until well into the 1960s. Writers often had to finance the publication of their own books, which would appear in only a few thousand copies at most.[51] The small circle of Latin American "monopolists" favored by the Stalinist system played an important role in supplying Soviet publishing houses with up-to-date information on literary developments in Latin America. Pablo Neruda, Nicolás Guillén and Jorge Amado all regularly corresponded with editors and specialists in Latin American literature, and when they came to the Soviet Union on official visits, they would bring copies of their books. In some cases, they shared manuscripts in progress and coordinated publishing plans: Jorge Amado's socialist realist novel trilogy *Os Subterrâneos da Liberdade* [*The Bowels of Liberty*], for example, appeared simultaneously with its Russian translation in 1954. At the same time, however, the monopolists' personal tastes as well as political proclivities also largely determined which authors and works would be approved for translation.

This situation changed significantly in the early 1960s following the Cuban Revolution. In 1961, the Soviet Academy of Sciences created the Latin American Institute in Moscow,

[50] Two leading specialists of this second generation, Valerii Stolbov (1913–1991) and Zakharii Plavskin (1918–2006), were studying philology at Moscow State University when they enlisted as volunteers. They were forced to quickly learn Spanish in intensive courses shortly before arrival in Spain.

[51] Álvaro Santana-Acuña, *Ascent to Glory: How One Hundred Years of Solitude Was Written and Became a Global Classic* (Columbia University Press, 2020), 40.

signaling the new importance of the region. Around the same time, the Soviet Writers' Union formed a special group (*aktiv* or *sektsiia*) dedicated to surveying literature from the region. The group met regularly to review press reports on literary developments and discuss which works to recommend for publication. Major publishing houses and journals dedicated to literary translations also began to form separate editorial boards dedicated to Latin American literature.[52] These editorial boards conducted their own overviews of literary developments in the region, collecting announcements of newly-published books, reviews in major journals, and important critical works. They contacted writers directly to request copies of their books.[53]

As publishing houses became more specialized in Latin American literature and gained easier access to contemporary publications, they instituted a systematized review process to sort through new acquisitions. Each new book had to pass through an internal review (*vnutrenniaia retsenziia*) that evaluated its aesthetic and ideological merits. Reviewers could either recommend a book for translation or advise against it. Any problematic aspects of the book, whether of an aesthetic or political nature, had to be pointed out by the reviewer; otherwise, if these problems were identified only at a later stage in the process, the reviewer would be held responsible and could be fired for the mistake. Despite the internal reviews' importance as the first ideological "filter" in the publishing process, publishing houses frequently hired beginning scholars and freelance external reviewers (*vneshtatnye retsenzenty*) for the job. These reviewers were typically young writers and scholars who were not members of the Writers' Union or the

[52] Goslitizdat (later renamed Khudozhestvennaia literatura) formed an editorial board for the countries of Latin America, Spain, and Portugal in 1960. The journal *Inostrannaia literatura* also created an editorial board specifically for Latin American literature around the same time.

[53] Scholars' accounts of Soviet translation practice typically state that many books from abroad were placed in the special storage section, also known as the *spetskhran* (*Otdel spetsial'nogo khraneniia*), where access would be strictly limited to readers who had gained special approval. It is unclear whether the books provided by writers themselves were ever subject to this type of restrictions.

Communist Party. They could be hired by the publishing house after joining a *gruppkom* (group committee), granting them legitimate employment that allowed them to avoid the political crime of "parasitism."[54]

Receiving a positive internal review was just the first step toward obtaining approval to translate a given work. Like all industries in the country's planned economy, the publishing industry followed regular production plans that could project years in advance. Each publishing house had a thematic plan (*tematicheskii plan*) that determined which titles would be published over the following year. Each thematic plan was compiled by an editorial council (*redsovet* or *redkollegiia*) that could be composed of publishing house officials and staff (editors and translators) as well as outside specialists (scholars and critics). In practice, thematic plans always left room for contingencies and were obligated to accommodate the official wishes of the authorities (the so-called orders "from above"). For example, central party organs could direct publishing houses to coordinate their plans with social campaigns or to commemorate Lenin Prize awards. The final version of the thematic plan also had to be approved by central party organs that dealt with publishing.[55]

Aside from the orders "from above," the translations that an editorial council would include in a given thematic plan were suggested by the editorial board at the publishing house. In theory, the editorial boards were supposed to take an active role in choosing and soliciting works

[54] Reviewers were paid by the page for reading the text. Reviewers that proved they could make a sufficient amount of money (say, sixty rubles per month after working for two years), would be hired officially by the publishing house. In the late 1970s, Andrei Kofman, a scholar of Latin American literature, worked as an external reviewer to earn money while writing his dissertation on Mexican folklore. After defending the dissertation, he had an official post at the publishing house Sovetskii pisatel'. Andrei Kofman in discussion with the author, January 2019.

[55] These requirements changed during the bureaucratic re-shuffling of various departments during the 1960s. Thematic plans were submitted to the Ministry of Culture's Main Administration of Publishers, Printing, and Bookselling (Glavizdat) until 1963, when these responsibilities were assumed by State Committee for the Press (Goskompechat'). In 1972, Goskompechat' was re-established as the State Committee for Publishing, Printing, and the Book Trade (Goskomizdat).

for translation; in practice, however, they relied on the translators' initiative to propose works for publication ("from below").[56] The first step in securing approval for a translation was to write a proposal (*zaiavka*) and submit it to the relevant editorial board at the publishing house. Proposals for translations of foreign novels were usually one to two pages long and contained a brief characterization of the writer, a condensed summary of the plot and major themes in the work, and an explicit justification for why the publishing house should commission the translation. If a proposal was accepted, the editorial board then submitted it for approval to the publishing house authorities. Once the proposal was approved, the editorial board could write up contracts for the translator, the editor of the manuscript, and author of the foreword. Only then could the translation be chosen among other successful proposals for inclusion in the thematic plan.

Selection criteria and proposal strategies

Each writer and each book required a special approach that corresponded to the fluctuations of the ideological climate of the era. Proposal writers had to be acutely aware of the "rules of the game," anticipating what would be considered appropriate by publishing house officials in order to secure approval. In general, proposals for translating works by well-known communist writers who openly supported the Soviet Union had the highest likelihood of being accepted. Latin American writers who were not communists but could be portrayed as leftist or progressive were also favored by the editorial councils in compiling thematic plans. Proposals for a third category of writers, those who were talented but not necessarily leftist, were more likely to be accepted if they emphasized a given work's denunciation of US foreign policy or criticism of bourgeois

[56] Party organs feared this practice, sometimes called *samotek* (spontaneous flow), as it threatened to undermine the entire premise of the planned nature of the publishing industry. For more on this topic, see Gregory P. M. Walker, *Soviet Book Publishing Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 50–51.

society. A fourth category of writers consisted of those who were effectively blacklisted for their right-wing political views or for making public statements critical of the Soviet Union.[57]

Asserting the political credentials of the writer was not enough to guarantee that a proposal would be successful. The literary work in question also had to meet the standards of the editorial board. Not everything written even by officially approved writers was deemed suitable for publication; it was common for major writers to be selectively published. For example, the state press regularly touted Julio Cortázar as an official friend of the Soviet Union following the first translations of his work in 1970. Nevertheless, his most well-known novel *Rayuela* (*Hopscotch*, 1963), a major work of postmodernism, appeared in Liudmila Sinianskaia's Russian translation (under the title *Igra v klassiki*) only in 1986.

Proposals commonly appealed to authority as a means of securing approval. If the proposal was for a writer who had already been translated in the Soviet Union, it was convenient to mention any previous publications and state that the writer was already familiar to Soviet readers. When advocating for a previously untranslated writer, however, proposal authors would make sure to cite laudatory comments from better-known writers, preferably those with communist credentials. Failing that, the proposal author could cite leading literary scholars or, in desperate cases, the leader of the communist party in the writer's home country. Later in the 1960s, proposals began to show concern for cultural provincialism. Successful proposals frequently mentioned that the work had already been translated in other countries; it was especially effective to mention translations published in the brotherly socialist bloc countries.

[57] Publishing house officials could learn about writers' critical public statements about the Soviet Union only through the so-called "white TASS" (*belyi TASS*), a special newsletter prepared by the state central news agency that contained foreign press reports with sensitive information not suitable for official newspapers. Andrei Kofman in discussion with the author, January 2019.

Proposals often emphasized the social commentary of a given novel, particularly if it criticized the role of the United States in Latin America. It was also helpful to mention any depictions of the author's national folk culture, the lives of workers and peasants, the backwardness of the Catholic Church, and capitalist exploitation. By the late 1960s, proposal authors began to appeal to more abstract qualities, such as the struggle of good over evil, optimism, and humanism. It was also important to explicitly state that the novel in question was a work of realism, however broadly defined. As the revisionist voices in literary criticism entered the mainstream, proposals often successfully claimed that the modernist form of the new Latin American novel was an expression of the writer's folk culture and worldview and thus realist in nature. By the late 1960s, a common strategy was to appeal to the writer's literary prestige and importance for world literature.

Proposals could also anticipate any objections from the editorial council by identifying and justifying political or aesthetic weaknesses. Writers who had been categorized as modernists in the West required special treatment. The proposal would be obligated to include a refutation of Western critics and an assertion that the writer's work was in fact realist and progressive. Finally, proposals typically explained how the novel would appeal to readers. Depending on the nature of the novel in question, the proposal could claim that it would excite readers with an engaging plot, address their ethnographic interest in foreign cultures and customs, or illustrate contemporary political events.

The head editor of the editorial board held considerable sway over the decisions regarding individual proposals as well as the overall look of the thematic plan.[58] No less

[58] Valerii Stolbov was the head editor of the editorial board at the publishing house Khudozhestvennaia literatura until 1975. Several translators of the era credit him with attracting promising beginning translators during his tenure. Translators of Jewish background resented Iurii Dashkevich, the head editor for Latin American literature at the

importantly, he decided which translators would be hired for which projects. The intense competition between translators to secure coveted contracts created plenty of behind-the-scenes intrigues. On some occasions, a translator would appeal to an editor's superiors to get a translation included in the plan.[59] The head editor's wishes could be overruled, however, and the contents of the thematic plan were always subject to change. If a writer included in the plan suddenly denounced the Soviet Union, for example, the fate of the translation would be jeopardized.[60] In such cases, even though the manuscript was not printed, the translators were usually still fully compensated for their work as stated in their original contract.[61]

Developments in the publishing industry

The decisions made by editorial councils and editorial boards in determining the gestalt of Latin American literature in the Soviet Union were also impacted by a series of major reforms in the state-owned publishing industry beginning in the late 1950s. Since the 1920s, Soviet publishing houses had been officially self-sufficient to some degree, operating on *khozraschet*, meaning that publishing houses were given certain fixed responsibilities for the resources allocated to them under the planned economy.[62] In practice, however, many publishing houses operated at a loss,

journal *Inostrannaia literatura*, for his reported anti-Semitic discrimination. Margarita Bylinkina, *Vsego odin* vek (Moscow: Grifon, 2005), 355.

[59] Liudmila Sinianskaia recalls how in 1959, at the start of her career, she translated the novel *La Resaca* by the Spanish writer Juan Goytisolo, hoping to publish it in *Inostrannaia literatura*. Dashkevich rejected her proposal, claiming he would not publish any work written under Franco's regime. Sinianskaia gave her manuscript to Boris Rozentsveig, the head of the editorial board for modern literature at the journal, who praised her work and had it published the following year. Liudmila Sinianskaia, "Vo sne i naiavu sredi glyb," *Znamia* 3 (2003): 147.

[60] Andrei Kofman in discussion with the author, January 2019. This is precisely the problem faced by the protagonist of the classic late Soviet film *Osennii marafon* (*Autumn Marathon*, 1979): Andrei Buzykin, a translator, is forced to give up one of his translation projects due to a sudden change in the author's political views.

[61] Andrei Kofman in discussion with the author, January 2019. Walker, *Soviet Book Publishing Policy*, 57.

[62] Ibid., 12–13.

prompting the Communist Party to issue a series of decrees in 1959 that called for better financial management.[63]

During the 1960s, further changes were indicative of a shift in the party leadership mentality away from viewing readers as receivers of culture and focusing instead on readers as consumers of books as commodities. In 1964, a decree from the Council of Ministers "obliged publishers and book-trade organizations to bear half each of the losses incurred from books delivered to the book trade but not sold, thus for the first time giving Soviet publishers a serious material interest in the market's response to their product."[64] The commercial incentive became more pressing by 1971, when constraints on the paper supply prompted the state to impose new regulations that forced publishing houses to coordinate publishing plans with the printing and bookselling industries.[65] The planned nature of the publishing industry forced publishing house officials to confront the problem of forecasting huge editions of some books that sold poorly; other books highly valued by readers came out in small print runs. Another major change occurred in 1973, when the Soviet Union joined the Universal Copyright Convention, thus forcing publishing houses to commission and print translations of works published after that year only with the explicit permission of the author. Publishing houses were also obligated to pay royalties, which they had seldom done before, only upon the request of the author (who, in many cases, had just learned of the translation's existence).[66]

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[63] Stephen Lovell, *The Russian Reading Revolution: Print Culture in the Soviet and Post-Soviet Eras* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 45–46.

[64] Gregory P. M. Walker, "Soviet Publishing Since the October Revolution," in *Books in Russia and the Soviet Union: Past and Present*, ed. Miranda Beaven Remnek (Wiesbaden: Harassowitz, 1991), 75.

[65] Walker, *Soviet Book Publishing Policy*, 42, 53.

[66] Ibid., 118. For the writer Viktor Pelevin, 1973 was "the Rubicon that separated legal piracy from illegal piracy," as the new regulations limited what was realistically publishable. Viktor Pelevin, "Ikstlan – Petushki," in *Relics: rannee i neizdannoe* (Moscow: EKSMO, 2005), 285.

Translating Latin American texts

The head of the editorial board for Latin American literature would grant contracts to translators with the approval of senior officials at the publishing house. Translators were typically given around one year to submit their manuscripts. They were paid by the *avtorskii list* (author's sheet), "equal to 40,000 typographical units of text, including spaces between words but excluding contents lists, illustrations, and other matter for which the author is not responsible."[67] Upon submission to the publishing house, the manuscript would be subject to two anonymous internal reviews. These internal reviews were typically entrusted to editors, translators, and other specialists associated with the Latin American editorial board at the publishing house. Their purpose was to judge the quality of the translation in comparison with the original text and identify any deficiencies, including any material that could potentially run afoul of the censor. The managing editor assigned to the translation would provide these reviews to the translator, who had the opportunity to respond and could accept or reject the suggestions indicated in the internal review. The translator would then work together with the editor to produce the final version of the manuscript. In certain cases, the publishing house could also bring in an "external" editor to resolve difficult questions of a linguistic, aesthetic, or political nature.

Soviet theoretical writing on translation

From the start of Gorky's World Literature project in 1918, translators recognized the need to establish normative guidelines for beginning translators. At the same time, literary theorists strove to articulate a theoretical grounding for translation, investigating the notions of translatability and equivalence well before the beginnings of translation studies as a discipline in

[67] Walker, *Soviet Book Publishing Policy*, xi.

the West. While these two goals were united at first, they soon quickly diverged. This is evident in the book *Iskusstvo perevoda* (*The Art of Translation*, 1930), the most ambitious attempt to outline a united approach to translation theory. The first part of the book, written by the writer and translator Korney Chukovsky, consisted of practical advice based on examples of existing translations; the second part, written by the Formalist theorist Andrei Fedorov, was a scholarly text that adopted a systems-based approach to translation.[68]

Following the declaration of socialist realism as the official aesthetic ideology at the First Soviet Writers' Congress in 1934, Soviet critics and scholars attempted to articulate a unified socialist realist method of translation. This period has often been characterized as a struggle between the proponents of "literal" (*bukvalistskii*) and "free" (*vol'nyi)* translation.[69] The former trend was closely associated with the publishing house Academia, the successor to the World Literature publishing house founded by Gorky, which served as a refuge for Russian formalist critics whose work was criticized by the authorities. The translations published by Academia closely followed the form of the original, including foreign syntax, literal translations of foreign expressions, and many borrowed terms for foreign realia. This "literal" approach had begun during the heyday of the modernist Silver Age, when Russian writers and poets turned to translation with the goal of introducing new literary styles. The translations of the works of Charles Dickens by Evgeny Lann and Aleksandra Krivtsova were considered emblematic of Academia's "literalist" approach. In reaction to the amateurish nineteenth-century translations of

[68] See Brian James Baer, ed., *Fedorov's Introduction to Translation Theory*, translated by Brian James Baer with Ryan Green (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2021).

[69] The "free" and "literal" translation approaches articulated here roughly correspond to Venuti's distinction between "domesticating" and "foreignizing" translations, respectively. For more detailed discussion of literalism and free translation in the Soviet and post-Soviet contexts, see Alexandra Borisenko, "Fear of *Foreignization*: 'Soviet School' in Russian Literary Translation," in *Domestication and Foreignization in Translation Studies*, ed. Hannu Kemppannen, Marja Jänis, and Alexandra Belikova (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2012), 177–188.

Dickens by Irinarkh Vvedensky, Lann and Krivtsova attempted to make "exact" translations that maximally followed the form of the original, even to the extent of leaving many English words untranslated: the Russian equivalents for "pub" and "sausage" did not evoke the same associations as in a novel by Dickens.

The supporters of "free" translation believed that any translation must stand as a work of Russian literature, and preferred readability and natural, idiomatic language over the literalists' striving for word-for-word precision. They stressed the creative role of the translator in reproducing the foreign work in Russian, a task understood as similar to that of the writer of an original work. In Chukovsky's formulation, the literalist approach resulted in "imprecise precision": a literal translation can never be an artistic translation. By hewing too closely to the form of the original text and translating word-for-word, literal translations resulted in a distorted rendering of the work. The translator had to discern which qualities were necessary to reproduce in the translation in order to create the same effect as the original.[70] Furthermore, while the literalists produced scholarly editions of translations complete with commentary, supporters of free translation argued that translations had to be accessible to the average Soviet reader.

The debate between the two schools of thought took on new significance in the late Stalinist era, when the repressive Zhdanov doctrine made the search for an official, unified translation method more pressing. In the early 1950s, the translator Ivan Kashkin harshly criticized the literalist approach, denouncing it as a "formalist" aberration from socialist realism, and outlined his own "realist" method of translation that closely aligned with socialist realist aesthetics.[71] Kashkin argued that a work of literature reflected the writer's perception of

[70] Kornei Chukovskii, "Netochnaia tochnost'," *Literaturnaia gazeta* (September 12, 1963). Chukovsky later expanded this article into a central chapter of his book *Vysokoe iskusstvo*, which I discuss below.

[71] For a more detailed analysis of Kashkin's criticism and its context, see Azov, *Poverzhennye bukvalisty.*

objective reality. The translator's task was to discern that reality, look "beyond the words of the original," and reproduce it by expressing it in his own language.[72] However, in reproducing the author's vision of reality, the translator was also supposed to depict this reality in its revolutionary development. This was a radical proposal that effectively encouraged the translator to significantly manipulate the original in order to serve the needs of the target audience. Any artefacts of reactionary ideology could be excised or paraphrased. Kashkin advised that translators

> should first of all strive to convey to our readers everything that is progressive [in the work being translated], all that is living and timely for the present. They should preserve whatever can be retained without impeding full, clear, and correct understanding of the thought and imagery of the original. This should be accomplished without undue burdening of the text with unnecessary detail that is characteristic only of the alien linguistic structure and sometimes should not be translated at all.[73]

Kashkin's approach can be characterized as "domesticating" to the extreme. The cognitive dissonance here is obvious. As Maurice Friedberg points out, "Translation after all, is not an entirely *independent* art; its final achievement is not wholly original. Creating socialist realist writing is one thing; *superimposing* it on the work of another author—and a 'bourgeois' one at that—is a rather different matter."[74] Kashkin's translation criticism did not amount to an actual normative theory or method. In his own wording, these were merely working terms for what he considered the best practices in translation. Nevertheless, by invoking socialist realism, he entangled all discussions of how to translate in larger ideological questions and effectively silenced any potential critics.

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[72] Ivan Kashkin, "V bor'be za realisticheskii perevod," In *Voprosy khudozhestvennogo perevoda*, ed. V. Rossel's (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1955), 126.

[73] Idem, "O metode i shkole sovetskogo khudozhestvennogo perevoda" [1954], *Dlia chitatelia-sovremennika*, ed. V. P. Balashov (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1977), 442; cf. Friedberg, *Literary Translation in Russia*, 104.

[74] Friedberg, *Literary Translation in Russia*, 103.

Beginning in the late 1950s, theorists of translation attempted to refine Kashkin's ideas and articulate a systematic approach to "realist" translation in such new venues as the journal *Masterstvo perevoda.* One of the most notable examples of this was put forward by Givi Gachechiladze, who subtly modified Kashkin's notion of the translator's task of reflecting "reality." Whereas Kashkin had argued that the translator's task was to reproduce objective reality as it was reflected in the original literary work, Gachechiladze took "reality" to mean the original literary work itself. A realist translation, then, was a creative act of the translator that best reflected the essence of the original work. He stated that translations could be either literally precise but artistically inadequate (word-for-word) or artistically adequate but not literally precise (sense-for-sense). No translation could accomplish both types of equivalence. He proposed realist translation as a "dialectical" solution to the conundrum: the translator should find which elements of the original must be transmitted in the translation.[75]

Such theoretical discussions of methods of literary translation were largely confined to specialized journals. The prejudices inherent in Kashkin's writings—free translations that "domesticated" the original work for the literary tastes, language, and worldview of the average Soviet reader—became the mainstream perspective.[76] It is important to note that the preference for "free" translation was shared by many translators who were not concerned with the ideological sanctity of their approach. Some writers, such as Boris Pasternak, valued free translation because it allowed them more artistic freedom during an era in which they could not publish their own original works.[77]

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[75] Givi Gachechiladze, "Realisticheskii perevod i zadachi ego teorii," *Masterstvo perevoda* 4 (1964): 241–251.

[76] One notable "dissident" in this context was Mikhail Gasparov, who argued in favor of the legitimacy of literalist translation, noting that different types of translations can serve different audiences and purposes. M. L. Gasparov, "Briusov i bukvalizm. (Po neizdannym materialam k perevody *Eneidy*)," *Masterstvo perevoda* 8 (1971): 88–128.

[77] Friedberg, *Literary Translation in Russia*, 105.

The translation norms of the "Soviet school"

During the Thaw, the question of how to translate took on new significance and urgency. The sudden flood of translations that began hitting the shelves of Soviet bookstores and libraries in the late 1950s coincided with a new and highly public debate on language. Stalin's death had prompted writers such as Vladimir Pomerantsev to raise the issue of sincerity in Soviet literature. As the decade continued, public discourse became increasingly fixated on the question of the "power and powerlessness of words," reanimating language with authenticity.[78] As in other areas of culture during the momentous changes of the Thaw, this concern for the purity of the Russian language aligned with state leaders' agenda to revitalize official ideology with new significance.

One of the most prominent voices in this debate was Korney Chukovsky, who diagnosed the "diseases" that had infected the Russian language. The worst of these he termed *kantseliarit* ("officialitis," a name for a disease that resembles "meningitis" or "bronchitis" in Russian), the abstract, stultified official language that had spread into everyday usage. Chukovsky lamented that the widespread use of clichéd bureaucratic formulas and colorless, overly wordy expressions had sucked the life out of the living Russian language. Furthermore, he claimed that the lack of clarity obscured reactionary thoughts.[79] Chukovsky's concerns about the sanctity of the literary language resounded in his translation criticism, which had become massively influential. In 1964, he expanded his early guidelines for beginning translators written in the pre-war era into the book *Vysokoe iskusstvo* [*A Lofty Art*], which was published in two more editions by the end of the decade. The eminent translator Nora Gal' helped further popularize Chukovsky's views in

[78] For more on these language debates, see Gilburd, *To See Paris and Die*, 103–157, and Denis Kozlov, *The Readers of Novyi Mir: Coming to Terms with the Stalinist Past* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 65–67.

[79] Kornei Chukovskii, "Kantseliarit," *Literaturnaia gazeta* (September 9 and 16, 1961). Chukovsky expanded this idea in his book *Zhivoi kak zhizn'. O russkom iazyke* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1962).

her 1972 book *Slovo zhivoe i mertvoe* [*The Living Word and the Dead Word*], which proclaimed that *kantseliarit* was an epidemic afflicting translators as well.

In her book, Gal' warned translators about the pitfalls of working closely with foreign texts. It was all too easy to lose one's ear for the Russian language and simply produce a dead copy of the original. Gal' considered translation an art that required no less creativity than the act of writing an original work: skilled translators had to have a strong command of and love for their native language. Bad translators fall under the sway of the original, failing to wrest control of their medium. Striving for precision, they unwittingly transgress the stylistic standards of Russian literature. They copy the original's foreign syntax, resulting in awkward macaronic calques.[80] They prefer introducing foreign expressions where a common Russian idiom would suffice. An abundance of auxiliary verbs, participles, and gerunds translated literally from foreign languages smacks of that dreaded *kantseliarit*, rendering the translation lifeless. Free translation, Gal' concludes, is the only means of creating a living reproduction of the original.

Free translation became synonymous with good style and competence, while "literalism" became a dirty word, an accusation of hackwork that retained its ideological undertones. However, while Soviet translators frequently stated their preference for creative, "free" translations, they could also be criticized for departing too far from the text and inserting their own content (known as *otsebiatina*).[81] Gal''s guidelines for translators reflect many of the norms of the "Soviet school" of translation that flourished in the late Soviet era. These norms were

[80] A famous example of this can be found in the film *Autumn Marathon*: an incompetent translator produces the infamous line "koza krichala nechelovecheskim golosom" ("the goat screamed in an inhuman voice").

[81] In contrast to Gal''s insistence on the creative role of the translator, Brian James Baer has argued that the proscriptions against both literalism and *otsebiatina* during the Stalin era served the same goal of "de-individualizing authorship," and that the practice of free translation was in fact "highly constrained." Brian James Baer, *Translation and the Making of Modern Russian Literature* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016), 130.

reinforced in the editorial offices of publishing houses, in university courses on literary translation, and in informal translation seminars.[82]

Library days and native informants: translating Latin American literature

Translators of Latin American literature adopted these norms as well. At the publishing house Khudozhestvennaia literatura, the translators and editors working for the Latin American editorial board regularly took special days off ("library days") to research the cultures and literatures they specialized in and maintain their foreign language proficiency.[83] For Liliana Brevern, a translator of Portuguese and Brazilian literature, these "library days" were an opportunity to brush up on her native Russian as well.[84] Nikolai Liubimov, the famous translator of *Don Quixote*, advised his colleagues to constantly read the nineteenth-century classics of Russian literature, "with pencil in hand," in order to expand their vocabulary and develop their creativity.[85] As was the case with Soviet translators at large, translators specializing in Latin American literature saw their task as equal to that of the original writer. In internal reviews of translation manuscripts, the highest praise that a translator could receive was if a reviewer claimed that he or she forgot the text was a translation and not an original work. The internal reviews of Nina Butyrina and Valerii Stolbov's translation of Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* praised not so much the linguistic accuracy of the translation, but

[82] For more on translation seminars, see Kamovnikova, *Made Under Pressure*, 90–106.

[83] The "bibliotechnyi den'" was a "fixed day when an employee is given time off in order to work on an individual project, usually once or twice a month. The practice was introduced under Khrushchev." Irina H. Corten, *Vocabulary of Soviet Society and Culture: A Selected Guide to Russian Words, Idioms, and Expressions of the Post-Stalin Era, 1953–1991* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992), 28.

[84] Liliana Brevern, *Sud'ba, sud'boiu, o sud'be…* (Moscow: Tsentr knigi Rudomino, 2014), 208.

[85] Friedberg, *Literary Translation in Russia*, 160.

rather its originality and the creativity of its authors. In his review, Nikolai Tomashevskii wrote that "reading the Russian text of the novel, you forget that you are reading a translation. […] One thinks that this sense of the linguistic originality, the 'non-translatedness' [*neperevodnost'*] of the text is the best evaluation of Butyrina and Stolbov's work."[86] Nikolai Liubimov similarly approved of the creative approach of the translators, which he deemed "artistically precise and on the whole having nothing in common with literalism."[87]

Reviewers' comments on the accuracy of the translations under review frequently echoed the guidelines that Chukovsky and Gal' suggested in their criticism. They would regularly point out foreign calques that had found their way into the translation. Liubimov's review suggested that certain calques in the Russian translation of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* unnecessarily preserved the structure of the author's original Spanish. In one scene in the novel, the character Melquíades "suffered a crisis of bad mood" [sufrió una crisis de mal humor]. Stolbov and Butyrina first translated this rather literally, creating an awkward calque: "u nego nachalsia pristup durnogo nastroeniia" [he started having a bout of bad mood]. Liubimov suggested replacing the nouns with verbs to express emotion instead: "on zatoskoval, vpal v unynie, v apatiiu" [he became sad, he fell into melancholy, into apathy].[88]

Reviewers also sought to find the right Russian equivalents when translating idiomatic phrases. In Julio Cortázar's short story "Las ménades" ("The Maenads"), a maestro conductor whips his audience of female admirers into a hysterical frenzy. Before the concert, the narrator meets two adoring young fans whose chatter he compares to the cackling of hens. One of the

[86] N. Tomashevskii review of *Sto let odinochestva*, RGALI f. 613, op. 10, ed. khr. 5324, l. 8.

[87] N. Liubimov review of *Sto let odinochestva*, RGALI f. 613, op. 10, ed. khr. 5324, l. 22.

[88] RGALI f. 613, op. 10, ed. khr. 5324, l. 22. Nora Gal' specifically warned translators about translating expressions of emotion: in Russian, verbs commonly describe emotional states whereas other languages use adjectives or nouns.

girls says that the maestro's music gave them goosebumps ("se le ponían carne de gallina"), prompting the narrator to ironically remark that his impression had proved quite literal. The translator of the story, Ella Braginskaia, used a common Russian expression that means "to have goosebumps": "zabegali murashki" (literally, "ants started running [on one's skin]"). The reviewer for the translation, N. Poliak, noted that Braginskaia's translation was idiomatic, but missed the necessary association. She proposed an alternative expression for "goosebumps" that could perhaps accomplish both goals: "gusinaia kozha" (literally "goose skin").[89]

Despite all they may have had in common with Soviet translation practice in general, translators working on Latin American literature faced certain specific challenges. Before the revolutionary Cuban government strengthened ties with the Soviet Union, very few specialists working on Latin American literature had ever actually traveled to the region. At the start of the Thaw, even expert knowledge in any sense was hard to come by: the lack of up-to-date reference literature and dictionaries was a major obstacle. While this situation improved over the course of the 1960s as cultural exchanges with Latin America became more common, translators sometimes had to rely on foreign guests as native informants. Translators frequently faced this issue with writers associated with the regionalist trend in Latin American literature. The novels of Jorge Amado, one of the most widely translated Latin American writers of the era, frequently troubled translators with their evocative depictions of the culture of his home state of Bahia. When translating his novel *Jubiabá*, full of rich descriptions of the Afro-Brazilian folk religion Candomblé, the translator Elena Golubeva found herself puzzled by the foreign terms and realia. In one passage in the novel, the main character, Antônio Balduíno, wins a sum of money playing *jacaré* [alligator]. Amado was referring to Antônio's lucky win in the illegal lottery game *jogo*

[89] RGALI f. 613, op. 10, ed. khr. 5347, l. 37.

do bicho [the game of the animals]. While this popular cultural subtext would have been familiar to any Brazilian reader, it was totally obscure to Golubeva. Finding no answer in any of the dictionaries on hand, she consulted the German translation of the novel, also to no avail. She desperately wrote to her editor for help, asking about the possibility of consulting a specialist at the Brazilian embassy, or if they were lucky, perhaps a visitor from Bahia happened to be in Moscow.[90]

In some cases, the publishing house would employ a native Spanish speaker as a co-translator to aid in the task. Two of these translators, Juan Cobo and Dionisio García, had been evacuated to the Soviet Union as refugees from the Spanish Civil War when they were children.[91] García collaborated on translations of some of the most important works of the Latin American "boom," such as Mario Vargas Llosa's novel *La ciudad y los perros* (known in English as *The Time of the Hero*), which he co-translated with Natal'ia Trauberg.

When translating Miguel Ángel Asturias's novel *El Papa verde* (*The Green Pope*), Margarita Bylinkina had to grapple with a detailed description of a baseball game played by Boby Thompson [sic], the grandson of the eponymous banana magnate. Asturias infused his description of the game with the English names for elements of the sport—catcher, pitcher, fielders, bats—to evoke the foreignness of the American game at the turn of the twentieth century. Apparently mistaking the game for a soccer match, Bylinkina translated "catcher" as "vratar'" [goalkeeper] and "base" as "vorota" [goal]; she mistook Asturias's mention of a baseball diamond to mean the most successful club, nicknamed the "diamond" team. The

[90] RGALI, f. 613, op. 10, ed. khr. 5294, l. 22. It appears that she did not find an answer in time: in the published translation, she simply leaves out the game's name.

[91] Dionisio Garsia Sapiko, *Vospominaniia. Zhizn' ispantsa v Rossii* (Nizhnii Novgorod: Vertikal'. XXI vek, 2012). For more on these refugees, the *deti voiny* (children of the war), see Karl D. Qualls, *Stalin's Niños: Educating Spanish Civil War Refugee Children in the Soviet Union, 1937–1951* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020).

reviewer, Ivan Likhachev, an experienced translator who was very familiar with Anglo-American literature, immediately recognized the mistake: "In reality the passage is about the English 'diamond,' a technical term to signify the baseball field. M. Bylinkina is apparently unfamiliar with both the essence of this game as well as its terminology." Likhachev suggested she consult the detailed depiction of the sport in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* as well as a baseball guidebook with instructions in Russian issued for the Red Army at the end of World War II.[92]

Latin American writers' evocations of culture and life in the United States often proved no less challenging to translators. They were important to get right, as such references were commonplace in illustrating writers' criticisms of US imperialism in their home countries. The most well-known example is surely to be found in Pablo Neruda's poem "La United Fruit Co.," which begins with God dividing the world between corporations—Coca-Cola, Anaconda Copper, and Ford Motors—giving Latin America to the eponymous banana conglomerate. While the abundance of US imports in Latin American literature often served this political goal, it sometimes signaled instead the cosmopolitan sensibility of the author. References to Hollywood stars and rock musicians could prove inscrutable, as they seldom appeared in any reference literature, and insider knowledge was often lacking. Julio Cortázar's story "El perseguidor" ["The Pursuer"], about the experiences of a bohemian saxophone virtuoso modeled on Charlie Parker, contains many references to contemporary jazz standards. Margarita Bylinkina translated the title of Lionel Hampton's song "Save It, Pretty Mama" as "Beregis', dorogaia mama" ["Take care, dear mama"] in the first edition of the translation for the journal *Inostrannaia literatura*.[93]

[92] RGALI, f. 613, op. 9, ed. khr. 1649, l. 21.

[93] Khulio Kortasar, "Presledovatel'," trans. M. Bylinkina, *Inostrannaia literatura* 1 (1970): 14.

When the publisher Khudozhestvennaia literatura decided to publish a book of Cortázar's stories, the internal reviewer for the story, N. Poliak, objected to Bylinkina's rendering of the song title: "It is unlikely that the name of the song 'Save It, Pretty Mamma' [sic] really means 'take care, dear mama.' *Save* means 'redeem' [*spasi*], 'preserve' [*sokhrani*]. *Mamma* (with a capital letter) is rather the Mother of God. It is possible this is some Negro hymn, such as 'Redeem us, dear Holy Mother' [*Spasi nas, milaia mater'*]."[94]

The red pencil: (self-)censorship and translation

Various stages in the translation and publication processes can be understood as sites of censorship. The traditional conception of censorship on the textual level via excisions and abridgments was merely one type of ideological manipulation. The selection of texts and the establishment of the thematic plan—the the first stage in the process—comprised merely one instance of censorship, alongside the translations of the texts themselves, the lengthy review process, and the presentation of texts in paratextual criticism.[95] Like all publications in the Soviet Union, literary translations had to comply with the official censorship standards established and enforced by the state censorship agency, Glavlit.[96] In theory, Glavlit had the ability to censor all publications in the country according to a list of restrictions known informally as the "Talmud."[97] The majority of the rules in the "Talmud" were intended to protect state secrets.

[94] RGALI f. 613, op. 10, ed. khr. 5347, l. 41.

[95] Maurice Friedberg identifies four main censorship strategies used with regard to Soviet translations: 1) refusal to translate or publish; 2) concealed, minor "cosmetic" changes; 3) overt censorship via abridgments; 4) temporary bans and withdrawals or retroactive eradication. See his *A Decade of Euphoria*.

[96] Glavlit was an abbreviation of Glavnoe upravlenie po delam literatury i izdatel'stv (The Main Administration for Affairs of Literature and Publishing Houses). The agency changed its names many time after its establishment in 1922, but the abbreviation remained the same.

Censors closely monitored translations of foreign literature during the Stalin era out of concern for potentially harmful anti-Soviet ideology. They could intervene in the publication of translations at an early stage to identify any objectionable content.

Glavlit's role in the censorship of foreign literature changed significantly during the Thaw. In the mid-1950s, the Central Committee issued decrees that called for a renovation of the censorship system and diminished Glavlit's authority by placing it under the control of the Ministry of Culture. Publishing houses and editorial boards gradually assumed more of the responsibility for censoring publications that was previously held by Glavlit. Over the next two decades, the Central Committee further curtailed Glavlit's role and shifted the burden of enforcing censorship restrictions virtually exclusively onto the editors and translators themselves. In much of the post-Stalin era, Glavlit did not censor manuscripts directly unless a publishing house specifically requested its assistance; it only reviewed works at the very last stage of the publishing process.[98] In her study of censorship of translations that were published in the journal *Inostrannaia literatura*, Samantha Sherry characterizes this shift in censorship as "a subtler, inclusion-oriented approach that sought to 'trim' texts to exclude the most unacceptable material, a tactic that demonstrated a keen editorial knowledge of the limits of acceptability."[99]

This decline in Glavlit's prestige and power was accompanied by an increase in the authority of editors and editorial boards. In the words of Arlen Blum, the decrease in external censorship was not a sign of the liberalization of society after Stalin—rather, censorship had

[97] This list was officially called *Perechen' svedenii, sostavliaushchikh gosudarstvennuiu tainu* (The List of Information Comprising State Secrets).

[98] Walker, *Soviet Book Publishing Policy*, 66. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Glavlit only reviewed the paratexts for translations slated for publication and did not examine the text of the translation itself. See the comments by Georgii Andzhaparidze, the former director of Khudozhestvennaia literatura, in T. V. Gromova, *Tsenzura v tsarskoi Rossii i Sovetskom Soiuze. Materialy konferentsii 24–27 maia 1993 g.* (Moscow: Rudomino, 1995), 35.

[99] Sherry, *Discourses of Regulation and Resistance*, 133.

"won," as the ideologized norms of literary production now had to become internalized; translators and editors had to censor their own work, anticipating what was permissible and what was not.[100] Commentary on the editor's task at the time framed it as "collective" work: the editor was the writer's "demanding and good-willed associate, a helper, an ally" who helped improve the final product.[101] Many translators fondly recall their collaboration with editors, whose careful and attentive work was sorely missed following the collapse of the Soviet publishing industry after 1991. On the other hand, some translators saw them as the "enemy"; in the absence of Glavlit's oversight, the editor effectively acted as the translator's personal censor.[102]

In his articles promoting "realist" translation, Ivan Kashkin wrote that it was the translator's responsibility to decide which elements of the source text needed to be reproduced in translation in order to depict reality in its revolutionary development. While Kashkin's method was not widely followed, his explicit call for translators to act as censors under the banner of "free" translation became standard practice during the flourishing of the "Soviet school" of translation. Censorship of the text was often inseparable from the act of reproducing the "reality" of the original text. In the post-Stalin era, censorship of translated texts generally concerned three types of objectionable content.[103] The most important of these were politically-sensitive topics, such as depictions of the Soviet Union or its leaders. The other two categories—profanity and

[100] See Arlen Blium's discussion throughout his book *Kak eto delalos' v Leningrade: Tsenzura v gody ottepeli, zastoia i perestroiki 1953–1991* (St. Petersburg: Akademicheskii proekt, 2005).

[101] M. Vaksmakher, "Na strazhe dvukh bogatstv. Zametki i (sovsem nemnogo) redaktora," in *Redaktor i perevod: Sbornik statei*, ed. E. B. Kuz'mina (Moscow: Kniga, 1965), 23.

[102] Sherry, *Discourses of Regulation and Resistance*, 57.

[103] Herman Ermolaev identifies two main categories of censorship in texts published in the Soviet Union: "puritanical" (relating to "curses and obscenities," "eroticism," and "naturalistic details" etc.) and political (concerning attitudes toward the Soviet Union, its policies, and its leaders). Herman Ermolaev, *Censorship in Soviet Literature 1917–1991* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997), ix–xii. Sherry expands this list to include "ideological" censorship, focusing on individual "ideologemes" (such as the words "revolution" or "party"). Sherry, *Discourses of Regulation and Resistance*, 8.

excessively frank portrayals of sex—were less overtly politically motivated. Translators considered such changes necessary due to the cultural context: in their view, the stylistic norms of standard literary Russian and the expectations of the Soviet public could not accommodate such overly blunt language and open eroticism. Censoring such passages was thus an artistic choice, making it impossible to determine whether some individual censorial interventions were motivated by concern for official demands.[104]

In the case of Latin American literature, the explicit erotic scenes that permeated the works of some of the most prominent authors such as Jorge Amado and Gabriel García Márquez posed significant challenges. Aleksandr Bogdanovskii, one of Amado's Russian translators, recalls the double bind he and his colleagues experienced: "It was an important issue: how to convey obscenity, erotica and pornography. In the Russian language it is totally unclear how to find resources for this, because you get either textbook anatomy or profanity and coarse vulgarity. There is no middle ground."[105] Nevertheless, he argues that these limitations were productive, as they pushed the translator to find a means of expressing all that needed to be said while still following the rules.

Translators used three general techniques in dealing with controversial or objectionable content. They could paraphrase a passage to retain the general sense of the original. For specific words that proved problematic, they could use euphemisms. If there was no other way around the issue, they would simply excise the passage from the translation.[106] In some cases, entire paragraphs or even storylines from the source text would be missing from the translation.

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[104] Sherry, *Discourses of Regulation and Resistance*, 59.

[105] "Aleksandr Bogdanovskii: 'Chem sil'nee na tebia daviat, tem luchshe delaesh' svoe delo.'" *Moskva 24* (July 16, 2015). https://www.m24.ru/articles/literatura/16072015/78908.

[106] For more on these techniques, see Sherry, *Discourses of Regulation and Resistance*.

Journals that published translations would often abridge them (sometimes with no notice to the reader of the fact) and publish them as a so-called "journal variant" in order to leave out sections that proved too troublesome to translate.[107]

Many retrospective accounts by translators emphasize that self-censorship was a necessary evil in order to guarantee publication. Samantha Sherry has argued that translators thus "occupied a difficult position between the source and target cultures and between official institutions and literary production."[108] Internalizing the censorship norms and anticipating what their superiors could find objectionable was an important part of translators' professionalization. Margarita Bylinkina proudly recalls mastering the editorial craft in order to "'force' a book into print and pass through the barricades" of the publishing house authorities.[109]

Contextualizing Latin America: presenting texts to readers

In the post-Stalin era, the cultural authorities sought to mediate readers' reception of foreign literature in translation through official literary criticism. The American Slavist Carl Proffer identified a pattern in introducing a new foreign writer's work into the Soviet literary environment during the 1960s: "(1) an article in *The Literary Gazette* [*Literaturnaia gazeta*], (2) a longer, serious, survey in *Questions of Literature* [*Voprosy literatury*], (3) translation in

[107] Some Latin American writers complained publicly about Soviet censorship. Mario Vargas Llosa claimed that the publishing house Molodaia gvardiia cut forty pages from the Russian translation of his debut novel *La ciudad y los perros*. The director of the publishing house explained to him that if they hadn't taken out these scenes, "young married couples would feel such embarrassment after reading them that they wouldn't be able to look each other in the face." When he asked how she could know this, she assured him that all of the publisher's editorial advisors had doctorates in literature. Mario Vargas Llosa, "Nuevas inquisiciones (Piedra de toque)," *El País* (March 17, 2018). Vargas Llosa's exaggerated claims were typical of his generation. See, for example, Carlos Fuentes's comments on the translation of *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* in Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

[108] Ibid., 58.

[109] Bylinkina, *Vsego odin vek*, 222.

Foreign Literature [*Inostrannaia literatura*] or book form."[110] The articles that preceded the publication of the translation itself introduced the writer and his or her work to the reading public. Translations of longer works in book form were virtually always published with a critical article, usually in the form of a foreword, that further contextualized the work for Soviet readers.

I use the term "paratext" to denote the individual critical interventions that accompanied officially published translations and comprised a vital component of their reception in the Soviet Union. In his seminal study on the subject, Gérard Genette conceived of paratexts as "thresholds of interpretation" that consist of two parts: a "peritext," which includes the titles, notes, and prefaces that accompany the physical book, as well as an "epitext," which includes materials that exist beyond the book itself, such as reviews, announcements, and interviews with the author.[111] Critics have noted that Genette's focus on the role of the author in shaping the paratext limits the effectiveness of his analysis in the context of literary translation.[112]

This is especially important to consider in the case of Soviet translation paratexts, which served multiple, sometimes contradictory purposes.[113] The sudden increase in published literary translations during the Thaw prompted the cultural authorities to take measures to regulate their

[110] Carl R. Proffer, ed. *Soviet Criticism of American Literature in the Sixties: An Anthology* (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1972), xxiii.

[111] Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* [originally published as *Seuils*, 1987], translated by Jane E. Lewin (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 5.

[112] Kathryn Batchelor revised Genette's definition to better fit discussions about literary translation: a paratext is "a consciously crafted threshold for a text which has the potential to influence the way(s) in which the text is received." Kathryn Batchelor, *Translation and Paratexts* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), 142.

[113] Scholars have increasingly begun to write on various aspects of Soviet translation, but with very few exceptions, they largely ignore the ways works were contextualized through critical paratexts. Notable exceptions include two studies of the paratexts used to "package" foreign literature in *Inostrannaia literatura* by Brian James Baer and Tatiana Chulanova as well as Ilaria Sicari's analysis of the role of paratexts in the publication of postmodern writers such as Italo Calvino. Ilaria Sicari, "(Re)Defining a Literary Genre: How Italo Calvino's Postmodern (Hyper)Novels became 'Philosophical Allegories' in the USSR," *Ulbandus Review* 17 (2016): 42–61; idem, "Paratext as Weapon."; Tatiana Chulanova, "The Politics of Paratexts: Framing Translations in the Soviet Journal *Inostrannaia literatura*," (PhD diss., Kent State University), 2020.

quality and ideological content. Paratexts were the most important means of shaping the reception of foreign texts that were published in official venues. They imposed an interpretation of the work in question that made it appear to align with the state's official ideology. In doing so, they would also discourage alternate, potentially subversive interpretations. In this sense, translation criticism can be understood alongside text selection and "free" translation as censorial techniques that "domesticated" foreign literature for Soviet readers.

During the Thaw, the Central Committee regularly issued decrees that urged publishing houses to maintain greater control over the quality of translation paratexts, expressing concern over the risk of readers' improper understanding of foreign literature.[114] Guidebooks for editors from the 1950s through the 1980s echoed these concerns in continual complaints about poorly written, perfunctory, and formulaic forewords that would sooner deter readers than edify them.[115] The changes in the ideological climate did encourage new approaches to writing forewords: one critic could even speak of "earning the trust of the reader," who had learned to ignore them after decades of the cult of personality.[116]

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[114] For example, in April 1958, the Ideological Commission of the Central Committee issued the decree [postanovlenie] "On the elimination of defects in the publishing and reviewing of foreign literature," which called for critical paratexts to accompany translations of works by authors from foreign countries: "Central and local publishing houses do not always help readers understand complex literary phenomena, releasing books by authors from capitalist countries without critical forewords and commentaries. [...] Criticism weakly discusses the growth and consolidation of progressive world literature and poorly acquaints readers with the work of leading foreign writers. Furthermore, certain Soviet critics praise the works of foreign writers and do not provide a comprehensive critical evaluation of their work, resulting in the incorrect orientation of readers." Cited in Afanas'eva et al., eds. *Ideologicheskie komissii TsK KPSS*, 45–46.

[115] These complaints persisted well into the late Soviet era. See, for example, Tiapkin's commentary on forewords in his 1977 guidebook on editing practices: "Forewords are either trivial, bereft of originality, or they are missing completely, or their contents reminds one of an introduction or introductory article, although, for example, the introduction is a part of the main text, while the foreword is a part of the apparatus." B. G. Tiapkin, *Apparat proizvedeniia pechati. Metodika vybora, podgotovka i redaktsionnaia obrabotka* (Moscow: Kniga, 1977), 46.

[116] Iurii Kagarlitskii, "O predisloviiakh," in *Redaktor i perevod*, 121. Nevertheless, in popular culture, forewords were to be ignored and their authors were considered marginal figures. The hapless Khobotov, one of the protagonists of the film *Pokrovskie vorota* [The Pokrovsky Gate, 1982], based on a play by Leonid Zorin, is a failed writer who is resigned to writing and editing forewords.

In practice, however, the foreword was not only a reader-oriented genre. From the perspective of the translators and editors who wrote these paratexts, they were a means of the making the case for publishing a given work and justifying its inclusion in the canon of translated literature. Translators and editors mediated between official ideological demands and their own personal motivations in devising creative interpretations of ideologically ambiguous (or even subversive) foreign texts in order to secure their passage into print. Over the course of the 1960s, writing translation forewords increasingly became a creative exercise in rhetorical ingenuity—the foreword had to use official ideological discourse to justify accommodating foreign material that was often directly at odds with the official aesthetic norms. The reigning logic was that the work *ought to* be published; the only question was *how*. The writer of the foreword had to be acutely aware of what would be permitted and subtly attuned to how to bend the rules of the game. For many, such as the Americanist and literary critic Raisa Orlova, writing forewords was a necessary evil that guaranteed an "entry permit" for the foreign writer's work to be published; it was one of the many compromises that served as "self-preservation ritual," allowing translators and critics to maintain their cultural niche within the official system.[117]

Scholars focusing on late Soviet culture have argued that the creative use of authoritative rhetoric to accommodate and introduce material originating from outside official discourse was largely a performative exercise. Anne O. Fisher has characterized this quality of forewords as mere "window-dressing" that did more to index official approval than offer a compelling justification for the work, claiming that the argument for the value of a given work was largely

[117] Raisa Orlova and Lev Kopelev. *My zhili v Moskve. 1956–1980* (Moscow: Kniga, 1990), 134; Orlova "Istoriia odnogo poslesloviia," *SSSR. Vnutrennie protivorechiia* 13 (1985): 127.

predictable.[118] Writing in a different context, Alexei Yurchak has emphasized the "performative dimension" of late Soviet life, in which the use of "authoritative discourse" became ritualized, emphasizing form over content.[119] However, as Caroline Humphrey has suggested regarding the composition of other official ideological texts, such authoritative discourse "was not a smooth homogenous entity, but had a restless and discordant character, such that even the agreed final product was the result of counteraction and disagreement."[120] This was certainly the case in translations of Latin American literature. Following the Cuban Revolution, Soviet specialists recognized the need for critical paratexts in order to help readers "understand the contents of this literature which is so unusual for him, acquaint him with its specific uniqueness."[121] As Latin American literature grew in prestige during the 1960s and 70s, prospective writers of forewords sometimes fiercely competed for contracts, leading to behind-the-scenes intrigues.[122]

Paratextual strategies

Translation forewords were ostensibly short critical essays aimed at educating the mass reader. In practice, however, and much like the original proposal for the translation, they were also

[118] Anne O. Fisher, "Adapting Paratextual Theory to the Soviet Context: Publishing Practices and the Readers of Il'f and Petrov's Ostap Bender Novels," in *The Space of the Book: Print Culture in the Russian Social Imagination*, ed. Miranda Remnek (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 257.

[119] Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More,* 76.

[120] Humphrey also helpfully proposes including "various genres, drafts, verbal asides, etc." in her conception of Soviet official discourse. Caroline Humphrey, "The 'Creative Bureaucrat': Conflicts in the Production of Soviet Communist Party Discourse," *Inner Asia* 10 (2008), 29.

[121] Ospovat, *Govorit Latinskaia Amerika*, 46.

[122] One such example of this can be found in the publication history of a translated volume of prose by the Peruvian writer Ciro Alegría, published by Khudozhestvennaia literatura in 1970. The scholar D. Faktorovich submitted a foreword for the volume to the publishing house, where it was handed to Iakov Svet for an internal review. Svet harshly criticized Faktorovich's foreword in his review, and in a separate letter to the head of the editorial board, he suggested that he be given the contract to write the foreword instead. F. 613, op. 10, ed. khr. 5287, l. 84–85.

persuasive texts designed to secure approval from the publishing house leadership and guarantee publication. In most cases, it was the only element of a given book translation project that the publishing house leadership and the censors at Glavlit examined in the approval process. Forewords thus had to convincingly argue for the ideological and aesthetic appropriateness of the text and author in question. Each work and author required a unique approach to strike the balance between properly orienting the mass reader and securing approval from the publishing house. The editorial board carefully selected critics whose expertise and official standing would be most appropriate for the task.[123] Once it was submitted to the editorial board, the foreword would be carefully examined, reviewed, edited, and in some cases, rewritten.

The first task of the foreword was to introduce the writer and provide a short biographical sketch that emphasized his or her political pedigree. This was rather straightforward in the case of Latin American writers in official favor, such as Lenin Peace Prize laureates and avowed communists. Previously untranslated writers required more careful treatment, especially if their works had been appraised negatively in official criticism. With varying degrees of inventiveness, foreword writers would craft a narrative account of the author's life that asserted a trajectory toward correct political consciousness. The wider geopolitical context of Latin America in the Cold War provided a convenient subtext that allowed forewords to claim that previously apolitical or "decadent" writers were now reformed and politically engaged.

In some cases, the opposite was true. Following the revelation of the extent of Stalinist repression in 1956, Jorge Amado ceased writing in a socialist realist mode. His next novel, *Gabriela, cravo e canela* (*Gabriela, Clove and Cinnamon*, 1958), signaled his retreat from leftist

[123] On some occasions, instead of giving this task to critics or editors, the editorial board would have well-known cultural or political figures write forewords for translations that were expected to seem controversial to the authorities. See Kamovnikova, *Made Under Pressure*, 190–191.

political commitment in favor of a new preoccupation with sensuality and humor: instead of depicting the struggles of the working classes, the novel promoted racial intermingling and free love as a proxy solution for the problems in Brazilian society. When the book finally appeared in Iurii Kalugin's Russian translation in 1961, the accompanying foreword asserted a rhetoric of continuity: Amado's new sensibility was simply another reflex of his commitment to social critique, a satire on provincial Brazilian bourgeois morality.[124]

Translation forewords discussed the work in question in terms that made it appear to align with the standards applied to Soviet literature. Ilaria Sicari's assessment of Soviet paratexts based on translations of Italo Calvino and Kurt Vonnegut applies to the paratexts that accompanied translations of Latin American literature as well: "the fate of a work was often entrusted to the critics' ability to gloss. If they were able to […] domesticate the aesthetic and ideological 'anomalies' of the foreign work—congruent with the exigencies imposed by the Soviet cultural field—it had some chance of reaching the Soviet reader." The fact that certain works did not make it into print "can be attributed precisely to the impossibility of creating politically oriented interpretations that were able to justify their anti-mimetic nature in favor of ideologically-marked content."[125]

Revisionist tides and the shifting shores of realism

The critical interventions that helped secure the publication of individual translations must be understood within the wider framework of the changing nature of official discourse on literary realism during and after the Thaw. The revelations of the Twentieth Communist Party Congress

[124] William Rougle, "Soviet Critical Responses to Jorge Amado," 42.

[125] Sicari, "Paratext as Weapon," 359.

in 1956 prompted Marxist intellectuals both at home and abroad to re-evaluate and redefine the doctrine of socialist realism. In that same year, the party publishing house Politizdat released an unprecedented complete edition of Marx's *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, inspiring a new generation of philosophers to revisit key concepts in Marxist-Leninist thought.[126] Rather than doing away with the concept of reflection in Marxist epistemology, Soviet philosophers "quietly reinterpret[ed] the term to include relationships far removed from resemblance or point-to-point correspondence."[127] Soviet aesthetics, which had conceived of art as a reflection of reality or an expression of class interests, now stressed the creative role of human cognition and the aesthetic function of art.[128]

Marxist literary theorists and critics in the West and in the fraternal socialist republics soon took advantage of the changing ideological climate. In May 1963, the Czechoslovak authorities unexpectedly allowed scholars to organize an international symposium dedicated to Franz Kafka, who had long been blacklisted for his decadent pessimism. This sparked a debate among Soviet critics about the value of Kafka's works for socialist society, causing rifts between orthodox Stalinists and a growing revisionist movement. The French communist Roger Garaudy provoked further scandal with his book *Realism Without Shores* (1963), in which he polemically argued that "there is no art which is not realistic, that is to say, which does not refer to an external reality," labelling Kafka along with Picasso and Saint-John Perse as realists.[129] In

[126] K. Marks, F. Engel's, *Iz rannikh proizvedenii* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1956).

[127] James P. Scanlan, *Marxism in the USSR: A Critical Survey of Current Soviet Thought* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 174.

[128] For more on the post-1956 "return to aesthetics," see: Scanlan, *Marxism in the USSR*, 297–325; Edward M. Swiderski, *The Philosophical Foundations of Soviet Aesthetics: Theories and Controversies in the Post-War Years* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1979).

[129] Roger Garaudy, *D'un realisme sans rivages* (Paris: Plon, 1963), 243.

opening up previously forbidden works of bourgeois modernism to ostensibly Marxist interpretations, Garaudy sought to demonstrate that socialist art could include a diverse range of forms beyond the strict limitations of canonical socialist realism. Despite protests from the "conservatives," translations of both Kafka's works and Garaudy's book were soon published and widely discussed in Soviet literary periodicals.[130]

Over time, the revisionists' views were gradually accepted as the norm, such that by the late 1960s, literary theorists discussed realism not as a literary method defined by a particular style, but rather as a matter of worldview and political consciousness.[131] Realist writers now had at their disposal a full arsenal of techniques inherited from the modernist avant-garde, which were no longer assumed to inherently reflect the bourgeois ideology of the writer who employed them. In 1966, the eminent critic Tamara Motyleva argued that inner monologue and stream-of-consciousness, techniques previously condemned as hallmarks of modernist decadence, were in fact welcome in realist literature, provided that they helped depict reality in its revolutionary development. When employed by realist writers, these techniques were "a means of depicting as faithfully as possible the psychological process in its vital immediacy" whereas "in modernist or 'avant-garde' literature, this irrationalism is elevated as a goal in itself."[132] Garaudy's once polemical views were finally fully vindicated by 1975, when the Slavist Dmitrii Markov

[130] R. Garodi, *O realizme bez beregov* (Moscow: Progress, 1966); Solomon Apt's translations of *The Metamorphosis* and several short stories by Kafka appeared in *Inostrannaia literatura* 1 (1964): 134–181. For more on the controversy, see Tall, "Who's Afraid of Franz Kafka?"

[131] For a more detailed contemporary account of the evolving definition of socialist realism, see Jochen-Ulrich Peters, "Réalisme sans rivages? Zur Diskussion über den sozialistischen Realismus in der Sowjetunion seit 1956," *Zeitschrift für Slavische Philologie* 37, no. 2 (1974): 291–324. See also Thomas Lahusen, "Sotsrealizm v poiskakh svoikh beregov: Neskol'ko istoricheskikh zamechanii otnositel'no istoricheski otkrytoi esteticheskoi sistemy pravdivogo izobrazheniia zhizni," in *Sotsrealisticheskii kanon*, ed. Hans Günther and Evgenii Dobrenko (St. Petersburg: Akademicheskii proekt, 2000), 523–536.

[132] Tamara Motyleva, *Zarubezhnyi roman segodnia* (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1966), 280–1.

redefined socialist realism as "a historically open system of artistic forms," expanding the boundaries of socialist realism to include virtually any conceivable literary form.[133] Susan Reid attributes the gradual acceptance of the revisionist view to "the logic of the Soviet Union's self-appointed, international role as guardian of the sovereignty of developing countries recently liberated from colonial rule," as critics presented the literatures of the developing world as the bulwark of realism against the moral and aesthetic decay of the West.[134]

Late Soviet culture and performative rhetoric

It is important to note that the literary theorists, critics, translators and editors involved in this process all worked within the state's official ideological strictures and structures. The critical interventions that broadened the horizon of translated literature employed standardized official rhetoric with the goal of extending what this rhetoric could signify. Samantha Sherry's comments on the function of internal reviews are relevant for understanding the critical apparatus as a whole: "The editors used the performative aspect to 'do things,' opening up new possibilities using the closed system of authoritative discourse in order to justify the inclusion of texts that might have been officially considered unacceptable. The use of ritualised, authoritative forms of discourse can, perhaps counter-intuitively, actually allow for the inclusion of new, foreign discourses."[135] Charles Rougle characterizes late Soviet literary criticism as demonstrating "the difficulties involved in finding and maintaining an approach to cultural

[133] D. F. Markov, *Problemy teorii sotsialisticheskogo realizma* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1975), 284.

[134] Susan Emily Reid, "Destalinization and the Remodernization of Soviet Art: The Search for a Contemporary Realism, 1953–1963." PhD diss. (University of Pennsylvania, 1996), 44.

[135] Samantha Sherry, "Censorship in Translation in the Soviet Union in the Stalin and Khrushchev Eras," PhD diss. (The University of Edinburgh, 2012), 121.

matters that would be both politically reliable and methodologically sophisticated."[136] Susan Reid argues that the gradual shift in the definition of socialist realism was "an attempt to salvage the validity of the doctrine itself from the taint of Stalinist absolutism, but it provided an authority to which liberals could appeal in further extending the range of art that could be publicly exhibited and discussed."[137] In a similar vein, Mark Lipovetsky and Mikhail Berg contend that "official criticism was trying to 'write into' the ideological context phenomena that had been rejected or surrounded with the halo of political suspicion."[138]

The translators, editors, and critics involved in presenting translations of Latin American literature to Soviet readers used authoritative discourse to include new works in the literary system. The foreign discourses that these translations introduced, such as the magical realism of *One Hundred Years of Solitude,* inspired Soviet writers to use them for their own purposes.[139] By the mid-1960s, a symbiotic relationship gradually emerged between literary criticism and published translations in which critics strove to make certain writers more accessible, thereby making it possible for publishing houses to commission translations of their works. The later inclusion of Jorge Luis Borges into the canon of translated Latin American literature (which I discuss in the conclusion) provides an even more provocative example: by questioning the very

[136] Charles Rougle, "Recent Soviet Approaches to Modernism," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 24, no. 4 (December 1982): 387.

[137] Reid, "Destalinization and the Remodernization of Soviet Art," 44.

[138] Mark Lipovetsky and Mikhail Berg, "Literary criticism of the long 1970s and the fate of Soviet liberalism," in *A History of Russian Literary Theory and Criticism: The Soviet Age and Beyond,* ed. by Evgeny Dobrenko and Galin Tihanov (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011), 208.

[139] The critical reactions to the prevalence of magical realist motifs in works by the Soviet Kyrgyz writer Chingiz Aitmatov are evidence of this complicated story of literary reception. While Erika Haber considers his novel *I dol'she veka dlitsia den'* [The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years, 1980] an exemplary work of magical realism, Katerina Clark discusses it as an example of "the way the socialist realist canon can generate new paradigms out of itself." Erika Haber, *The Myth of the Non-Russian: Iskander and Aitmatov's Magical Universe* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2003); Katerina Clark, "The Mutability of the Canon: Socialist Realism and Chingiz Aitmatov's *I dol'she veka dlitsia den'*," *Slavic Review* 43, no. 4 (Winter 1984): 573–587.

nature of reality and its representation in art, Borges's works paved the way for the literary experiments of the first generation of post-Soviet writers. For everyday Soviet readers, however, the depictions of brutal right-wing dictators and *caudillos* in faraway banana republics that they encountered in translations of Latin American literature—a favorite perennial topic in editorial board thematic plan meetings—provided an allegorical retelling of their own national history. In supporting the mass publication of translations of foreign literature during the postwar era, the state opened up the monologic nature of Stalinist discourse while at the same time attempting to mediate and control this new polyphony through the critical interventions that made each translation possible. In the end, the system fell apart.

Chapter Overview

The three central chapters of this dissertation serve as case studies of the reception and translation of Latin American literature in the Soviet Union. In each of the three chapters, I examine individual representative translations of major novels by twentieth-century Latin American writers, ranging from the first wave of modernist prose in Latin America to the canonical works of the "Boom" generation. My selection of translated novels reflects the availability of archival materials from central publishing houses, which I use to reconstruct the deliberations over how to translate, review, and present these novels to Soviet readers. The chapters are organized chronologically, broadly covering the period from the start of the Thaw to the late Soviet period, and each concerns a stage in the development of translation practices and the wider context of literary criticism.

In Chapter 2, I discuss the Soviet reception of the Guatemalan writer Miguel Ángel Asturias and analyze Margarita Bylinkina and Natal'ia Trauberg's Russian translation (1959) of

his novel *El Señor Presidente* (*The President*, 1946). As the Soviet cultural establishment embraced the new rhetoric of socialist internationalism during the Thaw, it sought to define Latin America's place in the emergent Cold War world. Asturias's appropriation of Mayan mythology in his denunciations of capitalist imperialism made him an ideal figurehead for this new brand of internationalism. However, as I trace the history of its publication, the Surrealist-inspired aesthetic of his novel made it a problematic choice for his major debut in Russian. I demonstrate that the criticism of the novel successfully secured Asturias's reputation as a committed, realist writer channeling an indigenous perspective, thus contributing to the growing focus on the "national" aspect of Third-World liberation struggles in official rhetoric.

My third chapter, on the Soviet reception of the Latin American literary "Boom," analyzes Bylinkina's translation (1965/1967) of Carlos Fuentes's novel *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* (*The Death of Artemio Cruz*, 1962). The "Boom Generation" of writers used techniques learned from Western modernists such as Joyce, Proust, and Faulkner to depict contemporary Latin American society. Soviet publishers hoped to capitalize on the worldwide enthusiasm for the Cuban Revolution by quickly publishing the latest literary works of the Boom Generation. However, Fuentes's novel is an experimental text, incorporating techniques—including interior monologue, automatic writing, and the superimposition of spatial and chronological planes—that deliberately generate ambiguity and demand the active participation of the reader. These techniques had been in official disfavor during the consolidation of socialist realism, but in the 1960s critics re-evaluated their usefulness as part of the larger debate on Marxist aesthetics and the limits of literary realism. I explore how the translated text and the paratexts that accompany it allowed Fuentes's novel to be contextualized within the tradition of critical realism.

My fourth chapter is a study of the reception and translation of Juan Rulfo, whose sole major literary works—the short-story collection *El llano en llamas* (*The Burning Plain*, 1953) and the novel *Pedro Páramo* (1955)—were published in Perla Glazova's Russian translation in 1970. In this chapter, I provide a detailed account of the translation and publication process, reconstructing the debates between Glazova and her editors over the text and the foreword used to present it to the reader. I analyze the translator's and editors' different translation strategies and ideological points of view within the context of contemporary literary criticism on the boundaries of socialist realism.

Finally, in the conclusion, I explore the final stage in the Soviet reception of Latin American literature by tracing the aftermath of the performative use of discourse in contextualizing translations. As the scope of literature that was translated increased, the paratexts used to contextualize them also increasingly let go of the tendency to impose one correct reading: totalizing interpretations began to soften, and criticism and packaging seemed to emphasize more literary and aesthetic concerns. While the social relevance of the translated work was almost always highlighted, critics began to abandon the crude ideological formulas that had been necessary in the past. In this context, then, I briefly trace the reception of Jorge Luis Borges, whose works appeared in official Russian translations only in 1981. Long blacklisted for his perceived right-wing political sympathies, Borges was the last writer of his stature to be introduced to Soviet readers, and perhaps by this same token he made a notable belated impact on the development of post-Soviet Russian writing. The complicated story of how Borges appeared in Russian illustrates how despite the agency of translators and editors, the Soviet state apparatus still played an important role in defining the limits of what was permissible.

Chapter Two

The Soviet Reception of Miguel Ángel Asturias

Introduction

For two weeks in the summer of 1957, Moscow hosted the Sixth World Festival of Youth and Students. The thirty-four thousand guests who arrived from all corners of the world were met with an extravagant official celebration of cultural universalism. For the vast majority of Muscovites, meeting the foreigners from Europe, Latin America, and Asia who suddenly inundated the city's streets marked a watershed moment in their memories of the era. These were not just their first encounters with the outside world, but the realization of a new utopian dream of international brotherhood. During the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party in February 1956, Nikita Khrushchev announced that the Soviet Union would support national liberation struggles in developing countries under the banner of preserving the "peaceful coexistence" of the capitalist and socialist systems in the emerging Cold War. The festival tested the limits of how far the cultural authorities were willing to engage this new internationalist rhetoric in practice.[1]

Among the participants was the Guatemalan writer Miguel Ángel Asturias, who arrived with his wife Blanca and eldest son Rodrigo. At 57 years old, a prominent literary figure, Asturias was an atypical guest. His visit was the latest step in what would become decades of political exile from his home country. Three years earlier, CIA-led forces had staged a coup that toppled the government of the progressive "Red President" Jacobo Árbenz, who had antagonized

[1] N. S. Khrushchev, "Otchetnyi doklad Tsentral'nogo Komiteta Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuza XX s"ezdu partii," in *XX S"ezd Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuza. Stenograficheskii otchet*. Vol. 1 (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1956), 10-42. For a detailed account of the festival, see Eleonory Gilburd, *To See Paris and Die: The Soviet Lives of Western Culture* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018), 55–102.

the United States by enacting agrarian reforms that expropriated land owned by the United Fruit Company. While in Moscow, Asturias was treated as an honored guest. The Communist Party newspaper *Pravda* published his impressions of the festival. At Moscow State University, he met with students and lectured on Latin American literature. In Peredelkino, he reconnected with an old friend, Ilya Ehrenburg, and met Boris Pasternak. Literary journals began publishing Russian translations of some of his short stories.[2]

In their treatment of Asturias, the Soviet cultural authorities were, in fact, testing out a new model of engagement with foreign writers. Under the previous Stalinist system of patronage, only a select few figures—Pablo Neruda, Jorge Amado, Nicolás Guillén, all dedicated communists—dominated the Soviet impression of Latin American letters. They were received with lavish receptions on state visits and were asked to speak at meetings of the World Peace Council. Their works were translated into Russian and published in massive print runs, reaching audiences that dwarfed what was possible in their home countries.[3] The post-1956 orientation of the Soviet Union and the heightening tensions of the Cold War prompted leaders to change their approach to cultural diplomacy, embracing a new rhetoric of internationalism. This was reminiscent of a similar brand of rhetoric in the 1930s that culminated in leftist cooperation in the Spanish Civil War. However, in contrast to the international proletarian solidarity of the 1930s, the new internationalism of the Thaw was centered on the more abstract notion of cultural

[2] Migel' Ankhel' Asturias, "Moskva v nashem serdtse," *Pravda* (August 13, 1957): 4. Blanca Mora y Araujo de Asturias, *Memorias de mi memoria* (Guatemala City: Editorial Cultura, 2017), 261.

[3] Writing about the socialist bloc literatures in the post-WWII Stalin era, Rossen Djagalov calls such officially-endorsed writers "literary monopolists" in what he terms the "People's Republic of Letters." Rossen Djagalov, "Literary Monopolists and the Forging of the Post-World War II People's Republic of Letters," in *Socialist Realism in Central and Eastern European Literatures under Stalin*, ed. Evgeny Dobrenko and Natalia Jonsson-Skradol (London: Anthem Press, 2018), 25–37. See my discussion of José Mancisidor in Chapter 4 for an example of how such Stalin-era "influencers" could impact the Soviet reception of their national literatures.

universalism, celebrating the commonalities between different discrete national identities.[4] The Soviet press praised Asturias chiefly as a national writer and representative of his country's indigenous population.

Asturias's own indigenist self-fashioning as the *Gran Lengua* [Great Tongue] of the Guatemalan people gave the Soviet cultural authorities a convenient means of articulating the new type of foreign writer in this new paradigm. As Asturias himself explained to Soviet readers, "in Guatemala we, the Mayan population, have what we call the 'Great Tongue'—it is the person who tells the legends of the people, sings its victories, its suffering, celebrates with it the harvest, rejoices in its art, laughs along with its children…"[5] This romantic self-stylization had a grain of truth—Asturias was in fact a *ladino,* of partial indigenous ancestry, and had studied ancient Mayan writings—but the fantasy was essential for Soviet purposes. This was a pragmatic maneuver: many of the third-world liberation movements were nationalist rather than broadly international leftist in orientation. In the figure of Asturias, the Soviets found a harsh critic of the United States' imperialistic demagoguery in Latin America and a passionate spokesperson for his downtrodden national community.

In 1959, the central state publisher Goslitizdat raised Asturias's profile further when it published a Russian translation of his debut novel *El Señor Presidente* [*The President*]. The translation, titled *Sen'or Prezident* [*Señor President*], was the work of Natal'ia Trauberg and

[4] Brian James Baer characterizes this as a transition from "international" to "foreign"; see his "From International to Foreign: Packaging Translated Literature in Soviet Russia," *Slavic and East European Journal* 60, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 49–67.

[5] "Pakt druzhby mezhdu pisateliami i molodezh'iu," *Literaturnaia gazeta* (August 3, 1957): 4. Asturias used this title with Latin American audiences as well; in a well-known interview with Luis Harss, he claimed, "Among the Indians there's a belief in the Great Tongue. The Great Tongue is the spokesman for the tribe. And in a way that's what I've been: the spokesman for my tribe." Luis Harss, *Los nuestros* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1966), 127.

Margarita Bylinkina, two beginning translators who would go on to have illustrious careers.[6] Asturias's novel was a denunciation of a tyrannical dictator based on his own experiences under the regime of Manuel Estrada Cabrera in Guatemala. He wrote most of the novel as a young political exile in Paris in the 1920s and 30s, where he associated with the Surrealists and other modernist Latin American writers. The political message of the novel is delivered in a programmatically modernist form: Asturias's verbal fireworks, expressionist grotesquery, and rendering of psychological states in his depiction of Guatemalan reality were quickly recognized as a major innovation in Latin American literature.[7] In translating the novel, Trauberg and Bylinkina faced a challenging task: they had to find a way to reproduce Asturias's modernist style without transgressing the boundaries of what was publishable in the rapidly changing literary environment of the Thaw. Their translation was both a critical and commercial success: over the next thirty years, it was republished in three more editions totaling well over half a million copies.[8] Asturias soon became one of the first Latin American writers to achieve wide renown in both the West and the East: nearly all of his novels would ultimately be translated into Russian and other languages of the socialist bloc countries. He visited the Soviet Union on

[6] Asturias, *Sen'or Prezident: roman*, translated by M. Bylinkina and N. Trauberg (Moscow: Goslitizdat, 1959). A prominent figure of the "Soviet school" of translation, Natal'ia Trauberg (1928–2009) made many works in English and Spanish well-known to Russian readers; she is perhaps best known for her *samizdat t*ranslations of G. K. Chesterton. Margarita Bylinkina (1925–2014), a translator of Spanish-language literature, acquainted Soviet readers with the Latin American "Boom" generation through her Russian translations of Carlos Fuentes and Julio Cortázar. The Russian title of their translation leaves the word "Señor" untranslated. Soviet newspapers and critical articles about Asturias that appeared before the book was published used the title *Gospodin Prezident* [*Mister President*].

[7] Asturias has been credited as both the founder of "magical realism" as well as the first writer of the mid-century Latin American "Boom." See Chapter 1 for a detailed discussion of both of these topics.

[8] The first edition, part of the series Zarubezhnyi roman XX veka [The Foreign Novel of the Twentieth Century], had a print run of 150,000 copies. The second edition—a special edition to commemorate Asturias's International Lenin Prize—had a print run of 50,000 copies. The novel was published a third time, together with Mariano Azuela's *Los de abajo* (1915) and Rómulo Gallegos's *Doña Bárbara* (1929), in a volume of the series Biblioteka vsemirnoi literatury [The Library of World Literature] with a print run of 300,000 copies. Finally, in 1986, a fourth edition for the series Politicheskii roman [The Political Novel] was published in a print run of 150,000 copies.

multiple occasions, including a 1966 trip to Moscow to accept the International Lenin Peace Prize. He received the Nobel Prize for Literature the following year, joining the select few laureates of the both major literary prizes representing opposite poles of the Cold War.[9]

This chapter discusses the reception of Asturias in the Soviet Union by focusing on the Russian translation of his debut novel, *Sen'or Prezident*. I examine how Trauberg and Bylinkina grappled with translating Asturias's programmatically modernist novel within the context of the prevalent attitudes and strategies commonly used by Soviet translators during the Thaw. The translation's success would have been impossible without the crucial role played by the paratextual criticism that set the stage for the book's reception. In both the articles that preceded the book's publication as well as the foreword that accompanied it, Lev Ospovat introduced Asturias to Soviet audiences as a realist writer devoted to the struggle of the indigenous Guatemalan peasantry against imperialism. Despite the negative internal reviews of the translation and paratext within the publishing house, the coordinated effort to promote Asturias as the new model for Latin American writers proved successful with both the Soviet cultural authorities as well as readers.

Asturias's creative evolution

Asturias was born in Guatemala City in 1899 to a middle-class family of mixed Spanish and indigenous origins. His youth and young adulthood were shaped by the rule of Manuel Estrada Cabrera, who had been elected president the year before he was born. Estrada Cabrera instituted a positivist dictatorship, brutally suppressing all political dissent and opening up the country to exploitation by the United Fruit Company. As a university student, Asturias participated in

[9] The Icelandic writer Halldór Laxness was the first to achieve this feat, winning both the Stalin Prize in 1952 and the Nobel Prize in 1955. Pablo Neruda, a 1953 Stalin Prize laureate, would be awarded the Nobel Prize in 1971.

student movements protesting the dictatorship and calling for liberal social reform. His 1923 law degree thesis "El problema social del indio" ["The Social Problem of the Indian"] is characteristic of his political beliefs at the time. In the thesis, Asturias argues that the impoverished indigenous peasantry was incapable of adapting to modernity due to genetic deficiencies. Their plight could be improved only by becoming part of a new national collective through intermarriage and miscegenation.[10]

Asturias fled to Paris shortly after graduation in order to escape political persecution. While in exile, he studied ethnology at the Sorbonne and took part in the cultural fervent of the artistic and intellectual gatherings in Montparnasse. Associating with the Surrealists (André Breton, Louis Aragon, and Robert Desnos) and fellow Latin American exiles (Alejo Carpentier, César Vallejo, and Alfonso Reyes) Asturias began to see his vocation as that of a writer. His experiences at the Sorbonne proved to be crucial for his new literary identity. In a now famous anecdote, this identity was conferred upon him by Georges Raynaud, an early scholar of Mayan writing. During one of his lectures, he reportedly singled out Asturias and proclaimed "Vous êtes maya" ["You are Maya"].[11] In Guatemala, Asturias had been a middle-class ladino who saw his indigenous countrymen as an obstacle to progress; in Paris, his national origin was evidence of the persistence of an ancient Mayan civilization. Asturias enthusiastically adopted this new identity: no longer positioning himself above the indigenous peasantry with paternalistic concern, he now fashioned himself as a genuine representative of an exotic and primitive people.

[10] Miguel Ángel Asturias, *Sociología guatemalteca: El problema social del indio*, ed. Julio César Pinto Soria (Guatemala City: Editorial Universitaria, Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala, 2007). For a critical discussion of Asturias's thesis, see Stephen Henighan, "El indígena y el alma nacional en 'El problema social' de Asturias: Fuentes de una investigación," *Hispamérica* 27, no. 80/81 (August–December 1998): 207–215. A similar positivistic vision of *mestizaje* (racial mixing) and miscegenation as a nation-building solution to the ethnic and social fractures in Latin American societies would later become well-known thanks to the Mexican philosopher José Vasconcelos's essay *La raza cósmica* (*The Cosmic Race*, 1925).

[11] Luis López Álvarez, *Conversaciones con Miguel Ángel Asturias* (Madrid: Magisterio Español, 1974), 75.

In 1926, under Raynaud's guidance, he collaborated with the Mexican José María González de Mendoza to produce a Spanish translation of the *Popol Vuh,* the sacred book of the Mayan K'iche' people. Despite his new identity, however, Asturias never learned the K'iche' language; the translation was from Raynaud's own French translation.[12] Asturias then wrote a collection of nine stories inspired by Mayan folklore and myth, *Leyendas de Guatemala* (*Legends of Guatemala*, 1930), to critical acclaim in France.[13] Asturias's "ethnographic" fiction cemented his reputation as a writer with privileged access to the primitive Mayan worldview.

Asturias returned to Guatemala in 1933 after a decade in exile, bringing with him a virtually complete manuscript of the novel about life under the dictatorship of Estrada Cabrera. The working title of the novel, *Tohil,* took the name of the Mayan god of fire, war, and rain to refer to the tyrannical rule of an unnamed dictator who decided the fates of every citizen of the anonymous Central American country depicted in the novel.[14] Asturias had returned to Guatemala under unfortunate circumstances: the country was under another military dictatorship, now ruled by the general Jorge Ubico. The stifling political circumstances pushed Asturias into a profound creative crisis. It was only after the regime was overthrown by a popular uprising in 1944, known as the Guatemalan Revolution, that Asturias renewed his career as a writer. In 1946 he finally published his novel about Estrada Cabrera under the title *El Señor Presidente*. The first

[12] René Prieto, *Miguel Angel Asturias's Archaeology of Return* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 31.

[13] Asturias, *Leyendas de Guatemala* (Madrid: Ediciones Oriente, 1930). Francis de Miomandre's French translation *Légendes du Guatemala* (Marseille: Les cahiers du sud, 1932) was awarded the Sylla Monsegur Prize.

[14] Gerald Martin, "Notas explicativas" in Asturias, *El Señor Presidente: Edición crítica,* ed. Gerald Martin (Madrid: ALLCA XX, 2000), 341.

edition appeared in Mexico City to little acclaim; two years later, however, a larger second edition published in Buenos Aires brought him widespread fame.[15]

The new progressive government in Guatemala renewed his creative impulses, and he began to write a new kind of prose that fused his ethnographic interest in Mayan folklore with political commitment. His novel *Hombres de maíz* (*Men of Maize*, 1949) tells the story of a peasant farming community that falls victim to capitalist exploitation. In order to lend the story a mythic quality, Asturias invented a literary style based on his studies of Mayan writings and mythology. Several critics have seen his evocation of myth and the clash of indigenous and Western epistemologies embedded in the text as one of the first examples of so-called "magical realism."[16] The peasants' resistance to modernization ends in defeat following the murder of the hero Gaspar Ilóm, and they lose their land. Asturias grants them victory on a mythological plane, however, as the peasants return in the form of ants to rightfully collect their harvest. A similar mythological symbolic victory is granted to the oppressed in his next novel, *Viento fuerte* (*Strong Wind*, 1950), the first volume of the ambitious, and doctrinaire, "Banana Trilogy" that denounces economic exploitation at the hands of foreign capital. Under the rule of the "Green Pope" Geo Maker Thompson, the American conglomerate Tropical Banana, Inc. (an obvious stand-in for the United Fruit Company) dominates an anonymous Central American country. Seeking to correct the injustices done to his people, the shaman Rito Perraj invokes the Mayan deities, the forces of nature, who punish the exploiters of the land with a destructive hurricane. The next volumes of the trilogy, *The Green Pope* (El Papa verde, 1954) and *Los ojos de los*

[15] Asturias, *El Señor Presidente*, 1st ed. (Mexico City: Costa Amic, 1946); 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, 1948).

[16] Gerald Martin, *Journeys through the* L*abyrinth: Latin American Fiction in the Twentieth Century* (London: Verso, 1989), 174–179.

enterrados (*The Eyes of the Interred*, 1960), explore the inner workings of the Tropical Banana corporation and envision a path for the country's self-liberation.

The Cold War in Latin America: Guatemala, 1954

While the former was written in the hopeful atmosphere of Árbenz's reformist administration, the latter was a creative compensation for frustrated dreams. Both his and his country's fate changed forever in 1954. Árbenz's reforms and his suspected ties to "Moscow gold" had antagonized the United States. His government expropriated much of the vast amounts of land owned by the United Fruit Company. The United States ambassador to the United Nations, Henry Cabot Lodge, happened to be a major shareholder in the company. He successfully levied his power in the Security Council to ensure that American meddling in Guatemalan politics would go unpunished. On June 18, 1954, the CIA-backed forces of Carlos Castillo Armas invaded the country from the south, aided by bombing raids on Guatemala City.[17] The Cold War had arrived definitively in Latin America.

The next day, while press agencies around the world spread contradicting news of the events, Asturias sent a telegram to Louis Aragon, his old friend in Paris, telling him about the tragedy. He asked Aragon to spread the news of the invasion and galvanize protest against American imperialism through his communist-aligned journal *Les Lettres françaises.* The journal closely followed the events in Guatemala and the country's suffering at the hands of the United States briefly became a cause célèbre among leftist intellectuals. In a poem on the occasion of reading Asturias's telegram, Aragon compared the American invasion of Guatemala to Nazi

[17] For a detailed account of the coup and invasion, see Piero Gleijeses, *Shattered Hope: The Guatemalan Revolution and the United States, 1944–1954* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 319–360.

barbarism: “Blood and gold will smell like United Fruit.”[18] Asturias fled to Chile to stay with Pablo Neruda, another old friend. In exile yet again, Asturias began writing *Week-end en Guatemala* (1956), the first of several *engagée* prose works about the fate of his country.[19] For another first-hand witness, the Argentine physician Ernesto Guevara, the invasion was a political rite of passage. Now convinced of the need for armed resistance to imperialism, he declared himself a communist and adopted the name that would become world-famous: “Che” was born.[20]

In the Soviet Union, the United Fruit Company had long been the subject of scrutiny as an “invisible empire” managed by the United States. Some translations of Latin American literature into Russian available at the time, such as Carlos Luis Fallas’s *Mamita Yunai* (1941) and Neruda’s “La United Fruit Co.” from his *Canto general* (1950), strongly denounced the Company’s support for dictatorships in Central America and the harsh conditions suffered by workers on its plantations.[21] Soviet journalists that had been following the 1944 Guatemalan Revolution wrote in praise of the government’s expropriation of land owned by the Company. The Árbenz regime had been moderately progressive at best, certainly not a communist government (as claimed in CIA-produced propaganda). However this may be, the 1954 invasion was officially denounced in the Soviet press, and Guatemala became a convenient ideological prop in the emerging Cold War.[22]

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[18] Pere Solà Solé, *Louis Aragon y España* (Lleida: Universitat de Lleida, 2014), 152; Louis Aragon, “Le 19 juin 1954” in *Les yeux et la mémoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1954): 111.

[19] Asturias, *Week-end en Guatemala* (Buenos Aires: Goyanarte, 1956).

[20] Daniel James, *Che Guevara: A Biography* (New York: Stein and Day, 1969), 81.

[21] Karlos Luis Fal'ias, *Mamita Iunai*, translated by B. Zagorskii (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo inostrannoi literatury, 1952); Pablo Neruda, *Vseobshchaia pesn*', ed. F. Kel’in (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo inostrannoi literatury, 1954).

[22] A Soviet guidebook on Guatemala printed that year is typical of the rhetoric used in denouncing the invasion: “The people of Guatemala, inspired by the international brotherly solidarity of laborers, bravely struggles against imperialist aggression for national independence, peace and democracy.” V. M. Venin, *Gvatemala* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo geograficheskoi literatury, 1954), 92.

The invasion resonated with some members of the Soviet cultural intelligentsia. The young writer Iurii Slepukhin, a former "displaced person" after WWII, returned to the Soviet Union from exile in Argentina with his debut novel, a fictionalized account of the Guatemalan coup based on first-hand accounts from refugees who fled the country.[23] The events in Guatemala also coincided with a growing fascination with pre-Columbian cultures and important research on the ancient Mayan civilization. In his 1955 doctoral dissertation, the linguist Yuri Knorozov developed a new approach to studying ancient Mayan hieroglyphs. Contrary to prevailing scholarly opinion at the time, he argued that Mayan hieroglyphs were not pictograms, but rather phonetic in nature. Now widely accepted among specialists, Knorozov's discovery served as a convenient political prop for Soviet interests. Articles publicizing his research connected his findings to the plight of contemporary Central America, "where still today the descendants of the ancient Indians—hard-working peons—break their backs from dawn to dusk on the fruit plantations of the American monopoly, the United Fruit Company."[24] When Árbenz, now the ousted ex-president of Guatemala, briefly stayed in the Soviet Union to secure his children's education, he was brought to the Kunstkamera to meet with Knorozov.[25]

The international outcry in response to the US coup made Asturias one of the first targets of a new style of cultural diplomacy wielded by the USSR. The writer Boris Polevoi sent a telegram to Asturias, then staying with Neruda in Chile, inviting him to attend the Second Congress of Soviet Writers later that year. Asturias accepted the invitation but did not manage to

[23] Iurii Slepukhin, "Rasskazhi vsem," *Neva* 5 (1958): 5–99. The work was later published as *Dzhoanna Alarika* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1962).

[24] S. A. Tokarev, "Razgadannaia taina," *Smena* 12 (June 1955), 10.

[25] Sergei Anatol'evich Korsun, *Amerikanistika v Kunstkamere (1714–2014)* (St. Petersburg: MAE RAN, 2015), 371.

attend.[26] In May 1955, Aragon's *Les Lettres françaises* sent one of Asturias's short stories about the invasion from *Week-end en Guatemala* to the newly-established journal *Inostrannaia literatura* [*Foreign Literature*].[27] Inna Tynianova's Russian translation of the story did not make it into the journal, however, and Asturias's *El Papa verde* was summarily dismissed in internal reviews.[28] Nevertheless, in November of that year, the Foreign Commission of the Writers' Union wrote to Asturias requesting a copy of *El Señor Presidente*.[29]

It was only during Asturias's appearance at the 1957 World Festival of Youth and Students that Soviet readers were finally able to read his work in Russian. These were the short stories from his collection *Week-end en Guatemala*, which depicted the 1954 coup and invasion of the country. In these stories, Asturias not only depicts the devastation of the country's indigenous peasant communities, but also attempts to articulate the indigenous perspective, narrating the events from an imagined mythological worldview. His story "La Galla," translated for the popular magazine *Ogonek*, follows the fate of a village community during the invasion.[30] The shopkeeper La Galla resents Árbenz's agrarian reforms following the murder of her father during a peasant uprising on his plantation. She welcomes the anticommunist invasion as

[26] RGALI f. 631, op. 26, ed. khr. 4602, l. 1. The reasons for Asturias's absence are unclear; in any case, he does not appear in the list of participants alongside fellow Latin Americans Amado and Neruda in the official published report. *Vtoroi vsesoiuznyi s"ezd sovetskikh pisatelei, 15–26 dekabria 1954 goda. Stenograficheskii otchet*. Vol. 2 (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel, 1956), 604.

[27] RGALI f. 631, op. 26, ed. khr. 4602. Claude Juffet sent Asturias's "Naique Bueyón Cuyque" to the journal.

[28] RGALI f. 1573, op. 1, ed. khr. 203–4. Tynianova (1917–2004), the daughter of the famous writer, scholar and critic Yuri Tynianov, was a respected translator of Portuguese- and Spanish-language literature. In his internal review, Ovadii Savich critiques the novel for showing signs of various "-isms" ("formalism, naturalism, symbolism") and disapproves of Asturias's lack of faith in the Guatemalan people's struggle. RGALI f. 1573, op. 5, l. 26. Cited in Ekaterina Eremina, "Traducciones al ruso de Rayuela de Julio Cortázar en la época soviética y postsoviética," PhD diss. (Universitat Pompeu Fabra, 2017), 229.

[29] RGALI f. 631, op. 26, ed. khr. 4604.

[30] Asturias, "La Gal'ia," trans. V. Zhitkov and A. Litvinov, *Ogonek* 33 (August 1957): 27–30. Another story, "Bugai" ["El Bueyón"], translated by G. Fomina appeared in *Ogonek* 48 (November 1957): 23–24.

retribution for her family's loss of status and power. The indigenous peasants, remembering past treachery by other "white men," reluctantly accept the lands given to them by the state. When La Galla helps the rebels massacre the suspected indigenous "communists" supporting the reforms, the elder Tucuche foresees the future coming of justice in mythic terms: "The eyes of younger generations will continue to count the eleven green shades in the Grandmother of Waters gorge, so that they could make the number thirteen, the holy number of the Great Bearer of Feathers Quetzal, who one morning, on one of the future days, will forever return the land to the Indians."[31]

This impression of Asturias as a national writer representing the downtrodden indigenous Mayans was strengthened in critical articles written by Lev Ospovat.[32] During the Thaw, critical articles introducing foreign writers to Soviet readers were a necessary step in expanding the canon of translated writers beyond the small circle of Stalinist stalwarts. These articles provided interpretations of literary works that made them seem to align with the standards and values of Soviet literature; they could also point out a writer's ideological or aesthetic deficiencies as a means of mediating their reception before a translation of their works was published. Writing about the Soviet reception of American writers in the 1960s, Carl Proffer identified the "typical pattern" for introducing a new writer: "(1) an article in *The Literary Gazette* [*Literaturnaia gazeta*], (2) a longer, serious, survey in *Questions of Literature* [*Voprosy literatury*], (3) translation in *Foreign Literature* [*Inostrannaia literatura*] or book form."[33] The reception of

[31] Ibid., 30.

[32] Lev Ospovat (1922–2009) was a major critic, scholar, and translator of Spanish-language literature in the Soviet Union. He co-authored important works of criticism on Latin American literature with his wife Vera Kuteishchikova (1919–2012), the country's preeminent scholar of Mexican history and culture.

[33] Carl R. Proffer, ed. *Soviet Criticism of American Literature in the Sixties: An Anthology* (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1972), xxiii.

Asturias followed this pattern closely. During the 1957 festival, Ospovat wrote a brief article introducing Asturias for *Literaturnaia gazeta* that characterized him as a privileged informant who can access the indigenous worldview and wield it in his politically-engaged works:

> This writer who spent many years in Europe nevertheless managed to preserve his spiritual connection to the people comprising the majority of the population of his homeland—the Guatemalan peasantry. The Indians and metis, the descendants of the ancient Maya, invariably attract Asturias with their poetic attitude toward labor, courage, and moral superiority over their oppressors. The writer did not idealize them; he accepted them as they are, sharing their superstitions, their helplessness before the forces of nature and the forces of social relations, their hatred for their enslavers. Their marvelous folklore fed his imagination. He looked upon the surrounding reality with the eyes of these people, and their elemental protest resounded in his works, lending them enormous denunciatory power.[34]

Ospovat takes an uncritical view of the ethnographic or indigenist current in Asturias's writings by mistaking his literary mimicry for an authentic articulation of an indigenous perspective. Repeating the old trope of the noble savage, he argues that Asturias's political protest was a reflex of the indigenous peasants' simplicity and connection to the natural world. A year later, Ospovat discussed Asturias's work in greater detail in an article on critical realism in Latin America for *Voprosy literatury* followed by an extensive article solely on Asturias's creative evolution as a writer for *Inostrannaia literatura*.[35] In the latter article, Ospovat expands on his earlier thesis, arguing that Asturias's efforts to adopt an indigenous worldview limited the maturity of his political critique: too immersed in the reactionary ideology of the peasantry, he could articulate its suffering, but he could not articulate the proper political path to liberation. It

[34] Lev Ospovat, "Stranitsy skorby i nadezhdy," *Literaturnaia gazeta* 23 (August 1957): 4. Ospovat's mention of the "metis" is likely an attempt to describe Asturias's own *ladino* ethnicity.

[35] Vera Kuteishchikova and Lev Ospovat, "Sud'by kriticheskogo realizma v sovremennoi literature Latinskoi Ameriki," *Voprosy literatury* 5 (1958): 69–95; Lev Ospovat, "Golos nepokorennoi Gvatemaly," *Inostrannaia literatura* 6 (June 1958): 182–192.

was only when the peasantry themselves struggled for their own freedom in the 1944 Guatemalan Revolution that Asturias could see the light:

> His passionate love for the people of Guatemala served as a compass for the writer […] if Asturias keeps his trusty compass, then, drawing together more closely to the Guatemalan people and its vanguard forces, heroically struggling for their freedom, he will surely arrive at a deeper and fuller representation of life in its progressive movement toward the future.[36]

Curiously, however, while Ospovat criticizes the pessimism of *El Señor Presidente* and *Hombres de maíz*, labelling the latter a step backwards in ideological terms, he claims that this regression ultimately enabled Asturias to see the revolutionary potential of his people. It is by following the indigenous resistance that he is able to assume the correct political positions.

While the Guatemalan resistance to the new military regime was definitively crushed, by mid-1958, Fidel Castro's forces in Cuba were gaining ground, galvanizing support and hope for national liberation movements throughout the region. More Russian translations from *Week-end en Guatemala* appeared at this time, including two stories in a widely distributed pamphlet published by *Pravda*.[37] The foreword to the latter edition by Iurii Dashkevich evokes the exotic landscape of Guatemala and repeats Ospovat's sentiments about the people's telluric connection to the land informing their valiant political struggle.[38] Dashkevich quotes Asturias from a conversation with him during his stay in Moscow: "Fighting on the side of the people, I consider it my duty to bear witness to the national struggle in my work […] You have been in Guatemala,

[36] Lev Ospovat, "Golos nepokorennoi Gvatemaly," 192.

[37] Asturias, "Vse oni byli amerikantsami" ["¡Americanos todos!"], trans. Iurii Dashkevich, *Inostrannaia literatura* 12 (1957): 61–78; Asturias, *Uik-end v Gvatemale*, trans. Iurii Dashkevich (Moscow: Pravda, 1958).

[38] Iurii Dashkevich (1913-1997), the head of the Latin American department at *Inostrannaia literatura* from 1958 to 1990, was a literary critic and translator. While working as a foreign correspondent for TASS (and, covertly, as an intelligence agent for the KGB) in Argentina and Mexico in the 1940s, he befriended several important Latin American writers and brought their books to the Soviet Union. S. I. Chuprinin, *Novaia Rossiia: Mir literatury. Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'-spravochnik*, vol. 1. (Moscow: Ripol Klassik, 2002), 409; Nil Nikandrov, *Grigulevich: Razvedchik, kotomoru vezlo* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 2005), 369.

you have seen our volcanoes. Each of these volcanoes can show its power today or tomorrow. But the power of the people is greater than that of any volcanic eruption..."[39]

The translation of *El Señor Presidente*

In September 1958, the central state publishing house Goslitizdat included Asturias's *El Señor Presidente* in its publishing plans for the following year.[40] The publishing house offered contracts to Trauberg and Bylinkina to translate the work together. In what was not an uncommon practice, the translators split up their work; Trauberg was given the first 24 chapters and Bylinkina was given the last 16 chapters plus the epilogue.[41] The deadline for the full manuscript of the translation was January 1959—only four months' notice, an unusually short amount of time by the publishing house's standards.[42] The translators worked quickly, though not necessarily together: decades later, Bylinkina wrote in her memoirs that she began translating her half of the book without having read any of Trauberg's work.[43]

El Señor Presidente depicts life in an unnamed Central American country under the dictatorial regime of the President, who appears in the novel in only a handful of episodes. When one of his favorite colonels is killed by the mentally unstable beggar Pelele, the President orders his right hand man, Miguel Cara de Ángel, to frame one of his generals, a potential

[39] Dashkevich, "Migel' Ankhel' Asturias," in *Uik-end v Gvatemale* (Moscow: Pravda, 1958), 2.

[40] Goslitizdat is a contraction of Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury [The State Publishing House of Fiction]. In 1963, Goslitizdat was renamed Khudozhestvennaia literatura [Fiction].

[41] RGALI, f. 613, op. 10, ed. khr. 5298, l. 129. Bylinkina was also responsible for editing the book as a whole. The publishing house sometimes gave inexperienced translators half of a novel for their first major translation contract.

[42] Translators working for Goslitizdat (and later, Khudozhestvennaia literatura) were usually given around one year to complete a book-length translation. However, the four-month deadline given to Trauberg and Bylinkina may not reflect the actual time spent on translating the novel: contracts were sometimes written and signed after the translation was already underway or even upon submission when completed.

[43] Margarita Bylinkina, *Vsego odin vek: Khronika moei zhizni* (Moscow: Grifon, 2005), 261.

political rival. Despite these orders, Cara de Ángel falls in love with Camila, the general's daughter. The President appears to keep him in official favor and publicly grants him a diplomatic post in Washington. However, this turns out to be a cruel deception to punish Cara de Ángel's disloyalty: the President covertly sends him to prison and replaces him with a lookalike. Meanwhile, several people who attempt to help Camila are deemed guilty by association. Most of the novel's characters end up in prison; their physical punishments are mirrored by the psychological suffering caused by the stifling, paranoid atmosphere.

In many ways, *El Señor Presidente* was a curious choice for Asturias's debut novel in Russian. The translators began their work during an unsteady period of official reckoning with the full extent of Stalin's crimes, which had become public knowledge just a few years earlier. Beyond the dictator theme, however, the novel's modernist orientation presented plenty of challenges for the inexperienced translators. The opening lines of the novel immediately immerse the reader in a disorienting, evocative linguistic game:

> ...¡Alumbra, lumbre de alumbre, Luzbel de piedralumbre! Como zumbido de oídos persistía el rumor de las campanas a la oración, maldoblestar de la luz en la sombra, de la sombra en la luz. ¡Alumbra, lumbre de alumbre, Luzbel de piedralumbre, sobre la podredumbre! ¡Alumbra, lumbre de alumbre, sobre la podredumbre, Luzbel de piedralumbre! ¡Alumbra, alumbra, lumbre de alumbre..., alumbre..., alumbra..., alumbra, lumbre de alumbre..., alumbra, alumbre...! (7)[44]

> "Boom, Bloom, alum-bright, Lucifer of alunite!" The sound of the church bells summoning people to prayer lingered on, like a humming in the ears, an uneasy transition from brightness to gloom, from gloom to brightness. "Boom, bloom, alum-bright, Lucifer of alunite, over the sombre tomb! Bloom, alum-bright, over the tomb, Lucifer of alunite! Boom, boom, alum-bright… bloom… alum-bright… bloom, alum-bright… bloom, boom."[45]

[44] All citations from the Spanish text of the novel refer to Asturias, *El Señor Presidente: Edición crítica*, ed. Gerald Martin (Madrid: ALLCA XX, 2000).

[45] Miguel Ángel Asturias, *The President*, translated by Frances Partridge (London: Victor Gollancz, 1963), 7. Partridge's translation remains the only English-language translation of the novel. Although it contains numerous mistranslations and stylistic inaccuracies, I nonetheless borrow from it for the English glosses that follow.

Asturias evokes the pealing of cathedral bells announcing the start of evening prayers using a dense web of sound associations that create a synesthetic contrast between light and darkness. Various forms of the verb *alumbrar* (to illuminate), *lumbre* (fire-light) and *alumbre* (alum) echo with a sudden invocation to Lucifer (*Luzbel*). The light imagery illuminates the putrefaction (*pobredumbre*) of the surrounding city. Asturias characterizes the uneasy contrast between light and dark using the neologism *maldoblestar*—a combination of *malestar* (unease), *doblar* (to toll), and *doble* (double)—a doubly-discomforting tolling of the bells that buzzes in the ears of the churchgoers. The opening lines of the novel immediately immerse the reader in a disorienting, evocative linguistic game. Asturias distorts the rational relationship between sound and meaning through his use of Joycean portmanteaus and playful sound associations (sometimes named *jitanjáfora* after the nonsense poetry of Mariano Brull), establishing the dark mood that permeates the novel.[46] The mention of Lucifer foreshadows the evil reign of the president depicted in the chapters that follow.[47] In the context of Latin American literature at the time it was written, this first paragraph was a programmatic declaration of Asturias's aesthetic allegiance to the avant-garde—a Guatemalan writer showing off his Parisian pedigree.[48]

Trauberg's Russian translation of the passage attempts to reproduce the sound associations by playing with the typical onomatopoeic syllables for large bells, *bom-bom*:

[46] The Mexican writer Alfonso Reyes used this word from a poem by the Cuban poet Brull to describe all poetry composed of meaningless syllables chosen for their musicality. Alfonso Reyes, "Las jitanjáforas" [1929] in his *Obras completas*, vol. 14 (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1962), 190–230.

[47] The Asturias scholar Jack Himelblau compares this opening to the coming of the Antichrist in the Book of Revelation. Jack Himelblau, "Chronologic Deployment of Fictional Events in Miguel Ángel Asturias's *El Señor Presidente*," *Hispanic Journal* 12, no. 2 (Fall 1991): 198.

[48] Thanks to the novel's delayed publication, critics have retrospectively acknowledged the novel (and this opening paragraph in particular) as the start of the mid-century "Boom." William H. Gass, "The First Seven Pages of the Boom," *Latin American Literary Review* 15, no. 29 (January–July 1987): 33.

> Бьём-бьём-бьём! бьём-лбом, бьём-лбом! — били-били-лбом! — белым лбом… бьём… бьём!.. — били колокола, ранили слух, луч сквозь мглу, мгла сквозь свет. — Били-бьём! Би-ли-бьём! Бьём-бьём… белым-белым лбом… бьём! бьём! бьём! (17)[49]
>
> We strike-strike-strike! We strike with our forehead, we strike with our forehead! — struck-struck-with the forehead! —a white forehead…strike…strike! —the bells rang, hurt the ear, a light beam through the dark, the dark through light. —We struck, strike! Stru-uck strike! Strike-strike… with a white-white forehead…we strike! Strike! Strike!

The bells echo with the rhyming pair *b'em* ("we beat," also used to denote a clock's striking or bell's ringing) and *belym lbom* ("with a white forehead"), capturing some of the violence connoted in the original while also incorporating the synesthetic connection between sound and light. By omitting any mention of Lucifer, however, the translation reproduces the sound effects at the expense of an additional layer of meaning: the contrast between evil and (if only by association) good. There are no portmanteaus or neologisms. Nevertheless, in its reproduction of the sound associations, this is an unusually close rendering of such a passage. The result is reminiscent of the sound associations and leitmotif-like repetitions found in the "ornamental prose" of early Soviet writers such as Boris Pil'niak, whose career flourished around the same time that Asturias wrote the first drafts of his novel in Paris.[50]

Expressionist imagery

Following this opening passage, the narration turns to the beggars who congregate on the steps of the cathedral portal. Asturias's depiction of their lives is abhorrent, and much of the novel is littered with disgusting details. Physically and mentally handicapped beggars sleep in piles of

[49] All citations of the Russian text of the novel refer to the pagination of the first 1959 edition.

[50] Asturias's style also resembles that of Andrei Belyi (such as *Petersburg* and *Kotik Letaev*) and Isaac Babel. It is possible that Trauberg and Bylinkina's translation was impacted by the republication of Russian modernist prose during the Thaw. Pil'niak and Babel had been officially repressed in the purges of the 1930s and were both "rehabilitated" in the early years of the Thaw. Outside of official channels, it is certainly plausible that both translators were familiar with their works in samizdat editions.

trash in the streets where dogs vomit and urinate. The President condemns suspected enemies to brutal physical punishments, many of them fatal. Several of the novel's characters find themselves imprisoned, huddled together in overstuffed cells where they stand in their own excrement. The phantasmagoric world of *El Señor Presidente* is a depiction of hell on earth, with the President as Lucifer.[51] This impression is strengthened by Asturias's use of shocking imagery and metaphor to defamiliarizing effect, such as in the narrator's description of the policemen who arrest the beggars following Pelele's murder of Colonel Parrales Sonriente:

> Las caras de los antropófagos, iluminadas como faroles, avanzaban por las tinieblas, los cachetes como nalgas, los bigotes como babas de chocolate... (16)
>
> The faces of the cannibals, lit up like lanterns, were advancing through the shadows, their cheeks like buttocks, their mustaches like chocolate slobber…

Trauberg reproduces much of the imagery with little extraneous detail:

> Жирные лица людоедов тускло светились в темноте—щёки толстые, будто задница, усы—длинные, липкие, будто коричневые слюни. (22)
>
> The greasy faces of the cannibals dimly shone in the dark—plump cheeks, like buttocks, mustaches—long, sticky, like brown spittle.

In other examples of defamiliarization in the novel, inanimate objects take on a life of their own and human beings are reduced to things. When Pelele is murdered, the public urinals cry out in mourning; later, as policemen ransack the house of General Canales, the kitchen utensils laugh. The members of the tribunal that condemns Abel Carvajal, another innocent person who gets caught up in the plot to frame General Canales, are described as "puppets made of gold and dried beef, bathed from head to foot in the diarrhetic light of the oil lamp" (muñecos de oro y de cecina, que bañaba de arriba abajo la diarrea del quinqué, 246). The novel abounds with images related to puppetry: the beggar Pelele's name refers to a puppet; Don Benjamin,

[51] One of Asturias's proposed titles for the novel was *Malebolge*, a reference to the eighth circle of hell in Dante's *Inferno*. Martin, "Notas explicativas," 341.

another character in the novel, is a puppeteer; several references are made to the street puppet shows popular in Guatemala at the time. The puppet motif is clearly a synecdochic reference to the President's dictatorial rule over every citizen in the country. Trauberg and Bylinkina recreate these images with few instances of censorship or even euphemizing, preserving the original's grotesque atmosphere.[52]

Other striking images in the novel clearly reflect Asturias's attempts to render subjective psychological states using free indirect discourse. As Cara de Ángel contemplates the President's orders to frame General Canales, the general paranoia of society under his regime is crystallized in the image of a "forest of ears" connected by telegraph wires:

> …el bosque monstruoso que separaba al Señor Presidente de sus enemigos, bosque de árboles de orejas que al menor eco se revolvían como agitadas por el huracán. […] Una red de hilos invisibles, más invisibles que los hilos del telégrafo, comunicaba cada hoja con el Señor Presidente, atento a lo que pasaba en las vísceras más secretas de los ciudadanos. (46)

> …the monstrous forest which separated the President from his enemies, a forest made up of trees with ears which would whirl at the slightest echo as if blown by a hurricane. […] A web of invisible threads, more invisible than telegraph wires, connected every leaf with the President, attentive to what went on in the most secret entrails of the townspeople.

Once again, Trauberg largely preserves the metaphor in her translation with no additional explanation:

> …в парке, отделявшем Сеньора Президента от врагов, – в чудовищном парке, где деревья имеют уши, и уши эти при малейшем шорохе настораживаются словно в бурю. […] Невидимые нити – куда тоньше, чем телеграфные провода, – вели от каждого листка к Сеньору Президенту. Он внимательно слушал всё, что происходит в самой глубине души его подданных. (41)

[52] In his study of Asturias's decade in Paris, Stephen Henighan notes that his morbid fascination with physical decay and overwrought mental anguish are evidence of his adolescent reading of Comte de Lautréamont: not so much the influence of his contemporaries, the Surrealists, but rather that of the *poèt maudit* who inspired them. Henighan, *Assuming the Light: The Parisian Literary Apprenticeship of Miguel Ángel Asturias* (Oxford: Legenda, 1999), 149. He further argues that the unique style of *El Señor Presidente* is evidence of Asturias's linguistic deterritorialization (in Deleuze and Guattari's terms) as an exile in Paris writing about his home country, writing that "his innovative language originates, in large part, in his expatriation." (154)

> …in the park separating the President from his enemies—in the monstrous park, where trees have ears, and these ears perk up at even the slightest rustle as if in storm. […] Invisible threads—much thinner than telegraph wires—lead from each leaf to the President. He attentively listened to everything that happened in the very depths of the souls of his subjects.

There are many passages in the novel where the narrator expresses a character's psychological states through free indirect discourse using an image that has an ambiguous relation to the reality depicted in the text. After witnessing the murder of the vagrant Pelele at the hands of the policeman Lucio Vásquez, Genaro Rodas is tormented with guilt. His guilty conscience manifests itself as an enormous glass eye that pursues him relentlessly. It is unclear if the eye is supposed to be understood as a metaphor or as a "real" manifestation of Rodas's psyche in the world of the novel. Trauberg offers no explanation, preserving the image and its inherent indeterminacy.

In most of passages of this kind, which appear throughout the novel, Trauberg and Bylinkina choose to recreate the image in Russian without the extra scaffolding of explanatory comments. There were limits to what kinds of imagery they included, however: while many of the scenes of violence and physical decay pushed the boundaries of what was typically acceptable in Soviet literature, some of Asturias's discussion of sexuality were a step too far. When Rodas's wife Fedina is imprisoned, destined to be forced into prostitution at the President's command, the drawings on the walls of her cell and the sounds of a mocking song provoke a strange vision:

> Por el suelo, un pueblo de hormigas se llevaba una cucaracha muerta. Niña Fedina, bajo la impresión de los dibujos, creyó ver un sexo arrastrado por su propio vello hacia las camas del vicio. […] Y volvía la canción a frotarle suavemente astillitas de vidrio en la carne viva, como lijándole el pudor femenino. (131)
>
> On the ground a nation of ants was carrying off a dead cockroach. Under the influence of the drawings, Niña Fedina thought she was looking at female genitals being dragged by their own hair towards the beds of vice. […] And the song again began rubbing at her

living flesh gently with little splinters of glass, as if to wear away her feminine modesty. The Freudian, surrealist undertones of this passage are obscured in Trauberg's rendering, which euphemistically summarizes the vision:

> На полу целое племя муравьёв тащило дохлого таракана. Нинья Федина насмотрелась тех рисунков, и ей чудилось в этом что-то чудовищное, непристойное... […] впивались в живую плоть острые осколки песни. (96)
>
> On the ground an entire tribe of ants was dragging the dead cockroach. Niña Fedina had seen her fill of those drawings, and she imagined something monstrous, obscene… […] sharp shards of song pierced into her living flesh.

Despite the puritanical censorship, the mention of the physical wound produced by her perception of the song captures the notion that the dictatorial regime oppresses the psyches of everyone in society; even sexuality is a weapon wielded by the state.

Interior monologue

El Señor Presidente abounds with depictions of psychological distress expressed through various forms of interior monologue. Many passages in free indirect discourse suddenly take on the anxiety and fear experienced by the character whose perspective is momentarily assumed. A whistleblowing doctor visits the President's office to reveal the corrupt scheme of the Chief of Military Hygiene that led to the accidental poisoning of soldiers in the military hospital. Rather than rewarding his actions, the President condemns him to two hundred lashes. When the doctor hears his ultimately fatal punishment announced, his desperation is "voiced" by the narrator:

> ¡Nunca había sudado tanto!... ¡Y no poder gritar para aliviarse! Y la basca del miedo le, le, le hacía tiritar... (42)
>
> Never had he sweat so much!... And to not be able to shout to relieve his feelings! And the nausea from the fear made him, him, him shiver…

These sound effects, a peculiar favorite technique used by Asturias, reflect the novel's origin as an oral tale told at Paris evening gatherings with other Latin American exiles. They accentuate the emotion, but also blur the boundaries between the narrator and narrated. Trauberg's translation reproduces the effect using similar means:

> В жизни так не потел! И нельзя громко плакать! Страшно, страшно, тошно, зубы сту-сту-сту-чат... (38)
>
> He had never sweated so much in his life! And he could not cry out loud! Terrifying, terrifying, nauseating, his teeth chat-chat-chatter…

Evidently sensing that the oral quality of such passages was worth preserving, the translators consistently find ways to make the Russian text "sound" like the original. In a similar manner, the narrator's description of Pelele's madness gets "infected" with the character's own laughter:

> El idiota se despertaba riendo, parecía que a él también le daba risa su pena, hambre, corazón y lágrimas saltándole en los dientes, mientras los pordioseros arrebataban del aire la car-car-car-car-cajada, del aire, del aire..., la car-car-car-car-cajada... (10)
>
> The idiot would wake up laughing, it seemed that he too was made to laugh by his misery, hunger, heart and tears falling on his teeth, while the beggars snatched bu-bu-bu-bu-bursts of laughter from the air…, bu-bu-bu-bu-bursts of laughter…

Trauberg includes the onomatopoeic quality of the laughter, but leaves the speaker of the utterance ambiguous, making it unclear whether it is the narrator or the beggars who laugh:

> Дурачок хихикал. Может быть, ему тоже было смешно, что он такой забитый, голодный—сердце да слезы. А те все хохотали – ха-ха-ха – хо-хо-хо… (19)
>
> The idiot giggled. Perhaps he also found it funny that he was so downtrodden, hungry—both heart and tears. And those others all kept laughing—ha ha ha—ho ho ho…

Readers are privy to the delirious ramblings of the "idiot" Pelele using a highly "visual" kind of interior monologue. As he lies injured and immobile in a pile of garbage, tormented by frightening visions, the narration blends seamlessly into Pelele's increasingly disconnected thoughts:

> Disociación de ideas. Elasticidad del mundo en los espejos. Desproporción fantástica. Huracán delirante. Fuga vertiginosa, horizontal, vertical, oblicua, recién nacida y muerta en espiral...
> ... erre, erre, ere, ere, erre, ere, erre...
> Curvadecurvaencurvadecurvacurvadecurvaencurvala mujer de Lot. (¿La que inventó la Lotería?) Las mulas que tiraban de un tranvía se transformaban en la mujer de Lot y su inmovilidad irritaba a los tranvieros que, no contentos con romper en ellas sus látigos y apedrearlas, a veces invitaban a los caballeros a hacer uso de sus armas. Los más honorables llevaban verduguillos y a estocadas hacían andar a las mulas... (24)
>
> Dissociation of ideas. The elasticity of the world in mirrors. Fantastic disproportion. Delirious hurricane. Vertiginous flight, horizontal, vertical, oblique, newly-born and dead in a spiral...
> …erre, erre, ere, ere, erre, ere, erre…
> Curveofacurveinacurveofacurvecurveofacurveinacurveof Lot's wife. (The one who invented the lottery?) The mules pulling the tram were transforming into Lot's wife and their immobility annoyed the tram conductors who, not content with breaking their whips on their backs and throwing stones at them, invited the gentlemen passengers to use their weapons. The grandest of them carried daggers and made the mules go by stabbing them...

Pelele's grunts and glossolalia morph into a strange concrete dream-image. Asturias uses elements of automatic writing in attempting to represent the character's interiority. Trauberg's Russian translation recreates these techniques using similar sounds and images, closely following the form of the original:

> Путались мысли. Мир расплывался, как в зеркале. Причудливо менялись размеры. Бурей проносился бред. Пелеле летел куда-то вверх, вниз, в сторону, в другую, по спирали…
> … У-и, у-и, и-и-и-и…
> Ло-та-ло-та-лото-ло-та-лотова жена. (Та, что выдумала лотерею?) Мулы, тянувшие конку, обернулись Лотовой женой – застыли – кучера бранятся – бросают камни, хлещут кнутами – ни с места, попросили пассажиров, не поможет ли кто. Те помогают, бьют мулов и мулы пошли… (27)
>
> Thoughts became mixed up. The world blurred as in a mirror. Proportions changed fantastically. Delirium swept past like a storm. Pelele flew somewhere above, below, to one side, to another, in spirals…
> … U-ee, u-ee, ee-ee-ee-ee…
> Lo-ta-lo-ta-loto-lo-ta-Lot's wife. (The one who came up with the lottery?) The mules pulling the horsecar turned into Lot's wife—they froze—the coachmen quarrel—they throw stones, lash with their whips—staying put, they asked the passengers if someone could help. They help, beat the mules and the mules get moving….

As the passage continues, Pelele's grunts of pain evoke a blasphemous reference to Christ: "...Erre, erre, ere... I-N-R-Idiota! I-N-R-Idiota!" (24). In a now familiar technique, the unconscious associations prompted by the verbal nonsense form a complex knot of meanings. The initials refer to the sign placed above Christ at his crucifixion, but this also, in turn, evokes common Spanish phrases: to "put the INRI" (*poner el INRI*) on someone means to mock them, and *para más INRI* is akin to "rub salt in the wound." Pelele was driven to murder by the mocking of his fellow beggars, and Asturias help readers understand and experience the cause and effect not only as seen from outside, but also from within Pelele himself, from within the "small universe of his mind" (24). This part of the passage is not present in the Russian translation. While such overt references to Christianity were not always omitted in Soviet translations, this may have been seen as excessive by either the translators or the editors.[53]

In another scene, as Cara de Ángel leaves the capital by train, finally seemingly free from the President's grasp, his perception of the constant motion and sound of the wheels gradually materializes into a premonition of his fate. The phrase "cada vez" ("each time") subtly morphs into "cada ver" (*cadáver*, corpse)

> Seguía la tierra baja, plana, caliente, inalterable de la costa con los ojos perdidos de sueño y la sensación confusa de ir en el tren, de no ir en el tren, de irse quedando atrás del tren, cada vez más atrás del tren, más atrás del tren, más atrás del tren, más atrás del tren, cada vez más atrás, cada vez más atrás, cada vez más atrás, más y más cada vez, cada ver cada vez, cada ver cada vez, cada ver... (314)

[53] In their article on the 1959 translation, Ol'ga Svetlakova and Boris Kovalev argue that Trauberg—a Catholic convert and theologian—could not possibly have missed the Christian reference, leading them to assume it was omitted out of political expediency, "simply not needed by the publishers, nor by the translators, who received excellent royalty payments in that era, nor by the Soviet reader." O. A. Svetlakova and B. V. Kovalev, "*Sen'or Prezident* Migelia Ankhelia Asturiasa v russkom perevode 1959 g.: svoe i chuzhoe," *Antichnost'—Sovremennost': Voprosy filologii* 6 (2019): 184. The omission may in fact be a result of the changes Asturias and his publishers made to various editions of the novel. The passage first appears in the 1952 Losada edition, but other details in the translation strongly suggest that Trauberg and Bylinkina were using the first Costa Amic edition (1946). The passage was left unchanged in later editions of their translation.

> He followed the low, flat, hot, monotonous land of the coast with his eyes lost in sleep and the confusing sensation of going in the train, of not going in the train, of going behind the train, each time farther behind the train, farther behind the train, farther behind the train, each time farther behind, each time farther behind, each time farther behind, more and more each time, each time cadaver…

Bylinkina brilliantly finds a pun to mimic the effect, using "s trudom" ("with difficulty") and its near rhyme "trupom" (like a corpse).

> Глаза сонно скользили по ровной, жаркой, однообразной низине побережья; в голове путались мысли: он едет в поезде, не едет в поезде, бежит за поездом, бежит с трудом – поезд уходит, бежит с трудом – поезд уходит, бежит с трудом, бежит с тру-дом, с тру-дом, с тру-дом, с тру-дом, с тру-пом, с тру-пом, тру-пом, тру-пом-тру-пом-тру-пом-тру-пом… (232)
>
> His eyes sleepily glided along the even, hot, uniform lowland of the coast; his thoughts became mixed up in his head: he is riding in a train, not riding in a train, running behind the train, running with difficulty—the train is leaving, he runs with difficulty—the train leaves, he runs with difficulty, runs with difficulty, with difficulty, with difficulty, with a corpse, with a corpse, like a corpse…

In rendering "the confusing sensation" as "his thoughts became mixed up in his head," Bylinkina provides a slightly more logical "explanation" to frame her recreation of Asturias's irrational verbal and visual associations.

Guatemalan identity

One of Asturias's central aesthetic goals in writing *El Señor Presidente* was applying modernist techniques to articulating Latin American reality. Although the country and the tyrannical dictator are never explicitly named, Asturias went to great lengths to evoke life in Guatemala City under the rule of Manuel Estrada Cabrera during the 1910s. The peculiarities of Estrada Cabrera's positivistic, liberal regime, such as his intellectual cult of the goddess Minerva, are clearly referenced in the novel, as are the brutal punishments he meted out to his subjects. The paranoid atmosphere of the city seems overwrought, but many of the concrete details were

historically accurate: for example, just as in the novel, women convicted of various crimes were, in fact, forced into prostitution in the capital city's brothels as part of their criminal sentence. The Asturias scholar Jack Himelblau researched the sources and antecedents for the novel, finding that even the minor characters in *El Señor Presidente,* such as the motley group of beggars depicted in the first part of the novel, were apparently based on real figures well-known in the city at the time.[54] The colloquial names of important locations in the novel can also be traced to the geography of the city before the destructive earthquake of 1917 that hastened the end of Estrada Cabrera's rule.

Asturias asserted the explicitly Guatemalan identity of the novel through his conscious focus on orality in the novel. He went to great lengths to differentiate the speech of his characters based on their social class and ethnic background, presenting a panorama of Guatemalan varieties of Spanish. Readers encounter the rhyming slang of the criminal underclass and the broken Spanish of the indigenous peasants and soldiers, riddled with grammatical errors. The yells of street vendors intermingle with the prostitutes' cant in brothel doorways. Asturias's penchant for capturing the full diversity of language even extends to individual idiolect: the puppeteer Don Benjamin, suffers from a speech impediment, to comic effect. The narration also abounds in Guatemalisms denoting local flora and fauna as well as social customs. Such attention to local realia was typical of the nineteenth-century realist *costumbrista* trend in Latin American prose, which sought to establish and consolidate nascent national identities through careful depiction of the local setting. Asturias was writing a modernist novel for an international, rather than local, audience, however, and his evocation of Guatemalan Spanish was programmatic. He appended to the end of the novel an extensive glossary of Guatemalisms,

[54] Jack Himelblau, "*El Señor Presidente*: Antecedents, Sources, and Reality," *Hispanic Review* 41, no. 1 (Winter 1973): 43–78.

without which readers in the rest of the Spanish-speaking world could at times struggle to understand key moments in the text. The glossary includes everyday colloquial expressions specific to Guatemalan Spanish, as well as folk sayings and words from Mayan languages.

In their Russian translation, Trauberg and Bylinkina did not include the glossary, instead preferring to translate most of the relevant words into Russian equivalents. In a few cases, the word is left untranslated, rendered in Cyrillic, and explained with a footnote. For example, in one scene depicting Lucio Vásquez in the "Two-Step" bar, the translation leaves his choice of drink—pulque—untranslated, explaining in a footnote that it is "an alcoholic drink distilled from cactus" (76). Both translators also continually find clever solutions to recreate even the rhyming slang. The characters' names, many of them nicknames, are given equivalents in Russian; for example, the beggar Patahueca [Flatfoot] is rendered as Kolchenogii [Cripple-leg], and the barmaid La Masacuata (literally "boa constrictor," derived from a Nahuatl word) appears as Udavikha [female boa constrictor]. The beggars, in particular, speak in an animated folksy idiom. In the moments before the murder that sets the plot in motion, Patahueca sees an owl fly past. He recites an incantation to ward off the bad omen:

> —¡Hualí, hualí, tomá tu sal y tu chile...; no te tengo mal ni dita y por si acaso, maldita! (12)
> *"Hualí, hualí*, take your salt and chili…; I wish you neither good nor ill, but be damned all the same!"

As Asturias explains in the glossary, the word *hualí* is "an expression of fearful joy taken from the *Popol Vuh*."[55] Trauberg's rendering of this phrase captures the meaning while retaining the rhyming form:

> — Совушка-сова, уходи, пока жива, унеси беду и горе за синее море. (20)
> "Owl-owl, get away while you're alive, bear trouble and grief away beyond the blue sea."

[55] Cited in Martin, "Notas explicativas," 350.

The omission of *hualí* is compensated by the phrase's resemblance to Russian folk incantations, which make use of similar rhyming diminutives and epithets.

The translators' close attention to the form of such exclamations does not always capture all of the shades of meaning inherent in them in the original. Another beggar, El Mosco, mocks the policemen dragging him off to jail after the murder of Colonel Parrales Sonriente:

> —¡Ay, suponte, cuánto chonte! ¡Ay, su pura concección, cuánto jura! ¡Jesupisto me valga!... (16)

Asturias provides glosses for these phrases in his glossary:

> *Ay, suponte, cuánto chonte...:* Wordplay that means: "Look, fancy that, so many policemen."
> *Ay, su pura concepción, cuánto jura...:* The same wordplay as before, about rural police.[56]

The last phrase El Mosco utters distorts the exclamation "¡Jesucristo me valga!" ["Good Lord!"] with "pisto," a slang term for money common in Central America. Trauberg leaves out this final phrase but adopts a similarly sarcastic tone in translating his outburst:

> — Фу-ты ну-ты, сколько полицейских! Ох ты, ух ты, сколько тут легавых! (21)
> "Well look at that, so many policemen! Oh, my, so many cops here!"

Asturias begins Chapter 24, "Casa de mujeres malas" ["House of Bad Women"], with snippets of overheard conversation between two prostitutes who play *jerigonza*. a word game that uses nonsense filler syllables, akin to Pig Latin in English or *javanais* in French:

> —¡Indi-*pi*, a *pa*!
> —¿Yo-*po*? Pe-*pe*, ro-*po*, chu-*pu*, la-*pa*...,
> —¿*Quitín*-qué?
> —¡Na-*pa*, da-*pa*!
> —¡Na-*pa*, da-*pa*!
> —... ¡Chu-jú!
> —¡Cállense, pues, cállense! ¡Qué cosas! Que desde que Dios amanece han de estar ahí chalaca, chalaca; parecen animales que no entienden… (188)
>
> "Indian!"

[56] Ibid.

> "Me? Sure, but at least I'm pretty…"
> "What?"
> "Nothing!"
> "Nothing!"
> "... Oh ho!"
> "Shut up already! What nonsense! Since God awakes you've been there yap-yap-yapping; you seem like dumb animals…"

This passage does not further the plot and serves only to immerse the reader in Asturias's fascination with colloquial speech and *jitanjáfora*-like wordplay. Trauberg recreates this word game quite ably in Russian using the meaningless filler syllable "па":

> —Ту-па-зем-па-ка-па пар-па-ши-па-вая!..
> —Са-па-ма-па су-па ка-па!..
> — Я-па? Ах ты стер-па-ва-па!..
> — Да тише вы! С самого утра: «па-па-па!», «па-па-па!» Как собаки какие все равно! (133)

> "You lousy native!"
> "You're a bitch yourself!"
> "Me? Ah, you're the bitch!"
> "Quiet, you! Since morning it's 'pa-pa-pa,' 'pa-pa-pa!' Just like dogs!"

Interestingly, while this passage is entirely omitted in Frances Patridge's English translation, Trauberg, if anything, intensifies the language of the original, albeit filtered through the word game.[57]

The Dance of Tohil

One key scene in Chapter 37, "El baile de Tohil" ["Tohil's Dance"], serves as the best example of Asturias's investigation of the roots of Guatemalan identity using modernist techniques. Cara

[57] Trauberg finds a similarly clever way of reproducing Asturias's playing with vulgarity in another scene in the brothel. The cook expresses contempt for the newcomer Fedina, calling her "gallina pu… erca!" [hen-sow!] (181) The obscene *puta* is euphemized as *puerca* (sow) at the last moment. Trauberg reproduces the effect in Russian, playing with the words *kurva* (whore) and *kuritsa* (chicken, hen): "Ukh, ty, kur…ritsa parshivaia!" [Oh, you … lousy hen!] (129).

de Ángel has fallen out of favor with the President on account of his romance with Camila Canales, the daughter of the general whom is being framed for the murder of Colonel Parrales Sonriente. As Cara de Ángel meets with the President, he has a vision of the Maya deity Tohil, the god of fire, war, and rain. Tohil demands total submission from mankind, including human sacrifice. This vision, clearly an allegory for or reflection of the tyrannical rule of the President, provided the most solid evidence for Ospovat's earlier criticism to the effect that Asturias could adopt an indigenous peasant perspective in his writing. This impression is strengthened by the epigraph to the novel, taken from the *Popol Vuh*: "Y entonces se sacrificó a todas las tribus ante su rostro" ["And thus all of the tribes were sacrificed before his face"].[58] At the same time, however, and similar to his use of stream-of-consciousness in depicting various psychological states, Asturias presents Cara de Ángel's vision in a way that blurs the boundaries between dreams and waking life, the mythical plane and the socio-political reality that comprises most of the novel.

The vision begins with the "subterranean palpitation of a subterranean clock that marks the fatal hours" (307) for Cara de Ángel. As he is immersed in the hallucination, the pulses materialize into the beats of the *tún.* the drum summoning Tohil. Using a familiar technique, Asturias mimics the constant drumbeat in another clever instance of wordplay. The sound of the word *tún* evokes associations with *retumbo* [boom], *tumbos* [jolts], and *tumbas* [tombs]:

> Tohil exigia sacrificios humanos. Las tribus trajeron a su presencia los mejores cazadores, los de la cerbatana erecta, los de las hondas de pita siempre cargadas. […] Y cada cazador-guerrero tomó una jícara, sin despegársela del aliento que le repellaba la cara, al compás del tún, del retumbo y el tún de los tumbos y el tún de las tumbas, que le bailaban los ojos a Tohil. (309)
>
> Tohil demanded human sacrifice. The tribes brought the best hunters before him, with their blowguns held high and their slingshots made of agave fiber at the ready. […] And

[58] Asturias, *El Señor Presidente: Edición crítica*, 3. The epigraph was included in the Russian translation: "…i byli prineseny v zhertvu vse pred likom ego…" ("…and all were brought in sacrifice before his countenance…," 5).

> each hunter-warrior blew on their gourds without pausing for breath, to the rhythm of the *túm*, of the boom and the *túm* of the jolts and the *túm* of the tombs, which set Tohil's eyes dancing.

In her Russian translation of the passage, Bylinkina replaces the word *túm* with the Russian words *baraban* [drum] and *gul* [boom]. The sound effects of the original are muffled as a result:

> Тоиль требовал человеческих жертв. Племена привели к нему своих лучших охотников, тех, у кого всегда наготове сербатана, у кого всегда под рукою праща из агавы. […] И каждый охотник-воин взялся за голову, жарким дыханием обдавало лица, а глаза, в такт барабанному гулу, и гулу шквалов, и гулу склепов, заплясали перед Тоилем. (228)

> Tohil demanded human sacrifices. The tribes brought to him their best hunters, those who always have their blowgun at the ready, who always have their sling made of agave under their arm. […] And each hunter-warrior grabbed his head, their faces enveloped in warm breath, and their eyes danced before Tohil to the rhythm of the drum's booming, and the boom of the squall, and the boom of the crypt.

The mythological content, however, is preserved, presenting Soviet readers with Asturias's appeal to ancestral, telluric forces at the expense of some of the difficulty of its form. This was, simply put, a significant departure from the norms of Soviet literature of the time: literary criticism regularly attacked "decadent" writers in the West for their use of myth. Soviet translators of the era regularly "softened" or simply excised passages from original texts in their translations if they contained objectionable content. While this censorship was most commonly applied to profanity, violence and gore, and overt depictions of sex, politically or ideologically controversial passages could also be omitted or changed.[59] Bylinkina or her editors could have excised the passage or rendered it more understandable with some extra "scaffolding" in the form of explanatory comments.

[59] See my discussion of censorship in Chapter 1 There is at least one instance of overt political censorship in Trauberg and Bylinkina's translation. In Chapter 41, the prisoner (given the ambiguously Slavic name Vich) who informs on Cara de Ángel during his final days in prison is allowed to flee (presumably back home) to Vladivostok; the Russian translation retains the name but unsurprisingly omits his mysterious destination.

In many ways, *El Señor Presidente* was a problematic choice for Asturias's novelistic debut in Russian. The political critique of the Estrada Cabrera dictatorship—ostensibly the most important element of the work for Soviet purposes—is obscured by Asturias's interest in avant-garde linguistic experimentation and rendering psychological states. Nevertheless, Trauberg and Bylinkina produced a surprisingly "literal" translation that explicitly recreates the avant-garde style and substance of the original novel with few additional explanations, euphemisms, or omissions.[60] Their translation appeared during the consolidation of the so-called "Soviet school" of translation, the norms of which were largely shaped by the translator and critic Ivan Kashkin. The socialist realist "method" of translation he developed in the mid-1950s led to a widespread preference for "free" translations over "literal" ones among Soviet translators.[61] This preference for "free" translations effectively sanctioned censorship of the original text in order to better depict reality in its revolutionary development. In practice, cosmetic censorship was most often applied to depictions of sexuality, profanity, violence, and sensitive political references. In terms of style, however, "free" translation discouraged close imitation of foreign syntax, calques, expressions, and conventions; in short, the "form" was subservient to the content. Trauberg and Bylinkina, both at the start of their careers, had perhaps not internalized these translation norms to the same degree as their more established colleagues. In any case, their translation does little to "mitigate" the peculiarities of Asturias's style.

The translation's publication coincided with the sweeping changes in Soviet literary criticism during the Thaw. Following the relative cultural isolation and dogmatism of the Zhdanovist era, critics were beginning to revisit and redefine the boundaries of literary realism in

[60] In fact, the 1968 and 1970 editions were slightly revised to censor certain depictions of sex and bodily decay.

[61] See my discussion of this topic in Chapter 1 of this dissertation.

their discussions of foreign literature. In 1961, Tamara Motyleva, later a major authority on Western European literature, wrote that "the main factor that determines the realist character of a given work is not the individual literary devices, but rather the degree of social typicality [*tipichnost'*] of the events and people depicted in it."[62] Techniques and devices such as allegory and grotesque imagery are not in themselves "decadent" or "realist"; on the other hand, writing in a traditional realist mode can still present an untruthful conception of reality. Motyleva suggests that the realism of a given work should be determined by "not the insignificant truth of facts, but the deep truth of the whole, the correspondence of the depicted events to the inner laws of modern society."[63] While Motyleva's approach was relatively "revisionist" in comparison to most criticism on realism in foreign literature at the height of the Thaw, the standards were in flux, and within a decade her view would become mainstream.[64] The Russian translation of *El Señor Presidente* was written during this transitional period, and, like virtually all Soviet translations of the era, it could not be published without a paratext that conditioned the work's reception.

The foreword

Lev Ospovat, the critic who first introduced Asturias to Soviet readers, wrote the foreword that was included in the published book. The foreword repeats many of the arguments of his earlier critical articles. Now writing after Castro's triumph in Cuba, Ospovat frames his discussion by discussing the "struggle of the peoples of Latin America against colonialism":

[62] Tamara Motyleva, *Inostrannaia literatura i sovremennost'* (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1961), 41.

[63] Ibid., 43.

[64] See Chapter 4 for a detailed discussion of revisionist criticism on literary realism in the 1960s and 70s.

> Before our eyes, now in one, now in another Latin American country, rotten regimes run by henchmen of American monopolies collapse under the blows of popular uprisings. The peoples of Latin America today enter the forefront of the struggle against the colonizers who hinder their societal and cultural development (7).[65]

While Ospovat concedes that the plot of Asturias's novel centers on the bureaucrats, one can sense the presence of another world—"the world of 'those from below,' the world of simple, ignorant, forgotten, but morally pure people" (8–9). Asturias, their "representative," exposes and denounces the harm brought upon them by bourgeois "civilization." Ospovat once again emphasizes Asturias's "spiritual connection" with the indigenous peasantry of Guatemala, his "blood brothers" [*brat'ia po krovi*] and his desire to become "the mouthpiece [*vyrazitel'*] of the thoughts of his people, not simply to describe the life of the Mayan Indians, but to illustrate it precisely as the Indians themselves see, feel and understand it themselves" (9). This is clear in the novel, he argues, starting with the epigraph from the *Popol Vuh,* which immerses the reader in "that folkloric-mythological elemental force," which, despite not comprising the plot of the novel, nevertheless still "powerfully defines its entire aesthetic form" (10). Ospovat attributes all of the peculiarities of Asturias's style—the sound repetitions, alliterations, leitmotifs—to the "elemental force of folk [*narodnoi*] poetry": "Like lava, this elemental force seethes under the surface of the novel, breaking through only once—in the chapter 'Tohil's Dance'" (10). This effectively provides a simple explanation for any possibly controversial elements of the novel's style.[66] In fashioning Asturias as the representative of the indigenous, the foreword prepares the reader to perceive the entirety of his work as a statement of anticolonial protest. Ospovat admits

[65] My pagination refers to the 1959 foreword: L. Ospovat, "Predislovie," in Asturias, *Sen'or Prezident,* 7–14.

[66] Asturias sometimes claimed he borrowed certain literary techniques from indigenous culture: "Onomatopoeias are an important ingredient in all Indian languages; they were a means the Indians had to reproduce natural phenomena. […] The Indians were also very fond of something found in my work: the multiplication of syllables within a word to give a particular sensation or impression." Harss, *Los nuestros,* 106–7.

that the novel does not depict any coherent opposition to the President's regime, but at the same time, he contends that Asturias definitively rejects "liberal bourgeois illusions about the liberation of the people without their own active participation" (13). He concludes his discussion of the novel with a note about its new significance in the light of contemporary events:

> The humanistic pathos of the novel, the hatred for the oppressors depicted in it and its aesthetic originality still continue to excite the hearts of readers. Today, when the wind of freedom flows over all of Latin America, *El Señor Presidente* has special relevance: it teaches one to hate exploiters, to believe in the people, to aid in the struggle (14).

The internal review

In April 1960, nearly a year after the book was published, Iurii Pevstov wrote an internal review of Trauberg and Bylinkina's Russian translation along with an evaluation of Ospovat's foreword.[67] Rather than submitting it to Skina Vafa, the editor in charge of the translation at Goslitizdat, Pevtsov chose to send it to Ivan Terekhov, the head of the department at Glavizdat that oversaw the activity of central publishing houses.[68] Terekhov then sent the review to Grigorii Vladykin, the director of Goslitizdat, who promptly forwarded it to other officials at the publishing house, including Aleksandr Puzikov, the head editor, and Sergei Emel'ianikov, the head of the editorial board for modern foreign literature. Suspecting that Pevtsov had an ulterior motive for going above the heads of his direct superiors, Vladykin asked Puzikov to look into the matter: "I ask that you carefully go over this review together with the editorial board; perhaps there is a 'direct' reason for it."[69]

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[67] Iurii Pevtsov was a scholar of Latin American literature at Moscow State University. In 1961, he was sent to Cuba to serve as Che Guevara's personal Russian tutor. An authority on Asturias, he compiled a bibliography of his works and associated criticism and completed a dissertation on his later novels in 1974.

[68] Glavizdat is a shortened form of Glavnoe upravlenie izdatel'stv, poligrafii i knizhnoi torgovli [The Main Administration of Publishers, Printing, and Bookselling].

[69] "Proshu sovmestno s redaktsiei tshchatel'no razobrat'sia s etoi retsenziei: m[ozhet] b[yt'] est' v nei 'priamoi' rezon." RGALI, f. 613, op. 10, ed. khr. 5298, l. 113. It is unclear whether Pevtsov's review was (belatedly) part of

In his review, Pevtsov laments that the translation was published so many years after the original, and he suggests that translating a different novel by Asturias would have been more appropriate.[70] His evaluation of the translation itself is quite negative: he begins his review by claiming any reader familiar with the original will be shocked and unable to recognize the work. Pevtsov's review highlights two main problems with the translation: mistranslations and an overly literal adherence to the original text. He identifies an important error, for example, in a depiction of a grand procession preceding the President's address to his people. The proceedings are interrupted when the sound of a loud explosion sends the crowd running in confusion; the cause of the sound was not, in fact, an actual bomb (*bomba*), but rather a large bass drum (*bombo*) dropped by a musician in the military band.[71] Pevtsov's comments on literalism are less convincing. Pevtsov harshly judges both Trauberg and Bylinkina for directly translating metaphors from Spanish rather than paraphrasing them in Russian.

> The translators often, without thinking about the content of the translated text, translate diplomatic turns of phrase literally, resulting in total absurdity. On page 120 there is the phrase "there were not enough nails on the cross from which he hung." And although they wrote several lines earlier in the translation that Cara de Ángel (one of the book's characters) was lying in bed, not hanging on a cross, they don't see the contradiction. In reality this is about the sharp internal anxiety torturing Cara de Ángel.[72]

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the typical internal review process for translations at Goslitizdat at the time. There are no archival records of any other internal reviews of the work.

[70] He notes that the Hispanist Fedor Kel'in and the critic E. M. Kolchina had proposed first translating *Hombres de maíz*, *El Papa verde*,or the entirety of *Week-end en Guatemala* instead. Ibid., l. 114, 118.

[71] Ibid., 115.

[72] "Neredko perevodchiki, ne vdumyvaias' v soderzhanie perevodimogo teksta, perevodiat idiomaticheskie oboroty bukval'no, chto vedet k iavnomu absurdu. Na str. 120 est' fraza 'v kreste, na kotorom on visel, ne khvatalo gvozdia.' I khotia neskol'kimi strokami vyshe oni sami zhe pereveli, chto Kara de Ankhel' /odin iz personazhei knigi/ lezhit v posteli, a ne visit na kreste—oni ne vidiat protivorechiia. V deistvitel'nosti zhe, rech' idet ob ostrykh, vnutrennikh perezhivaniiakh, muchivshykh Kara de Ankhel'." Ibid., 116. Pevtsov is referring to an idiom that, in his opinion, should not have been translated literally.

Pevtsov argues that the inaccuracies in the translation were a result of the translators' insufficient knowledge of Spanish and suggests that they should have been given more time to complete the task. He concludes that despite having some skillfully-rendered passages, the translation as a whole was not fit for publication.[73] Pevtsov also devoted a few pages of his review to Ospovat's foreword. He complains that the foreword offers too streamlined of an overview of Asturias's evolution as a writer, smoothing over the full complexity of the man and his work. Pevtsov points out that the scenes depicting psychological states—such as Pelele's rambling, Camila's dreams, or the inner monologues of Cara de Ángel—are far removed from literary realism. He attributes the foreword's one-sided evaluation—a betrayal of the "principles of the Marxist-Leninist study of literature"—to the demands of the publishing house:

> Publishing house editorial boards often mistakenly assume that if one points out the contradictions of a writer's method and worldview, then the question arises about the appropriateness of publishing a book by this or another author. [...] Forewords in which a writer's creative evolution and method are given in their full complexity and inconsistency only help the reader to understand the work's contents.[74]

His complaints about both the translation seem to have had little impact as the novel appeared again in three more editions over the next thirty years, with only slight revisions.

Conclusion

As both Soviet leaders and the general public were swept up in the romance of the Cuban Revolution, Asturias became the most prominent new Latin American novelist. The December 1960 issue of *Inostrannaia literatura*, devoted entirely to the "blazing continent" and its peoples struggling for freedom, featured Bylinkina's abridged translation of *El Papa verde*.[75] The

[73] Ibid., 119.

[74] "Neredko redaktsii izdatel'stv oshibochno polagaiut, chto esli otmetit' protivorechiia metoda i mirovozzreniia pisatelia, to togda vozniknet vopros o tselesoobraznosti izdaniia knigi togo ili inogo avtora. [...] Predisloviia, gde tvorcheskii put' i metod pisatelia dan vo vsei svoei slozhnosti i protivorechivosti, lish' pomogut chitateliu razobrat'sia v soderzhanii knigi." Ibid., 121.

editorial board of the journal was unanimous in its praise of the novel's depiction of local color, but mixed on the quality of the translation. In his internal review, the writer Lev Nikulin, for example, called it an "interesting and well-written work; even the bad translation does not spoil this impression […] the novel has the climate, as well as the landscape and people, their feelings and thoughts."[76] Such evaluations reflect the sometimes contradictory priorities of the Soviet cultural authorities with regard to Latin American literature: while the political utility of a given work to be translated was always considered important, editors were no less interested in providing readers an engaging illustration of life in an exotic, faraway land.[77]

Asturias became a literary celebrity not only in the Soviet Union, but across the socialist bloc. Exiled first from his home country, then from Argentina, he spent a good portion of 1960s in the socialist East. In January 1962, he requested permission from the Foreign Commission of the Soviet Writers' Union to attend the World Peace Congress in Moscow that June.[78] While he waited for approval from Moscow, Asturias accepted an invitation from the Romanian government to stay in the country with Pablo Neruda. He stayed in a famous sanatorium near Bucharest and debated the merits of socialist realism with young writers in Cluj.[79] In March 1963, Asturias and his wife began petitioning friends from his visit to the 1957 festival—Lev

[75] Asturias, *Ego zelenoe sviateishchestvo* [*His Green Holiness*], trans. M. Bylinkina, *Inostrannaia literatura* 12 (1960): 26–121. Goslitizdat later published a book version in 1964 under the title *Zelenyi papa* [The Green Pope].

[76] "Interesnoe i khorosho napisannoe proizvedenie, vpechatlenie ne portit dazhe plokhoi perevod, v kontse poiavliaetsia mnogo lits novykh, za nimi trudno sledit', no v obshchem ia za pechatanie imenno etogo romana, a ne drugogo ('Ol'ga') – v etom romane est' i klimat, i peizazh, i atmosfera i liudi, i chuvstva i mysli." RGALI f. 1573, op. 3, ed. khr. 22, l. 7. Margarita Rudomino was particularly dismissive of the translation.

[77] Tobias Rupprecht characterizes this dynamic as the Soviet authorities' attempt to impose an ideological superstructure on the general popular fascination with escapist Latin American cultural products. Tobias Rupprecht, *Soviet Internationalism after Stalin: Interaction and Exchange between the USSR and Latin America during the Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

[78] RGALI f. 631, op. 26, ed. khr. 4605.

[79] This trip inspired his travelogue *Rumania, su nueva imagen* (Xalapa: Universidad Veracruzana, 1964).

Ospovat, his wife Vera Kuteishchikova, a major scholar of Latin American literature, and Elena Kolchina, the head of the Latin American section of the Foreign Commission—hoping to visit the Soviet Union once again.[80] While on another trip to Bucharest later that year, they were granted permission to visit the Rostov branch of the Peoples' Friendship University, where they met the exiled leftist Salvadoran poet Roque Dalton.[81] Asturias returned to the socialist bloc with Neruda in 1965, embarking on a gastronomic tour in Hungary before travelling to East Berlin for the International Writers' Meeting.[82] During his peripatetic exile, Asturias regularly corresponded with his friends in the Soviet Union, expressed interest in his Russian translations, and, unlike many foreign writers, frequently asked about royalty payments.[83]

Asturias was entangled in a Cold War controversy in 1965, at the International PEN Congress held in Bled (then in Yugoslavia). When the French section of PEN nominated Asturias as candidate for president of the organization, Michael Josselson, the man behind the Congress for Cultural Freedom, a CIA front, conspired to block Asturias from election, denouncing him as "that old Nicaraguan fellow-travelling war-horse." The CIA's hand-picked delegates elected Arthur Miller instead.[84] Later that year, while staying in Italy, Asturias learned that he had been awarded the International Lenin Prize. He was deeply ambivalent about this

[80] RGALI f. 631, op. 26, 4606, l. 2

[81] Mora y Araujo de Asturias, *Memorias de mi memoria*, 262.

[82] David Schidlowsky, *Neruda y su tiempo: las furias y las penas*, vol. 2 (Santiago: RIL Editores, 2008), 1131. Asturias and Neruda wrote a book in praise of Hungarian cuisine following their tour: Miguel Ángel Asturias and Pablo Neruda, *Comiendo en Hungría* (Barcelona: Editorial Lumen, 1969). Published simultaneously in five languages (Spanish, Hungarian, French, German, and Russian), their book was effectively a work of propaganda sponsored by the socialist government in Hungary.

[83] RGALI f. 631, op. 26, 4609. For example, in 1962, upon learning of the good reputation of the Russian translation of *El Señor Presidente,* Asturias wrote to Bylinkina to thank her personally. Bylinkina, *Vsego odin vek*, 261.

[84] Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters*, 2nd ed. (New York: New Press, 2013), 306–308.

honor: his conscience was troubled by the scandalous trial of Sinyavsky and Daniel, and yet the material safety that the award could provide him and his wife was hard to turn down. As his wife Blanca recalled in her memoirs, "it was a bitter gulp for us because despite not being communists, we admired the achievements of the USSR."[85] He was eventually convinced to accept the award by the Spanish poet Rafael Alberti, a longtime friend of the Soviet Union. In July, Asturias traveled to Moscow, where, in a ceremony in the Kremlin, he received the award from Dolores Ibarruri, alias "La Pasionaria," the famous exiled leader of the Spanish Republican cause.[86]

In 1967, Asturias became the first Latin American novelist to win the Nobel Prize for Literature. Vitalii Somov, the deputy editor-in-chief of the Committee for Printing of the Council of Ministers, asked the director of the publishing house now known as Khudozhestvennaia literatura [Fiction] to publish a new edition of the Russian translation of *El Señor Presidente*.[87] A third edition followed in 1970, when the translation was included in a volume of the prestigious series *The Library of World Literature*. While most of Asturias's major works were eventually translated into Russian, his first novel remains the best known.[88]

Asturias's reputation was overshadowed in his own lifetime by that of Gabriel García Márquez, whom he publicly accused of plagiarism.[89] For Western audiences, the latter's personal

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[85] Mora y Araujo de Asturias, *Memorias de mi memoria*, 168.

[86] Luis López Álvarez, *Conversaciones con Miguel Ángel Asturias*, 145.

[87] RGALI f. 613, op. 10, ed. khr. 5298, l. 112.

[88] Dashkevich's translation of *Los ojos de los enterrados* appeared in 1968, followed by Trauberg's translation of *Leyendas de Guatemala* in 1972. A volume containing Trauberg's translations of *Hombres de maíz* and *Viento fuerte* (the latter co-translated with R. Sashina and M. Abezgauz) was published in 1977. That same year, Trauberg apparently began work on a translation of Asturias's 1963 novel *Mulata de tal* [*Mulatta*] that was never published. RGALI f. 613, op. 10, ed. khr. 5300.

[89] In 1967, Asturias suggested that *One Hundred Years of Solitude* was plagiarized from Balzac's *The Quest of the Absolute.* As Gerald Martin describes in his biography of García Márquez, the statements were exaggerated in the

brand of "magical realism" quickly displaced Asturias's surrealist-inspired expressionism as the trademark Latin American literary mode. In the socialist East, however, Asturias remained a major literary figure. For some Latin American intellectuals, Asturias's associations with the Soviet Union amounted to a kind of political collaboration that compromised his literary talents.[90] It would be fairer to say that the mutual fascination between Asturias and his Soviet audience was as pragmatic as it was partisan.[91] With the publication of *El Señor Presidente,* Asturias was introduced to Soviet audiences as both an anti-imperialist writer raging against the United States as well as a proud member of an ancient indigenous people from a faraway land. Upon Asturias's death in 1974, Bylinkina wrote a eulogy that captured this unique combination of the political and exotic in one man:

> No one who saw Asturias could forget his face: the face of an Indian, the descendant of the ancient and wise Mayan people. His high forehead, large, aquiline nose; his prominent, slightly slanted eyes, looking inquisitively at the world under heavy eyelids; the head of a thinker, a warrior, a priest, as if carved by ancient master stonemasons. Indeed, he was a warrior, thinker, and priest: a militant humanist, always thinking about the fates of the oppressed peoples of Latin American and bringing to the altar of truth his wonderful talent as a prose writer and poet. […] Asturias is a national writer [*narodnyi pisatel'*] in the fullest sense of the word.[92]

press. In fact, Asturias was finally responding to years of provocation by the younger writer, who suffered from a certain anxiety of influence: he deeply resented the fact that he was not the first Latin American novelist to win a Nobel Prize and sought to establish himself as the progenitor of "magical realism." Gerald Martin, *Gabriel García Márquez: A Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009), 341.

[90] Juan Olivero, a fellow Guatemalan writer who knew him in Paris, went so far as to claim that he had been taken in by a Comintern plot, and that his Banana Trilogy was written on Moscow's orders. Juan Olivero, *El Miguel Ángel Asturias que yo conocí: relato anecdótico* (Guatemala City: Editorial Cultural Centroamericana, 1980), 123–140.

[91] Asturias's engagement with the socialist East has been nearly entirely ignored by scholars and critics. Tobias Rupprecht concludes that Asturias "showed no particular interest in the Soviet utopia." Rupprecht, *Soviet Internationalism after Stalin*, 157. Arturo Taracena Arriola mentions only the Lenin Prize in his account of Asturias's political evolution. See his article "El camino político de Miguel Ángel Asturias," *Mesoamérica* 38 (December 1999): 86–101.

[92] Bylinkina, "Pamiati Migelia Ankhelia Asturiasa" *Latinskaia Amerika* 6 (1974): 145–146.

Chapter Three

The "Boom" in the Soviet Union: Carlos Fuentes

On the final page of his novel *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* (*The Death of Artemio Cruz*), the Mexican novelist Carlos Fuentes stamps the work with two locations and two dates: "Havana, May 1960" and "Mexico City, December 1961." Fuentes wrote much of the novel at the epicenter of the Cuban Revolution, which resonated strongly throughout all of Latin America. For Mexican intellectuals, it was an event that prompted many to evaluate the revolution that began in their own country half a century earlier.

In his early stories and criticism, Fuentes had established an ambitious cosmopolitan literary program, seeking to bring Mexican literature into dialogue with the rest of the world. His earlier works such as *La región más transparente* (*Where the Air is Clear,* 1958) employed modernist techniques gleaned from careful reading of Joyce, Dos Passos, and others in an examination of contemporary Mexican society. The Cuban Revolution spurred him into political engagement. He condemned the interventionist policies of the United States in Latin America, and in 1962, was invited by the Alliance for Progress to take part in a televised debate on Latin America with Richard N. Goodwin, the US Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs.[1] The debate never took place, however, falling victim to the deepening tensions of the Cold War: like many other Latin American writers, Fuentes was denied an entry visa for his supposed Communist convictions under the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952.[2] In his prepared

[1] The Kennedy and Johnson administrations sought to foster better relations with Latin America through the Alliance for Progress, a well-funded program that "supported development and modernization projects as means of building democracy and political stability—and thereby, it was hoped, containing the spread of Communism—as well as gaining goodwill in the public sphere." Deborah Cohn, *The Latin American Literary Boom and U.S. Nationalism during the Cold War* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2012), 25.

[2] Cohn, "Carlos Fuentes: Fostering Latin American-U.S. Relations during the Boom," *INTI* 75/76 (Spring–Autumn 2012), 9–10.

statement, which he published in the leftist Mexican periodical *Siempre!*, he declared that armed revolution was the only way to transform Latin America and overthrow the hegemony of the United States.[3] As Maarten van Delden has argued, his concrete sociopolitical arguments in favor of revolution were informed by a deeper utopianism that conceived of revolution as "a sudden return to a pristine state of universal fraternity."[4]

For Fuentes, the utopian promise of the Cuban Revolution starkly contrasted with the stagnated Mexican revolutionary government. He provided his own critical account of the Mexican Revolution and the corruption of its ideals in *La muerte de Artemio Cruz*, which appeared in 1962. The novel examines the life of Cruz, a former revolutionary who consolidates power through violence and betrayal. In tracing his rise to the top echelons of society, the novel is a damning retrospective assessment of the legacy of the revolution. And although Fuentes was clearly writing within an established literary subgenre—the novel of the Mexican Revolution—he remained equally committed to his modernist aesthetic allegiances.[5] *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* is an experimental text that departs from the norms of the traditional critical realist canon. He uses techniques that deliberately frustrate the reader's understanding of the events, including nonlinear temporality, fragmented narrative perspectives, and intentional ambiguity. In attempting to stay true to both his aesthetic and political allegiances, Fuentes wrote a novel of considerable complexity that earned him international acclaim.

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[3] Carlos Fuentes, "El argumento de América Latina," *Siempre!*, August. 8, 1962, 20–25.

[4] Maarten Van Delden, *Carlos Fuentes, Mexico, and Modernity* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1998), 43.

[5] In such prose works as Mariano Azuela's *Los de abajo* (*The Underdogs*, 1915) and Martín Luis Guzmán's *El águila y la serpiente* (*The Eagle and the Serpent*, 1928), the authors of the so-called *novela revolucionaria* combined autobiographical elements with documentary technique to depict the experience of the revolution. Fuentes wrote that despite their technical shortcomings, these authors "introduce an original note in the Spanish American novel: they introduce ambiguity. Because in the revolutionary dynamic the heroes can be villains and the villains can be heroes." Fuentes, *La nueva novela hispanoamericana* (Mexico City: Joaquín Mortiz, 1969), 15.

In the Soviet Union, where the Cuban Revolution resonated with the internationalist hopes of the Khrushchev Thaw, Fuentes's pivot toward political engagement was received enthusiastically. The major newspapers in the country published translated excerpts from his article from *Siempre!*, presenting him as the leader of the Mexican Left's "angry young men": an "honest intellectual who does not stand apart from public life."[6] The Soviet cultural authorities were desperate to court the favor of the Latin American left as part of a wider strategy to regain the hegemonic position the state had once enjoyed around the world in the era of the pre-war Comintern. However, as they tried to reposition themselves as the custodians of the nascent third-world left, party leaders learned they would have to relinquish control of revolutionary aesthetics. In translating the works of the new generation of leftist Latin American writers, the Soviet literary establishment would be forced to accept compromises.

The Russian translation of *La muerte de Artemio Cruz—Smert' Artemio Krusa*, first translated in full by Margarita Bylinkina in 1967—reveals the tensions residing in this changing power dynamic. As I discuss in this chapter, through numerous editorial interventions and selective "cosmetic" censorship, Bylinkina's translation "domesticates" many experimental aesthetic features of the original in accordance with the conventions of Soviet literature.[7] In addition to suppressing the modernist nature of the text, the translation also augments Fuentes's critique of the role of the United States in the failures of post-revolutionary Mexican society and obscures the novel's discussion of national identity and cultural mythology. The foreword,

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[6] B. Iaroshevskii, "'Delo' Fuentesa," *Za rubezhom* 27 (1962): 22; Fuentes, "Revoliutsiia? Vy boites' ee!" *Izvestiia* (6 July 1962); Fuentes, "Otkroite glaza, ianki!" *Nedelia* 12 (17–23 March 1963): 15. All translations of cited Spanish and Russian text in this paper are the author's unless stated otherwise. Soviet critics of the era sometimes used the term "angry young people" (*molodye serditye liudi*) to refer not only to the writers of John Osborne and Kinglsey Amis's generation, but to young postwar Western writers more generally, such as Alain Robbe-Grillet, Siegfried Lenz, and Juan Goytisolo.

[7] See Chapter 2 for my discussion of Bylinkina's 1959 co-translation (with Natal'ia Trauberg) of Miguel Ángel Asturias's novel *El Señor Presidente*.

written by Iurii Dashkevich, makes this propagandized interpretation explicit, presenting the novel as a politically engaged work within the tradition of canonical realism that unmasks the corruption and betrayal of the Mexican Revolution by the new Mexican bourgeoisie. As a result, the Russian translation of *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* significantly distorts the impression of the original work in order to reflect Soviet priorities. [As such, the reception of this landmark text of the Latin American "Boom" mirrors the evolving official discourse on literary realism in Soviet criticism. In redefining realism as a political orientation rather than a style or set of devices, translators of Latin American literature strove to introduce literary works into the Soviet literary system that contained aesthetically subversive material, essentially shuffling in Western modernism through a side door.

Historical context

In the mid-1950s, Fuentes regularly criticized Soviet cultural and political policies in the journal *Revista Mexicana de Literatura*, which he founded with Emmanuel Carballo. The journal promoted a largely apolitical notion of artistic freedom in seeking to bring Mexican culture into dialogue with the rest of the world.[8] This was as much a response to the Mexican state's official support for nationalism in art and literature—the so-called "cactus curtain"[9]—as it was a rejection of the paternalistic cultural diplomacy of the Soviet Union and the United States, viewed as two sides of the same imperialist coin. In one of his regular columns, Fuentes published a translation of the American communist Howard Fast's public renunciation of

[8] Leonardo Martínez Carrizales, "*Revista Mexicana de Literatura*: Autonomía literaria y crítica de la sociedad," *Tempo Social* 28, no. 3 (2016): 66.

[9] The phrase "cortina de nopal" was popularized by José Luis Cuevas, whose book with this title critiqued the dominance of muralism in Mexican art.

Stalinism following Khrushchev's "secret speech" at the Twentieth Communist Party Congress in early 1956, praising it for its "great human and historical value."[10] By the end of the decade, the rapid changes in Soviet society during the ensuing Thaw fascinated Fuentes, and the Cuban Revolution prompted him to reflect on the legacy of Stalinism. In his journalism, he maintained that while the Latin American Old Left had become an obstacle to national liberation movements, the Soviet Union was a helpful model for underdeveloped countries; the failures of communism were not the fault of the system itself, but of Stalin alone.[11]

Fuentes's re-evaluation of his views coincided with a short period of deepening sociopolitical engagement between Mexico and the Soviet Union. During the presidency of Adolfo López Mateos, the Mexican government sought to diversify its trade relations by exploring cooperation with the Soviet Union, which provided a helpful model of industrialization and economic development while also serving as a counterbalance to the influence of the United States. Receptive to this interest, the Soviet government arranged an exposition in Mexico City in 1959 led by Anastas Mikoyan that showed different facets of Soviet life to a Mexican audience.[12] The fascination was mutual. In the early 1960s, Soviet audiences could visit large exhibitions of ancient Mexican art in Moscow and Leningrad, read about the exploits of Pancho Villa, sing along to folksongs about the Mexican revolution, and marvel at murals by Diego

[10] [Fuentes], "Talón de Aquiles," *Revista Mexicana de Literatura* 7 (September–October 1956): 119–122.

[11] Fuentes, "Carne y cartón de Stalin," *Política* 2, no. 38 (November 15, 1961): 16. The Russian State Archive of Literature and Art (hereafter RGALI) holds a letter from Fuentes to Ilya Ehrenburg dated March 4, 1956, to which I was denied access. The timing of the letter, which coincides with the earliest public knowledge of Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin, suggests at the very least that Fuentes was closely following events in the Soviet Union.

[12] For more on Mexican-Soviet relations during this period, see Vanni Pettinà, "Bienvenido Mr. Mikoyán!: tacos y tractores a la sombra del acercamiento soviético-mexicano, 1958–1964," *Historia Mexicana* 66, no. 2 (October–December 2016): 793–852.

Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, and José Clemente Orozco.[13] In popular works with such suggestive titles as *Meksika bez ekzotiki* (*Mexico Without Exoticism*), they read about a poor country languishing in the "dark shadow of its northern neighbor," still struggling to realize the goals of its groundbreaking, if ideologically misguided revolution.[14] Meanwhile, scholars from a variety of fields made important contributions to the study of Mexico's past and present, such as Yuri Knorozov's landmark study of the Mayan writing system.[15]

Fuentes's sympathetic attitude toward the post-Stalin Soviet Union did not go unnoticed by the cultural authorities in Moscow, who were eager to make connections with Mexican intellectuals and encourage further cultural exchanges between the two countries. Soviet criticism on Mexican letters had long been dominated by the figure of José Mancisidor, a writer of proletarian novels and avowed Communist. His novels and statements to the press were regularly translated and published widely, and he was regarded as an authority on Mexican culture and politics. Mancisidor's death in 1956, along with that of the Stalinist system of patronage, heralded the end of an era.[16] Fuentes, already recognized as the leading young Mexican writer of his generation, seemed well-positioned to take up the mantle. When his 1962 article from *Siempre!* in favor of revolution circulated in Soviet newspapers, Fuentes was introduced in print as a short-story writer, but misleadingly so: one story, titled "Ispaniia, ne

[13] B. R. Vipper, ed. *Iskusstvo Meksiki* (Moscow: Sovetskii khudozhnik, 1960); I. Lavretskii [I. Grigulevich], *Pancho Vil'ia* (Zhizn' zamechatel'nykh liudei. Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1962); L. A. Zhadova, *Monumental'naia zhiopis' Meksiki* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1965); G. Stepanov, ed. *Narodnaia meksikanskaia poeziia* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1962).

[14] R. A. Tuchnin, *Meksika bez ekzotiki* (Moscow: Goslitizdat, 1963), 57.

[15] Iu. V. Knorozov, *Pis'mennost' indeitsev maiia* (Moscow-Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1963); M. S. Al'perovich and N. M. Lavrov, *Novoi i noveishei istorii Meksiki (1810–1945)* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoi literatury, 1960). For more on this topic, see William Harrison Richardson, "*Meksikanistika*—Five Decades of Soviet Historical Writings on Mexico," *Mexican Studies* 8, no. 1 (Winter 1992): 53–57.

[16] See my discussion of the Stalin-era "literary monopolists" from Latin America in Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

zabud'" ("Spain, Do Not Forget"), was in fact a translated excerpt from *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* depicting Lorenzo's experiences in the Spanish Civil War.[17] Framing Fuentes as a storyteller of the heroic Republican cause was a convenient means of signaling his commitment to Khrushchev's renewal of socialist internationalism during the Thaw.

In early 1963, Fuentes wrote to the Soviet embassy in Mexico to ask for permission to travel to the Soviet Union.[18] He was invited for a week-long trip in August 1963, during which the Soviet Writers' Union arranged for him to meet with important cultural figures.[19] Fuentes wrote about his meetings with Ilya Ehrenburg, Andrei Voznesensky, and Grigory Chukhray as a correspondent for *Siempre!* in a feature that remarked positively on the developments of the Thaw.[20] His visit was well-received by the editors at the journal *Inostrannaia literatura*, whose office Fuentes visited during his trip. Months later, Iurii Dashkevich, the head editor of Latin American literature for the journal, published an article on Fuentes's visit, including extended alleged quotations from the writer's comments.[21] Fuentes argues that a century and a half of Latin American independence has managed to merely replace Spanish colonial oppression with

[17] Bibliographies of Latin American literature in the Soviet Union list two translations of prose works attributed to Fuentes: the aforementioned "Ispaniia, ne zabud'," trans. N. Golubentsev, *Literaturnaia Rossiia* (January 11, 1963), 22–23, and *Chistaia sovest'* [Clear Conscience], trans. E. Pashchenko, in *Zoloto, Kon', i Chelovek* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Inostrannoi literatury, 1961), 325–333. The latter is evidently a translated excerpt from Fuentes's second novel *Las buenas conciencias* (*The Good Conscience*, 1959).

[18] RGALI, f. 631, op. 26, ed. khr 4703, l. 1. Fuentes had been planning this trip for some time: in a letter to Sam Hileman in March 1961, he wrote that he expected to travel there the following summer. Sam Hileman papers (Collection 337). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

[19] RGALI, f. 631 op. 30, ed. khr. 992, l. 49–50.

[20] Fuentes, "Moscú en el verano de paz," *Siempre!* 534 (September 18, 1963): 29, 70. "Diálogo con Ilya Ehremburg [sic]," *Siempre!* 538 (October 16, 1963): ii–v. "Andre Voznesienski," *Siempre*! 539 (October 23, 1963): vii. "Entrevista con Grigori Chujrai," *Siempre!* 540 (October 30, 1963): xiv.

[21] Fuentes's comments on this occasion have not been reported or translated elsewhere. Archival records of the publication proofs for *Inostrannaia literatura* put their authenticity into doubt: editors freely inserted politicized language to his reported comments throughout the article. RGALI f. 1573 op. 3, ed. khr. 1292, l. 1.

American imperialism. His reported comments outline the responsibility of the writer to his people in a recognizably Soviet mold:

> In the conditions of an undeveloped dependent country the popular masses do not have the ability to speak their word freely. [...] And the honest writer, working on a literary work, strives to invest it with not only his own thoughts and feelings, but to convey the thoughts and feelings of his people, to show the genuine life of his fellow countrymen. The people expect the true word from the writer—it is their only possibility to pour out their heart and soul, to express their aspirations and hopes.[22]

Fuentes's short discussion of *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* as cited in the article similarly and conveniently reduces the plot to one of class struggle: "It is the biography of one man as well as the history of my country over the last half-century. The rise and fall of Cruz is the trajectory of the haute bourgeoisie..."[23] The presentation of Fuentes in this feature further cemented his positive reputation in the Soviet Union. In 1964, likely at Dashkevich's urging, the journal included the novel in their publication plans for the following year.[24]

At the end of his feature on Fuentes, Dashkevich quotes him as paraphrasing Mayakovsky on revolutionary aesthetics: "A work that has revolutionary content should also have a revolutionary form."[25] One wonders if Dashkevich was fully aware of what the journal had committed to in selecting *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* for translation.[26] The novel hardly resembled the canonical critical realism that the Soviet Union had exported as the literary mode

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[22] Dashkevich, "Karlos Fuentes," *Inostrannaia literatura* 12 (1963): 252.

[23] Ibid., 253.

[24] "K svedeniiu chitatelei," *Inostrannaia literatura* 10 (1964), back cover. Dashkevich's role in arranging these publication plans could not be corroborated by the archival records of *Inostrannaia literatura* at RGALI, which do not contain the typescripts and internal reviews related to the translation discussed in this chapter.

[25] Dashkevich, "Karlos Fuentes," 253.

[26] The translator Èlla Braginskaia provided crucial information to *Inostrannaia literatura* about the novel as early as December 1962, when she translated a glowing review of the novel by María del Carmen Millán that had been published in *Revista Iberoamericana* no. 54 (July–December 1962): 397–399. Curiously, a letter from the Soviet ambassador to Mexico addressed to the Writers' Union announcing Fuentes's visit (March 4, 1963) states that *La región más transparente* was being translated at the time. RGALI f. 631, op. 26, ed. khr. 4703.

of the international Left. It was in fact a paradigmatic text of what would later be labelled the Latin American literary "Boom"—a new generation of writers who were, if anything, eager to reject what they considered the provinciality and naïve realism of their predecessors.

La muerte de Artemio Cruz was indeed revolutionary in form. The title character's biography is presented in a tightly-organized alternation of different narrative fragments. Readers first encounter Cruz on his deathbed through a first-person interior monologue, often using stream-of-consciousness narration. Pages later, the narration shifts to the second person, as an indeterminate narrator explores alternate paths Cruz's life could have taken in a sort of future conditional. This is followed by a passage of conventional third-person omniscient narration that depicts a single day in Cruz's life. These three narrative and temporal frames alternate through twelve full cycles, forcing the reader to observe Cruz's life from multiple perspectives. Fuentes introduces repeated motifs and echoes of speech whose significance emerges only gradually. Readers are forced to take an active role in interpreting the events and reconstructing the timeline of Cruz's life. The novel was experimental not only in its form, however, but also in content: the detailed descriptions of bodily decay and physical sexuality as well as the prominent role of vulgar language were a novelty in Spanish-language literature.

Such deliberate formal difficulty and shocking content could not easily be accommodated by Soviet literary tastes, let alone censorship. Like virtually all translations of foreign literature that were published in official venues in the Soviet Union, the translation of *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* had to pass through a rigorous review process. In order to be approved for translation and publication at a major journal or publishing house, it first had to be evaluated in a series of internal reviews. The translation could proceed only after it had been approved. The final translation would then have to be evaluated by another set of internal reviews and approved

by the editorial board. A foreword would have to be written, reviewed, and approved by multiple editors as well.[27]

The translator tasked with rendering the novel into Russian was Margarita Bylinkina, a translator who had previously translated Miguel Ángel Asturias's *El papa verde* (*The Green Pope*). Bylinkina's translation, *Smert' Artemio Krusa*, was published in abridged format over two issues of *Inostrannaia literatura* in July and August 1965.[28] In November 1966, the editorial board of the state publishing house Progress decided to include the translation in its thematic publishing plan for the following year.[29] It was published in book format with a foreword by Dashkevich in the first quarter of 1967 in a print run of 50,000 copies—a sizeable quantity that was actually quite modest for the first translation of novel by a foreign writer.[30]

Translating an experimental novel

Cruz's thoughts as he lies on his deathbed are presented as interior monologues that often employ stream-of-consciousness narration. Long run-on sentences containing sudden shifts in perspective and content are combined with onomatopoeic cries of pain and echolalic repetitions.

[27] This process is discussed in detail in Chapter 1 of this dissertation. Until 1973, when the Soviet Union joined the Universal Copyright Convention, authors of translated works were not only not paid royalties, but, in most cases, they were also not asked for permission or even notified when a translation was published.

[28] The journal frequently published long-form prose works in an abridged so-called "journal variant." This effectively sanctioned the tacit censorship of the texts without the authors' consent. The implications of this for the translation of *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* are discussed below.

[29] State Archive of the Russian Federation (GA RF), R-9590, op. 7, d. 765, l. 116. The fact that the translation had previously appeared in *Inostrannaia literatura*, albeit in an abridged format, may have allowed it to bypass some of the usual internal review process at Progress.

[30] During this era, Progress Publishers was a relatively "niche" publisher for translations of foreign literature. In contrast, the book series "Library of World Literature" began in 1967 by Khudozhestvennaia literatura, the most important publishing house in the country, published some 200 titles at print runs of 300,000 copies. Such quantities were indeed considered massive for Latin American writers at the time.

By forcing the reader to work through the deliberate difficulty of such passages, Fuentes calls attention to language itself. In one such interior monologue, Cruz plays with the letters that make up his name:

> …mi nombre que sólo tiene once letras y puede escribirse de mil maneras Amuc Reoztrir Zurtec Marzi Itzau Erimor pero que tiene su clave, su patrón, Artemio Cruz… (118)[31]
>
> my name that has only eleven letters and can be written a thousand ways Amuc Reoztrir Zurtec Marzi Itzau Erimor but has its key, its model, Artemio Cruz…

This kind of formal and conceptual difficulty was far from the conventions of contemporary Soviet literature. Bylinkina's translation of the novel brings it stylistically closer to the norms of standard literary Russian. Her rendering of the passage above is representative of this "domesticating" approach:

> В моем имени и фамилии только одиннадцать букв, их можно сочетать по-всякому: Амук, Реострир, Суртек, Марси, Итсаи, Еримор. Но у этой абракадабры есть свой код, свой стержень – Артемио Крус. (106)
>
> In my name and surname there are only eleven letters, they can be combined in any way: Amuc, Reoztrir, Zurtec, Marzi, Itzau, Erimor. But this abracadabra has its code, its core—Artemio Cruz.

Bylinkina tames the run-on sentence by dividing it in two and introducing punctuation. While the anagrams' strangeness is preserved, the translation interprets the passage for the reader with the label "this abracadabra." These two domesticating strategies—suppressing the experimental form and resolving conceptual ambiguity—are evident throughout the entire translation, resulting in a more uniform text. In her memoirs written decades later, Bylinkina emphasized that she strove to make the translation more accessible to the reader by following the advice of her mother, her first reader: "You should generally make divisions between the dialogue and Cruz's reasoning. It

[31] The pagination for the original text of the novel refers to Carlos Fuentes, *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1962). The pagination for the Russian translation refers to the first full translation: Karlos Fuentes, *Smert' Artemio Krusa: Roman*, translated by M. Bylinkina (Moscow: Progress, 1967).

will be easier to understand."[32] Beyond this concern for the reader's comprehension, these strategies may also reflect the new commercial demands of the publishing house: in 1964, the Council of Ministers had issued a decree that made publishers and bookstores responsible for their book sales, "thus for the first time giving Soviet publishers a serious material interest in the market's response to their product."[33]

The novel's passages in third-person narration employ similarly challenging techniques. Numerous disorienting transitions interrupt the straightforward depiction of events. The first of these passages, dated July 6, 1941, begins with Cruz riding in a limousine on his way to a meeting with American businessmen in Mexico City—a key scene that highlights his willingness to plunder his country for personal gain. Cruz's thoughts relayed in free indirect discourse are suddenly interrupted mid-sentence by an entirely different parallel scene in which his wife Catalina and daughter Teresa shop for a wedding shower dress and stop to eat at a restaurant. Using an effect similar to a cinematic cross-cut, the two scenes show the extent to which American capital and culture have infiltrated Mexican society:

> …él pensó que no había hecho mal en asociarse con los cafetaleros colombianos cuando empezó la guerra en África y ellas entraron a la tienda y la empleada les pidió que por favor tomaran asientos mientras le avisaba a la patrona…(18)
>
> He thought he hadn't done badly in associating himself with the Colombian coffee-growers when the war in Africa began and they entered the store and the clerk asked them to please take a seat while she sent for the mistress…

Bylinkina's translation prevents disorienting the reader by splitting the run-on sentence into two sentences, inserting an ellipsis and paragraph break after the first:

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[32] Margarita Bylinkina, *Vsego odin vek: Khronika moei zhizni* (Moscow: Grifon, 2005), 265.

[33] Gregory P. M. Walker, "Soviet Publishing Since the October Revolution," in *Books in Russia and the Soviet Union: Past and Present*, edited by Miranda Beaven Remnek (Wiesbaden: Harassowitz, 1991), 75. For more on this topic, see Chapter 1 of this dissertation.

> Он думал, что правильно сделал, связавшись с колумбийскими кофейными плантаторами, когда началась война в Африке...
>
> Женщины вошли в ателье, и мастерица попросила их – «будьте любезны, пожалуйста!» – сесть и подождать, пока она позовет хозяйку. (21–22)
>
> He thought that he had done well, having involved himself with the Colombian coffee plantation owners, when the war in Africa began…
>
> The women went into the tailor shop, and the mistress asked them—"if you'd be so kind, please!"— to sit down and wait until the owner called them.

The first mention of "ellas" (feminine "they") is defined right away as "zhenshchiny" ("the women")—perhaps because of the lack of a commonly-used feminine plural personal pronoun in Russian. Bylinkina also provides the shopkeeper's request in quoted direct speech in contrast to the ambiguous reported speech of the. Later in this passage, as Catalina and Teresa pass by other stores, their comments are integrated into the third-person narration:

> Caminaban las dos tomadas del brazo. Caminaban despacio con las cabezas bajas y se detenían frente a cada aparador y decían qué bonito, qué caro, hay otra mejor más adelante, mira ése, qué bonito, hasta que se cansaban y entraban a un café y buscaban un lugar, alejado de la entrada por donde asomaban los billeteros de la lotería y se levantaba el polvo seco y grueso, alejado también de los mingitorios y pedían dos Canada Dry de naranja. (25)
>
> The two of them walked arm in arm.[34] They walked slowly with lowered heads and they stopped in front of each shop window and said how pretty, how expensive, there's a better one up ahead, look at that one, how pretty, until they got tired and entered a café and looked for a place, away from the entrance where the lottery ticket sellers peeked in and the dry and thick dust was rising, also away from the urinals and they ordered two orange Canada Drys.

The Russian translation relays their comments as direct speech in quotation marks and splits up the single run-on sentence:

> Мать и дочь шли медленно, держась за руки. Шли, ни на что не глядя, кроме витрин, останавливаясь у каждой и приговаривая: «Как красиво, но дорого; дальше будет магазин еще лучше; погляди, ах, как красиво...» пока, наконец, не устали и не зашли в кафе. Отыскали удобное местечко – подальше от туалета и от входа, где

[34] "Las dos" in the original indicates that the walking pair are both female.

> галдели продавцы лотерейных билетов и вздымались клубы сухой колючей пыли,– и попросили два бокала апельсинового «Канада дрей». (28)
>
> The mother and daughter walked slowly, arm in arm. They walked, not looking at anything except for the shop windows, stopping at each one while saying "How pretty, but expensive; there'll be an even better store ahead; look, ah, how pretty…" until, finally, they got tired and entered a café. They searched out a comfortable seat—a bit farther from the bathroom and from the entrance, where the lottery ticket sellers were clamoring and dry stinging dust billowed—and they asked for two glasses of orange "Canada Dry."

Bylinkina inserts lexical connectors, such as "nakonets" ("finally"), to further help orient the reader. Her rendering of this passage, like many others in the translation, retains Fuentes's implicit critique of the privileged life of the Mexican bourgeoisie but at the expense of his innovative modernist style.

In other passages in the novel, Fuentes uses deliberately defamiliarizing techniques to depict Cruz's thoughts in first-person narration. In one such scene, the bedridden Cruz senses only indirectly that someone (or something) has entered the room:

> Ah. Huelo ese incienso. Ah. Los murmullos en la puerta. Llega con ese olor de incienso y faldones negros, con el hisopo al frente, a despedirme con todo el rigor de una advertencia. (10)
>
> Ah. I smell that incense. Ah. The murmurs in the doorway. He[35] arrives with that smell of incense and black skirts, with the aspergillum in front, to see me off with all of the rigor of an admonition.

Fuentes forces the reader to read between the lines and wade through considerable ambiguity in Cruz's fragmented and incomplete perception of his surroundings. Bylinkina's Russian translation, in contrast, immediately defines the new arrival in his hospital bedroom as the priest that has been summoned to provide extreme unction:

> Ага. Чую ладан. Ага. За дверью слышу шепот. Явился святой отец со своим запахом ладана, в своих черных юбках, с кропилом в руках, чтобы спровадить меня на тот свет по всем правилам искусства. (15)

[35] Alternatively, "*It* arrives…": the original Spanish does not define whether the subject is animate or inanimate.

> Aha. I smell incense. I hear the whispering at the door. A holy father has shown up with his smell of incense, in his black skirts, with an aspergillum in his hands, in order to send me off to the afterlife following all the rules of the art.

The translation gives a more straightforward version of the events being narrated, lessening the burden of interpretation for the reader. Bylinkina similarly resolves conceptual ambiguity throughout the novel, explaining and defining what Fuentes merely implies or suggests.

Bylinkina's two main strategies in translating *La muerte de Artemio Cruz*—suppressing the irregular, experimental form and resolving conceptual ambiguity—effectively "domesticate" the original text for her Russophone audience. In this sense, her translation is a representative example of the "Soviet school" of translation: in the post-Stalin era, Soviet translators frequently made foreign texts conform to readers' and officials' tastes and expectations. In the case of this particular translation, Bylinkina's distortion of the novel's form shifts the reader's attention away from the aesthetic innovations of the text—they were, if anything, a mark against Fuentes and a barrier to having him published in the Soviet Union—directing it instead toward the "moral" of the story: condemnation of the United States' economic imperialism enabled by magnates like Cruz.

Translating with a political bent

Bylinkina's tendency to resolve the ambiguities of the original text in her translation occasionally leads her to impose politically-charged interpretations. In the same passage dated July 6, 1941, Cruz's meeting with the American businessmen provides the novel's first depiction of the wider exploitative relationship between Mexico and the United States. When Cruz meets with the American businessmen, they try to convince him of their plan to procure sulphur domes by communicating in condescendingly simple Spanish phrases:

> "—Domos, bueno. Piritas, malo. Domos, bueno. Piritas, malo. Domos bueno..." Él tamborileaba los dedos sobre el vidrio de la mesa y asentía, acostumbrado a que ellos, al hablar en español, creyeron que él no entendía, no porque ellos hablaran mal el español, sino porque él no entendía bien nada. "Piritas malo." (24)

> "—Domes, good. Pyrites, bad. Domes, good. Pyrites, bad. Domes good…" He drummed his fingers on the glass of the table and nodded, used to the fact that, speaking in Spanish, they thought he didn't understand, not because they spoke Spanish poorly, but because he didn't understand anything. "Pyrites bad."

Fuentes has the Americans assume Cruz is too stupid to understand their proposal, leaving it to the reader to infer that they harbor similar assumptions about all of their Mexican business partners. In her translation of this fragment, Bylinkina explicitly ascribes the Americans' assumption that Cruz cannot understand their proposal to the Americans' attitudes toward Mexicans in general:

> «Залежи – хорошо, колчедан – плохо. Залежи – хорошо, колчедан – плохо, залежи – хорошо...» Он, постукивая в такт американцу пальцами о настольное стекло, повторил: «...колчедан – плохо», повторил по привычке, ибо они, говоря по-испански, думают, что Он их не понимает – не потому, что они плохо говорят по-испански, а потому, что, мол, мексиканцы вообще все не так понимают. (26)

> "Deposits—good, pyrite—bad. Deposits—good, pyrite—bad, Deposits—good…" Knocking his fingers against the table glass to the rhythm of the American, he repeated: "…pyrite—bad," he repeated by habit, because when speaking in Spanish, they think that He doesn't understand them—not because they speak Spanish poorly, but because, as they say, Mexicans understand everything the wrong way.

Her use of the particle *mol* ("as they say" in Russian) further suggests that these businessmen are not alone in their cultural chauvinism, but rather repeating a widespread cultural prejudice. The second-person narration section that follows addresses Cruz's feelings of satisfaction at having earned the respect of the American businessmen:

> TÚ te sentirás satisfecho de imponerte a ellos; confiésalo: te impusiste para que te admitieran como su par: (32)

> YOU will feel satisfied for sticking it to them; admit it: you asserted your authority over them so that they would accept you as their equal.

The Russian translation defines who "ellos" ("they") are right away:

> Ты будешь доволен тем, что заставишь американцев уважать себя. Признайся, Ты ведь вон из кожи лез, чтобы они считали тебя своим. (34)
>
> You will be satisfied that you will force the Americans to respect you. Admit it, You made every effort so that they would consider you their own.

The "they" is explicitly named as the Americans. The Russian translation uses a typical idiomatic expression in its rendering of "you made every effort": "ty von iz kozhi lez" (literally, "you climbed out of your skin"). In the context of Cruz's envy and resentment of Americans, the expression intensifies his desire to be seen as an equal and perhaps unintentionally suggests that Cruz's resentment of his own nationality could be based on racial and ethnic grounds as well.

Fuentes's critique of contemporary Mexican society brings attention to the cultural hegemony of its northern neighbor. The world of Cruz's elite Mexico City milieu abounds in English phrases, which are all left untranslated in the original text. During a flight from Hermosillo to Mexico City, the signs on the airplane glow in English: "No Smoking, Fasten Seat Belts" (13). When Catalina and Teresa try on dresses, the shopkeeper reminds them "the customer is always right" (21). Over lunch, they argue over the pronunciation of Joan Crawford's name (23). The members of the new post-revolutionary bourgeoisie enjoy American consumer goods—Canada Dry, Pepsi, Cadillac—and their speech is peppered with words like "front-man" and "know-how." (25, 265) Bylinkina's translation retains nearly all of the English in the original and provides glosses in footnotes.[36] By retaining the English untranslated, the

[36] The glosses in the footnotes occasionally get it wrong. "Know-how" is translated as "metod proizvodstva" ("production method"); the American custom of saying "cheese!" when taking a photograph is misunderstood entirely. The translations of Western luxury items are similarly misunderstood: in Acapulco, Cruz treats his mistress Lilia to an extravagant meal of "vichysoisse, langosta, Côtes du Rhone, Baked Alaska" (159), rendered in Russian as "sous Vishi, langusty, otbivnye po-ronski, omlet 'Aliaska.'" ("Vichy sauce, lobsters, Rhone cutlets, an 'Alaska' omelet," 138).

translation reproduces the jarring effect of the original. All of this serves to highlight the extent to which Cruz—and by extension, the Revolution itself—has sold out the country to the Americans.[37]

The translation abounds in footnotes that are used to interpret features of Mexican life and history, sometimes with overt political bias.[38] The reader learns, for example, that Lázaro Cárdenas

> is a distinguished political and public figure of Mexico, an active participant in the Mexican revolution. As president of the republic (1934–1940), he implemented a number of measures that elicited sharp attacks from the reactionaries supported by US imperialism. Cárdenas is a vice-president of the World Peace Council, a laureate of the International Lenin Prize "for Strengthening Peace Among Peoples." (19–20)

Such explanations of foreign realia, commonplace in Soviet translations of foreign literature, can be understood as a reflex of the state's paternalistic attitude toward the reading public. In internal correspondence between different branches of the party apparatus, officials that advocated increasing the scope and quality of translations of third-world literatures listed readers' curiosity about foreign cultures as a top concern of the state. Footnotes were a relatively simple way to provide readers with the "correct" ideological interpretation of a given foreign culture along with the translation itself.[39] Bylinkina's explanatory footnotes clearly reflect the state's official attitudes toward Mexican history and politics. However, she occasionally misinterprets

[37] This stands in contrast to the first English-language translation of the novel (1964) by Sam Hileman, who perhaps unintentionally suppresses the anti-American message of the novel by failing to signal to the reader when the narration and dialogue abruptly shift to English.

[38] A form of meta-commentary on the main text, translators' footnotes have sometimes been discussed as an element of the paratext in Translation Studies scholarship; see, for example, Carmen Toledano Buendía, "Listening to the voice of the translator: A description of translator's notes as paratextual elements," *Translation & Interpreting* 5, No. 2 (2013): 149–162. I discuss Bylinkina's footnotes along with the text of the translation.

[39] Tobias Rupprecht similarly discusses the "rather successful subtle politicization of mass culture" during and after the Thaw as combining "a fascination for exotic beauty with an ideological superstructure." See his article "The Blazing Continent: Latin American Folklore and Romanticism in the Soviet Union," in Jan Hansen, Christian Helm and Frank Reichherzer, eds. *Making Sense of the Americas: How Protest Related to America in the 1980s and Beyond* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press; Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2015), 336.

references that would have been obvious to those familiar with the Mexican political system. An overheard snippet of conversation at Cruz's 1955 New Year party in his house in Coyoacán reports "[I hope] that the PRI continues choosing by finger" ("que el PRI siga eligiendo de dedo y ya...," 264). Bylinkina's translation, "chto PRI s trudom vyplyvaet…" ("that the PRI is barely cropping up again…," 225), misses the reference in the original text to the infamous "dedazo," the Institutional Revolutionary Party's custom of having the president hand-pick his successor.

The *chingar* passage

The section in second-person narration immediately preceding the section dated September 11, 1947, is an extended passage that develops from Cruz's inner thoughts as a man on his deathbed: "lárguense: ay dolor: lárguense: chinguen a su madre:" ("get out: oh pain: get out: go fuck yourselves," 143). Occurring in the sixth iteration of the novel's twelve rounds of shifting temporal and narrative frames, this passage can be considered the center of the novel in both the textual and ideological sense. Through his second-person narrator, Fuentes explores the embeddedness of the verb *chingar* in Mexican society. A vulgar word of uncertain origin most widely used in Mexican Spanish, the verb *chingar* literally means to harm, to damage, violate. It often implies specifically sexual violation, and is often rendered in English with the verb "to fuck." The reflexive of the verb—*chingarse*—means "to have failed," "fucked up."[40] It is a polysemous word that connotes violence and power—and like its Anglophone or, much more to the point, Russian equivalent, *ebat'*—is used commonly in conversational speech in a vast number of idiomatic expressions that do not reflect the literal meanings of the word.

[40] Guido Gómez de Silva, *Diccionario breve de mexicanismos* (Mexico City: Academia Mexicana, 2001), 49.

In this section, here discussed as the "*chingar* passage," Fuentes performs an exhaustive linguistic analysis of the word and lists over twenty examples of its inflections of meaning. This passage is clearly an homage to Octavio Paz, who interpreted the centrality of *chingar* in Mexican culture in his book *El laberinto de la soledad* (*The Labyrinth of Solitude*, 1950). In his essay "The Sons of La Malinche," Paz writes that

> In Mexico the word has innumerable meanings [...] But in this plurality of meanings the ultimate meaning always contains the idea of aggression [...] an emergence from oneself to penetrate another by force [...] The person who suffers this action is passive, inert and open, in contrast to the active and aggressive and closed person who inflicts it. The *chingón* is the *macho*, the male; he rips open the *chingada*, the female, who is pure passivity, defenseless against the exterior world.[41]

The *chingada*—the violated woman—becomes an important Mexican cultural symbol as a metaphor for the conquest: "If the *Chingada* is a representation of the violated Mother, it is appropriate to associate her with the Conquest, which was also a violation, not only in the historical sense but also in the very flesh of Indian women."[42] Expressions such as *hijo de la chingada*, using the past participle of the verb, can be understood literally—"son of the fucked woman." However, *la chingada* recalls the symbolic figure of La Malinche, the legendary Malintzin, an indigenous concubine of the Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés who aided him as an advisor and interpreter and gave birth to the first Mexican *mestizo* (person of mixed Iberian and indigenous ancestry). Her children by him—and by extension, all Mexicans—are thus the sons of La Malinche, the bastard children of violation and conquest. Clearly following Paz's example, Fuentes invokes the word to diagnose the Mexican existential condition. The wound of the conquest has produced a society locked in an eternal struggle to either dominate others or be dominated. This trauma is contained in the word *chingar*, continually invoked in everyday life,

[41] Octavio Paz, *The Labyrinth of Solitude*, trans. Lysander Kemp (New York: Grove Press, 1961), 76–77.

[42] Ibid., 86.

reinforcing the fate Mexicans are to endure: all are collectively "sons of the word" (144), and each generation bequeaths the curse to the next: "chain of *la chingada* that imprisons us all: […] you will inherit *la chingada* from above; you will inherit it from below: you are the son of the sons of *la chingada*; you will be the father of more sons of *la chingada*" (145).

The novel's twelve sections narrated in the third person each depict one decisive day in Cruz's life. At nearly every step, he opportunistically looks out for himself and seeks to survive at all costs. Even his idealized memory of his youthful love for Regina is revealed to be a rationalization for sexual violence. Cruz is the *chingón* who perpetuates the cycle of violence and domination. However, as readers learn near the end of the novel, the *chingar* passage points to Cruz's origins as well. Following the symbolic pattern of the Conquest, the green-eyed *mestizo* Cruz is the product of the rape of an Afro-Mexican woman by a *criollo* descendant of a Spanish family that colonized Mexico. Insofar as Cruz is understood as a national allegory for the fate of Mexico itself, this supports Paz's mythic reading of the Conquest.

In the second half of the *chingar* passage, however, the second-person narrator breaks with Paz, commanding the ambiguous addressee to "kill" the word and the power it yields over him: "leave it [*la chingada*] on the road, murder it with weapons that aren't yours: let's kill it: let's kill that word that separates us, petrifies us, rots us with its double venom of idol and cross: let it be neither our answer nor our fate:" (146). The narrator's use of the first-person plural seems to invoke Mexicans as a collective. As Richard M. Reeve notes, the second-person narrator is effective in "coercing the reader with a sense of complicity": Cruz judges himself, and we are complicit in his self-judgment as readers.[43] Similarly, Robert R. Ellis argues that Fuentes's use of second-person narration in extended passages, likely modeled on Michel

[43] Richard Reeve, "Carlos Fuentes y el desarrollo del narrador en segunda persona: un ensayo exploratorio," in *Homenaje a Carlos Fuentes*, ed. Helmy F. Giacoman (New York: Las Américas, 1971), 83.

Butor's *La Modification* (1957), "radically alters the reader's traditional relationship to fiction" by implicating him and his fellow readers as the protagonist: "it is specifically through the second person narrative that the reader comes to discover himself."[44]

As one could imagine, translating this passage presented a considerable challenge for Bylinkina, her editors, and the Soviet literary establishment. The first (1965) edition of Bylinkina's translation that appeared in *Inostrannaia literatura* simply excludes the passage altogether in its serialization.[45] Besides the *chingar* passage, three other sections of the novel's thirty-eight total were left untranslated. These sections focus on the events that take place on January 18, 1903, telling the story of Cruz's origins on the Menchaca estate and establish his hereditary link to mixed Spanish and Afro-indigenous ancestry (foreshadowed throughout the novel by repeated references to his dark skin, curly hair, and green eyes).[46] The fact that these two important points in the novel are absent is significant, as they concern Cruz's identity—and thus national identity. For the editors of *Inostrannaia literatura*, such discussion of national identity in symbolic terms was an ideological defect and an obstacle to the reader's understanding of the concrete causes of Mexico'sv socioeconomic problems.

The decision to leave out the *chingar* passage may just as well have been motivated by the strict Soviet censorship rules regarding vulgar language, depictions of sensuality, and gore. Translators often found ways to accommodate this "puritanical" reflex through the use of

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[44] Robert R. Ellis, "Phenomenological Ontology and Second Person Narrative: The Case of Butor and Fuentes," in *Phenomenology and Aesthetics: Approaches to Comparative Literature and the Other Arts*, ed. Marlies Kronegger (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991), 242, 244.

[45] The first sixteen sections of the novel were published in the July 1965 issue of the journal; the following August 1965 issue begins with the eighteenth section, skipping the seventeenth—the *chingar* passage.

[46] For more on the implications of Cruz's racial background see Marco Polo Hernández Cuevas, "Modern National Discourse and *La muerte de Artemio Cruz*: The Illusory 'Death' of African Mexican Lineage," *Afro-Hispanic Review* 23, No. 1 (Spring 2004): 10–16.

selective excisions, using softened euphemisms, or inventing clever circumlocutions.[47] Such graphic scenes in the novel as Cruz's "romance" with Regina, for example, or the lurid descriptions of bodily functions on his deathbed are rendered relatively inoffensive in translation.

The first book edition of the translation (v1967) includes all of the sections that were left out of the journal variant. Soviet readers, though, encountered the *chingar* passage heavily bowdlerized, riddled with deletions and euphemisms. Cruz's invective that introduces the passage ("chinguen a su madre") is translated into Russian as "Ubiraites'… vashu mat'." ("Go away … your mother," 126). Bylinkina uses a Russian analog to the Spanish insult, but excises the vulgar word, leaving the reader to read between the lines. She was forced to adopt a different strategy, however, for the cascade of profanities that followed. Bylinkina replaces *chingar* with the euphemism "eto slovo" ("that word"). She omits entirely the list of linguistic examples and attempts to compensate for this loss by inserting generalizing idiomatic statements that convey the word's presence in Mexican culture:

> Со всеми своими сородичами оно вылезает из постели и проникает во все закоулки быта, выходит на столбовую дорогу жизни. Сплошной мат. […] И это слово – или жизнь – везде и всюду. (127)
>
> It climbs out of bed with all of its relatives and penetrates into all the nooks and crannies of everyday life, it goes out onto the high road of life. Sheer profanity. […] And this word—or life—is anywhere and everywhere.

As the passage continues, the word "chingar" is rendered with a wide variety of euphemisms, such that it becomes unclear whether the text refers to one word in particular or profanity in general. In addition to "sploshnoi mat" ("sheer profanity"), the translation uses the euphemisms "paskudstvo" ("filth"), "nepotrebstvo" ("indecency"), "raspokhabshchina" ("obscenity"), "matershchina" ("foul language"), and "svoloch" ("bastard") for the Spanish "chingada." The

[47] For more on these strategies, see Samantha Sherry, *Discourses of Regulation and Resistance: Censoring Translation in the Stalin and Khrushchev Era Soviet Union* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015).

verb “chingar” is instead translated using “izmaterit'” (“to curse out”), “opoganit'” (“to befoul”). The phrase “los hijos de la chingada” (“the sons of *la chingada*”) is rendered as “vse eti nichtozhnye liudishki” (“all these insignificant worthless people”).

Overall, the translation’s handling of the *chingar* passage leaves at best a murky impression of what would be self-evident to Fuentes’s readers in Mexico. The link between contemporary Mexico and the trauma of the conquest is reduced to a depiction of society filled with vulgarity and ruled by violence. The need to use euphemisms in this context was certainly necessitated by official policies because such profanity would transgress the stylistic norms of literary Russian of the time. However, Bylinkina’s wide variety of euphemisms suggests an interpretation of the passage that either misses or deliberately suppresses the cultural specificity of *chingar*. By 1971, Soviet scholarship had filled this gap. In her monograph on the history of the Mexican novel, Vera Kuteishchikova was the first Soviet critic to discuss the “purely Mexican concept of ‘chingada’—violence, brutal superiority. O. Paz used this phrase in his essay [The Labyrinth of Solitude] in order to define the traditional traits of Mexican life. Conquered by the mighty and cruel conquistador, Mexico is itself a product [porozhdenie] of chingada. Chingada is linked to the image of the suffering Mexican woman, the victim of harsh violence.”[48]

The paratext

Like the vast majority of translated books published in the Soviet Union, the 1967 book version of *Smert' Artemio Krusa* was published with a foreword. Iurii Dashkevich, the editor who had published the first journal edition of Bylinkina’s translation, authored the foreword for the book

[48] Vera Kuteishchikova, *Meksikanskii roman* (Moscow: Nauka, 1971), 271–2.

edition. A veteran of the genre, he wrote the foreword following the typical format, starting with a short summary of the novel, followed by a condensed review of the modern history of Mexico and a biographical sketch of the author that highlights his leftist credentials. Dashkevich liberally quotes from Fuentes's reported statements in his own 1963 article for *Inostrannaia literatura*. The foreword asserts that Fuentes's main political concerns were "the paralysis of the people's revolution" and the "advance of the haute bourgeoisie in union with foreign capital."[49] Dashkevich focuses on Cruz's enrichment of himself at the expense of his country's welfare by cooperating with the Americans:

> There is no stop to the American monopolies' attempts to consolidate their position in the economy of Mexico through direct capital investment or predatory lending, by creating so-called "mixed" American-Mexican companies and societies controlled by the dollar. This is why the US monopolies need Artemio Cruzes![50]

Dashkevich discusses Cruz as a social type—a representative of the entire post-revolutionary bourgeoisie. Following this sociological reading of the novel, he further argues that Fuentes surpasses the narrow psychologism of Western literature by discussing "major moral and social problems, therefore, naturally, strengthening the critical social meaning of the work."[51] Dashkevich reserves only a few lines to the aesthetic elements of the text

> *The Death of Artemio Cruz* is also original in its composition, whose multifaceted nature (notably, its construction in three tenses—present, past, and future) gave the author the ability to encompass a vast panorama on a relatively small canvas, to illuminate the characters and events from different sides, to convey the richest range of human experiences.[52]

[49] Iurii Dashkevich, "Predislovie," in *Smert' Artemio Krusa*, 6.

[50] Ibid., 7.

[51] Ibid., 6.

[52] Ibid., 10.

Such a description could hardly prepare the reader for what follows. Dashkevich opted to emphasize the political merits of the work and makes little mention of the controversial form. This was likely a strategy to help get the work published, as the head editors of publishing houses often approved works for publication on the basis of the *zaiavka* (proposal), which were written in a similar manner. As a threshold of the translation itself, the foreword was a key way for the Soviet ideological apparatus to neutralize the threat of subversive content. By imposing an interpretation of the text, the foreword would, in theory, ensure that readers understood the correct ideological "lesson." In the case of *La muerte de Artemio Cruz*, the paratext works in concert with the manipulated translated text to deliberately obscure Fuentes's focus on Mexican identity.

Conclusion

Bylinkina's translation and Dashkevich's foreword promote a reading of *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* as a work of critical realism. For the Soviet literary establishment, the novel's experimental form was at best a curiosity, at worst, a serious defect that distracted from the critique of the Mexican bourgeoisie. While the translation and foreword also neglect Fuentes's treatment of Mexican identity, the historical and cultural details included in the novel served the Soviet cultural authorities' "ethnographic" interest in presenting acquainting readers with Latin American cultures. In contrast to wishes of the authorities, the motifs of the stagnated revolution and state corruption were meaningful for Soviet readers who felt that Fuentes had captured something from their own experience. In her memoirs, written forty years later, Bylinkina recalls her enthusiasm at being assigned the novel for this very reason:

> In the Soviet literature of the 1960s, even during the so-called Thaw, the theme of the former Bolshevik-Jacobins' transformation into the state's fat cats never came up. My

> hands were itching to show the inevitability of the process of revolutions devouring themselves through the example of Mexican reality.[53]

In a similar vein, Vera Kuteishchikova remembers the response she received upon submitting a review of the translation for the journal *Novyi mir* in 1967. Aleksandr Tvardovskii, the editor of the journal, remarked on the similarity of the two countries' fates: "So, their revolution has also degraded!"[54]

Accustomed to decades of heavily censored literature, Soviet readers were adept at "reading between the lines" in an allegorical manner. Foreign writers' depictions of the evils of crony capitalism and fascism served as obvious substitutes for open discussion of the domestic history of mass political repression, which had only recently entered public discourse following the death of Stalin. Just as novels by Remarque, Hemingway, and Salinger defined a generation's ideals and modes of behavior during the Thaw, Latin American writers' condemnations of tyrannical dictators and failed revolutions spoke to Soviet readers' privately-held convictions about their own country's history.[55] Translators found themselves in the middle of this cultural phenomenon in mediating between official ideological discourse, the source text, and their personal motivations. Forced to accommodate the state's ideological demands in translating and interpreting texts, translators had thoroughly internalized the rules and were adept at "playing the game," manipulating official discourse to find a way to get a translation published by any means

[53] Bylinkina, *Vsego odin vek*, 264.

[54] Vera Kuteishchikova, *Moskva – Mekhiko – Moskva. Doroga dlinoiu v zhizn'* (Moscow: Akademicheskii proekt, 2000), 203. A similar story about the betrayal of the revolution narrated told from the perspective of one man's life resonated in Iurii Trifonov's novel *Starik* (*The Old Man*, 1978).

[55] In Eleonory Gilburd's words, these Western novels became "books about us". See her book *To See Paris and Die: The Soviet Lives of Western Culture* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018), 103–157.

possible. Bylinkina suggests, albeit with decades of hindsight, that this game had high moral stakes.[56]

Fuentes's political engagement waned by the end of the decade, and his utopian hopes of revolution were brought down to earth by the fractious response of the Latin American Left to the Padilla Affair and his clashes with Cuban cultural functionaries, including Roberto Fernández Retamar, who vehemently denounced him along with Pablo Neruda for attending the June 1966 PEN conference in New York City.[57] He grew disillusioned with the Soviet Union as well following the highly publicized Sinyavsky-Daniel trials and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in the wake of the Prague Spring. On a personal level, he took umbrage at the unauthorized censoring of his Russian translations, claiming that puritanical Soviet censorship was worse than that of Franco's Spain.[58]

This overall political disillusionment echoed clearly in his writing: the appropriately-titled *Cambio de piel* (*Change of Skin*, 1967) signaled his departure from the pretenses of realism

[56] Cf. Bylinkina's comments in one of her last interviews: "Sometimes, however, with a light movement of the pen or by choosing a close synonym there was occasion to remind Soviet readers about what was then our own native regime. That's how it was when translating the anti-dictator novels *El Señor Presidente* by Asturias and Carpentier's *El recurso del método*, when I wanted to show that 'their' dictatorships were by no means worse than 'ours.'" Iutta Nikulina, "Margarita Ivanovna Bylinkina – znamenityi perevodchik knig Garsia Markesa, Borkhesa, Kortasara, drugikh ispanoiazychnykh i germanoiazychnykh avtorov," *KM. RU* (January 7, 2006), http://www.km.ru/glavnoe/2006/01/12/intervyu/margarita-ivanovna-bylinkina-znamenityi-perevodchik-knig-garsiya-markesa.

[57] I thank Maarten van Delden for these details. For more information, see his book *Carlos Fuentes, Mexico and Modernity*, 49–50.

[58] In a 2011 interview with Xavi Ayén, Fuentes claimed that, without his permission, the Soviet censors had expunged so much from the translation of *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* that only 30 pages remained: "One day I got the Russian translation of *La muerte de Artemio Cruz*. It was only 30 pages long! I went to ask for an explanation and they told me: 'It's just that we took out everything related to politics and sex.' 'How wonderful,' I responded, 'Where did you get those thirty pages from? Because the entire book is made up of that.' It truly was a scandal; they would publish your books without asking for your permission and without paying royalties." This was, of course, an exaggeration, but other prominent writers of his generation often expressed similar resentments. Xavi Ayén, *Aquellos años del boom: García Márquez, Vargas Llosa y el grupo de amigos que lo cambiaron todo* (Barcelona: Debate, 2019), 608.

into a more recognizably postmodern intertextuality. Like many other Latin American writers, in the decades to come, Fuentes would further explore the capability of language to represent reality in his investigation of Latin American identity. As Nicola Miller (among others) has argued, this retreat into self-referentiality and pastiche can be understood as "an acceptable substitute for more tangible forms of action in protest against the imperialist practices to which twentieth-century Spanish America was subject."[59] Nowhere is the Latin American intellectual's sense of political futility better articulated than in Fuentes's novel *La cabeza de la hidra* (*The Hydra Head,* 1978), in which the two Cold War superpowers are equated in the symbol of the two-headed eagle:

> One head is called the CIA and the other, the KGB. Two heads, but only one body. almost the Holy Trinity of our age. Whether we know it, whether or not we want it, we cannot help but serve the ends of one of the two heads of that cold monster. But as it has only one body, in serving one head we serve the other, and vice versa. There's no escape. […] At times, it is the beak of the Washington eagle that cuts off our head and eats it; at times, it is the beak of Moscow. But the intestines of the winged beast are the same, and the excretory passages are the same. We are the excrement of that monster.[60]

Unsurprisingly, few of Fuentes's novels written after *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* were translated and published in the Soviet Union. Literary critics and scholars writing on contemporary Latin American writers were virtually obligated to include a patronizingly gentle critique of his later works.[61] However, over the course of the 1970s, the ideological tides shifted the "shores" of socialist realism to allow more and more experimental works of foreign literature, and many of

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[59] Nicola Miller, *In the Shadow of the State: Intellectuals and the Quest for National Identity in Twentieth-Century Spanish America* (London: Verso, 1999), 207.

[60] Fuentes, *The Hydra Head,* trans. Margaret Sayers Peden (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1978), 283–4.

[61] For example, the two leading critics of Latin American literature at the time, Vera Kuteishchikova and Lev Ospovat, characterized Fuentes's "change of skin" thus: "We will be frank: in our opinion, Carlos Fuentes has yet to write any new books that can compare to his realist masterpiece [*La muerte de Artemio Cruz*]. Incessantly searching, never content with his achievements, avidly absorbing everything new, the Mexican writer has paid abundant tribute to avant-gardism. [...] Fuentes relentlessly experimented, which inevitably led him to lose contact with the reader." *Novyi latino-amerikanskii roman, 50–60-e gody* (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1976), 197.

Fuentes's earlier works were finally translated. A 1974 volume of his selected works included a second edition of *Smert' Artemio Krusa* along with *Aura* (1962) and *Las buenas conciencias* (*The Good Conscience,* 1959), and a translation of *La región más transparente* (1958) followed in 1980. It would be only in 2001, a decade after the fall of the Soviet Union and the collapse of the state-supported translation industry, that Bylinkina returned to her old work and published an updated version of her translation. No longer beholden to the strictures of Soviet aesthetics and the Communist Party, she made sure to return to the central passage of the novel that had caused her so much trouble decades earlier. The euphemism is named… but left untranslated: "you have pronounced, will pronounce that cursed Mexican word, that vulgar word. Chingada."[62]

[62] Carlos Fuentes, *Zamaskirovannye dni: Rasskazy; Aura: Povest'*; *Kukla-koroleva*: *Rasskaz; Smert' Artemio Krusa: Roman,* trans. Margarita Bylinkina (Biblioteka Latinskoi Ameriki. Moscow: Akademicheskii Proekt, 2001), 236.

Chapter Four

Rulfo the Realist: *Pedro Páramo* in Russian

The reputation of the Mexican writer Juan Rulfo rests chiefly on two works that amount to no more than 300 pages of prose. The first of these, the 1953 short story collection *El llano en llamas* [The Plain in Flames], depicts the world of the peasants living in Rulfo's home state of Jalisco, which had been ravaged by the violence of the Mexican Revolution. Rulfo's use of limited narrative perspective, radically innovative for Spanish-language literature, garnered him immediate acclaim. He expanded this technique in his debut novel *Pedro Páramo* (1955), which traces the life of the eponymous hero and the fate of the ghost town of Comala through multiple refracted narrative perspectives. In writing the novel, a process he characterized as "an exercise in elimination," Rulfo removed hundreds of pages of details, logical explanations, and connective sequences from the original drafts. This resulted in a fragmented structure "made of silences, of hanging threads, of cut scenes" that demanded an unprecedented level of active cooperation from readers to reconstruct the plot.[1]

The novel begins from the perspective of Juan Preciado, who travels to Comala in search of his father, a man named Pedro Páramo, to fulfill the dying wish of his mother Dolores. Upon arriving in the town, Juan learns that Pedro had died many years earlier. As he meets his mother's old friends Eduviges Dyada and Damiana Cisneros, he slowly realizes that the town's inhabitants are also dead, their souls still wandering the earth. From his conversations with the living dead, interrupted by ghostly echoes and whispers, Juan gradually learns about his father's life, his tragic love for Susana San Juan, and his avaricious rise to power in the town. A third-person narrator then begins the second half of the novel, which depicts in various fragmented

[1] Juan Rulfo, *Pedro Páramo.* Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1955. Juan Rulfo, "*Pedro Páramo*, treinta años después," *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos* 421–423 (July–September 1985): 7.

perspectives Pedro's despotic rule over Comala, his political maneuvering during the upheavals of revolution and rebellion, and his murder by one of his sons. Pedro is unable to win over the heart of Susana, and when she dies, he condemns the town and its inhabitants to death. The priest of the town, Padre Rentería, finds himself in a moral crisis, as his inability to fight against Pedro's despotic rule precludes him from sanctifying the souls of the townspeople. As their penitent souls await salvation in purgatory, they haunt Comala and tell their stories.

Pedro Páramo met an initially lukewarm critical reception in Mexico, where the literary scene was entrenched in an ongoing polemic between nationalism and cosmopolitanism. The novel's quintessentially Mexican rural setting and modernist form defied the expectations of critics from both ideological camps, who critiqued Rulfo from opposing perspectives. In one of the first appraisals of the novel, the poet and critic Alí Chumacero wrote that *Pedro Páramo* was an unwieldy combination of "a preponderantly realist style and an imagination given to the unreal."[2] Convinced that such mixed reviews had condemned his novel to obscurity, Rulfo lamented that the initial print run still remained unsold after four years, and he gave the rest to friends who asked for copies.[3]

While it proved controversial in Mexico, *Pedro Páramo* was well received abroad, where it became embroiled in the power dynamics of the cultural Cold War. Rulfo had written both his stories and his novel as a fellow at the Mexican Writers' Center, a US-backed cultural diplomacy initiative founded in 1951 with the goal of improving relations between both countries.[4] For the

[2] Alí Chumacero, "El 'Pedro Páramo' de Juan Rulfo," *Revista de la Universidad de México* 8 (April 1955): 26.

[3] Juan Rulfo, "*Pedro Páramo*, treinta años después," 7. For more on the early reception of the novel, see Jorge Zepeda, *La recepción inicial de* Pedro Páramo *(1955–1963)* (Mexico City: Fundación Juan Rulfo, 2005), 27–67.

[4] Rulfo was a fellow at the Center from 1952–1954 and later returned to work as a tutor in the 1960s. The Center was funded by the Rockefeller Foundation and, to a lesser extent, by the Farfield Foundation, one of the CIA's many front organizations. Patrick Iber, "The Cold War Politics of Literature and the Centro Mexicano de Escritores," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 48, no. 2 (May 2016): 247–272.

Center's founder, the American poet Margaret Shedd, Rulfo's seemingly apolitical evocation of national identity and innovative literary technique made him an ideal representative of the new generation of Mexican writers. These same qualities also aligned well with the priorities of the US government, which sought to recruit Latin American writers to the anti-communist cause under the guise of defending artistic freedom. With cooperation from front organizations managed by the Central Intelligence Agency, the Center helped raise Rulfo's profile internationally by supporting the first translations of his works.[5] While Rulfo never became the strident anti-communist the Center's sponsors hoped for, *Pedro Páramo* fared well in translation, gaining him an international audience by the end of the decade.[6] In the years that followed, Rulfo's novel came to be regarded as a modern classic—an early example of magical realism that foreshadowed the modernist experiments of the Boom generation.[7]

Rulfo's reception was more uneven in the opposite pole of the Cold War, where the developments of the Thaw heralded a new era in literary translation. In the years after Stalin's death, the Soviet state supported a massive increase in translating an ever-expanding canon of contemporary foreign literature in translation. Literary criticism played a crucial role in this process by imposing officially-approved interpretations on foreign works in translation, thus

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[5] Irene Nicholson made the first translation of *Pedro Páramo* at the Center in 1955. It was never published. Jorge Zepeda, "La primera traducción de *Pedro Páramo* y el Centro Mexicano de Escritores," in *Juan Rulfo: Otras miradas*, ed. Víctor Jiménez, Julio Moguel, and Jorge Zepeda (Mexico City: Fundación Juan Rulfo, 2010), 260ff. She also produced the first published translation of one of Rulfo's stories: "The Miraculous Child" ["Anacleto Morones"], *Encounter* 5, no. 3 (September 1955): 3, 13–19.

[6] The first published translation of *Pedro Páramo* was Mariana Frenk's German translation (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1958). Roger Lescot's French translation (Paris: Gallimard, 1959) and Lysander Kemp's English translation (New York: Grove Press, 1959) soon followed. The subtitle added to Kemp's translation—"a novel of Mexico"—is representative of the idealized picture of Mexican identity attributed to Rulfo.

[7] Ángel Flores listed Rulfo as a proponent magical realism in his landmark article on the topic. Ángel Flores, "Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction," *Hispania* 38, no. 2 (May 1955): 190. For a general overview of the later criticism on Rulfo, see Enriqueta Morillas Ventura, "Lectores de Rulfo," *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos* 421–423 (July–September 1985): 116–133.

sanctioning their entry into the shifting ideological boundaries of the post-Stalin literary field. In 1957, this literary environment welcomed the first Russian translations of Rulfo's short stories for their stark depiction of Mexican peasant life and use of an expressive popular idiom. *Pedro Páramo,* in contrast, was summarily dismissed for its deviations from critical realism and pessimistic conception of the Mexican Revolution. It remained unpublished for over a decade.

In 1970, the publishing house Khudozhestvennaia literatura [Literature] released Perla Glazova's Russian translation of the novel.[8] This translation is exemplary of the "Soviet school" of translation in several ways. Glazova simplifies the reader's task of interpretation by inserting numerous details and contextual clues that are absent in the original, making explicit what Rulfo merely implies. These additions result in a much wordier text that not only distorts Rulfo's terse style, but also disrupts his calculated manner of revealing information to the reader. Glazova's preference for "free" translation, widely shared by many in her milieu, effectively allows her to subtly circumvent potentially subversive themes. Writing about Glazova's translation of one of Rulfo's stories, Olga Svetlakova retrospectively characterizes her approach as one "appropriate for the times" that was "probably welcomed by the editorial board."[9] In fact, Glazova's manuscript proved controversial, and the book was published only after a fairly fraught editorial process at Khudozhestvennaia literatura. The main task of this chapter, then, is to examine how Glazova's translation was reviewed and eventually approved by the editorial board.

The deliberations over how to present such a novel to readers were no less important than how it was rendered in Russian, and they proved no less contentious. The foreword to Glazova's

[8] The novel was published along with a complete translation of *El llano en llamas*. Khuan Rul'fo, *Ravnina v ogne. Pedro Paramo,* trans. P. Glazova. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1970.

[9] Svetlakova makes these conclusions following an analysis of Glazova's handling of Christian imagery in "Na rassvete," her translation of Rulfo's "En la madrugada." Ol'ga Svetlakova, "Rul'fo po-russki: perevody P. N. Glazovoi cherez polveka," *Literatura dvukh Amerik* 3 (2017): 454.

translation, written by Lev Ospovat, interprets the novel as an allegorical denunciation of local political tyranny. He argues that the novel's mixing of fantasy and reality borrows from the established tradition of Menippean satire and, at the same time, is a direct expression of a specifically Mexican worldview. Glazova disagreed with this interpretation and proposed alternative justifications for publishing the novel. This chapter will reconstruct the debates among members of the editorial board and evaluate their strategies for bringing the novel within the ideological limits of the Soviet system. These debates demonstrate how translators and editors struggled to navigate the changing official attitudes regarding the limits of literary realism. In reconstructing these debates, this chapter illustrates the necessity of re-examining central assumptions about the uniform nature of Soviet translation.

Pedro Páramo and the Soviet Context

Soviet readers were first introduced to Rulfo in the March 1956 issue of *Inostrannaia literatura* [*Foreign Literature*], the most prominent Soviet venue for translated literature, through a short feature on his work by the prominent leftist Mexican novelist José Mancisidor.[10] Mancisidor praised Rulfo's depiction of peasant life and his use of "the people's language" in his short stories, but reserved sharp words of criticism for *Pedro Páramo*, which he judged an aesthetic and ideological regression:

> In his new work, steeped in pessimistic attitudes, Rulfo illustrates the popular masses in a state of inaction and passivity. Why are the people depicted in this manner? Why did the Mexican Revolution not receive a realistic representation? All of these questions […]

[10] Mancisidor (1895–1956) was a progressive Mexican writer who explicitly followed the example of Soviet socialist realism in his novels. One of the few contemporary Latin American writers regularly translated into Russian, Mancisidor had an outsize impact on publishing trends: publishing houses and journals would contact him for information about literary developments in Mexico, his addresses to the Soviet people were published in newspapers, and he sometimes wrote forewords to Soviet editions of his works in translation.

> must invariably be faced by a genuine writer, which Rulfo is, in his future works, if he wants to achieve maturity as a novelist.[11]

Mancisidor's praise for Rulfo's stories and scorn for his novel were soon officially endorsed in Soviet criticism and scholarship on contemporary Mexican literature. In a 1958 overview of Latin American literature, Lev Ospovat and Vera Kuteishchikova wrote approvingly of Rulfo's "truthful depiction of social ills" in his short stories while accusing him of propagating "common bourgeois conceptions about the eternal baseness of human nature" in *Pedro Páramo.*[12] Despite his criticism of Rulfo's later work, Ospovat translated three stories from *El llano en llamas* for the journal *Zvezda* in 1957, contemporaneous with the first translations of Rulfo's stories into English.[13] While some additional individual stories appeared in Russian translation over the next several years, for the time being, a Russian translation of *Pedro Páramo* was considered outside the realm of possibility.[14]

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[11] "Novyi roman Khuana Rul'fo," *Inostrannaia literatura* 3 (March 1956): 278. Mancisidor's review was first published in *Intercambio Cultural*, a Mexican magazine funded by the Soviet Union. The translator is not named.

[12] V. Kuteishchikova and L. Ospovat, "Sud'by kriticheskogo realizma v sovremennoi literature Latinskoi Ameriki," *Voprosy literatury* no. 5 (1958): 91. Kuteishchikova repeated this negative judgment nearly word-for-word in a 1960 article on the Mexican realist novel. V. N. Kuteishchikova, "Formirovanie i osobennosti realizma v mekiskanskoi literature," in *Meksikanskii realisticheskii roman XX veka* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1960), 60. William Rougle suggests that even if Kuteishchikova and Ospovat had understood the novel's social message, "it is likely they still would have rejected it on the grounds that its form did not convey its content in terms readily accessible to the masses." William P. Rougle, "The Soviet Reception of Latin American Literature (1917–1975)," PhD diss. (University of California, Santa Barbara, 1980), 157.

[13] Rul'fo, "Vse iz-za togo, chto my ochen' bedny" ["Es que somos muy pobres"], Nam dali zemliu" ["Nos han dado la tierra"], "Ne slyshno laia sobak" ["¿No oyes ladrar los perros?"], trans. Lev Ospovat, *Zvezda* 5 (1957): 88–90, 90–92, 92–94. When Ospovat's translations were published, only three translations of Rulfo's stories had been published in any language: one by Nicholson (see above) and two by Robert Cleland, "The Night They Left Him Behind" ["La noche que lo dejaron solo"] *Mexican Life* 32, no. 11 (Nov. 1956): 17–18 and "Talpa" ["Talpa"] *Mexican Life* 33, no. 1 (Jan. 1957): 62, 64.

[14] Ospovat's translation of "Es que somos muy pobres" was reprinted under the title "Potomu chto my ochen' bedny" in *Zoloto, Kon' i Chelovek. Rasskazy meksikanskikh pisatelei* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo inostrannoi literatury, 1961), 252–255. Other stories from *El llano en llamas* were published in Russian over the next several years: S. Alenikova's rendering of "Tacha" appeared in *Lalu: Latinoamerikanskie rasskazy* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1963), 148–152; "Luvina" was translated by L. Novikova as "Rodina toski" ["The Motherland of Melancholy"] in *Molodaia gvardiia* 5 (1965): 172–175, 184–185.

In 1967, Ospovat submitted a formal proposal to the publishing house Khudozhestvennaia literatura commissioning a Russian translation of both *El llano en llamas* and *Pedro Páramo*. In his proposal, Ospovat argues for Rulfo's significance in an altogether new way, praising his enrichment of Latin American literature while making note of his reputation abroad:

> Both of Rulfo's books have been translated into many languages (*El llano en llamas* has been published in Czechoslovakia, and *Pedro Páramo* in Hungary, for instance); the critical literature on his work exceeds the volume of what he has written by several times. […] Juan Rulfo is the originator of tendencies with which an entire generation of writers entered Mexican and, more widely, Latin American literature, fertilizing their national traditions with the experience of contemporary world prose.[15]

Ospovat's characterization of the novel in the proposal contrasts starkly with what he had previously written. His justification for translating the novel contextualizes some warnings about its formal complexity with similar appeals to Rulfo's relevance for world literature:

> It is important to emphasize that similar narrative devices—the freedom of reference to time, the displacement of planes, the narrative's interaction with memory—which Rulfo has in common with such writers as Faulkner, Updike, and Böll—is subordinate to a fully realist task: the artistic exposé [*razoblachenie*] of caciquism, which remains even today one of the worst social ills of Mexico. And this task is met brilliantly: in its synthesizing, typifying power, the sinister image of Pedro Páramo that arises from Rulfo's novella belongs to the best achievements of Mexican literature.[16]

In the end, Ospovat found it necessary to stress the realism of the novel he had previously dismissed as decadent. He managed this by grounding Rulfo's depiction of Pedro Páramo as an example of a *cacique*, one of the many local despotic rulers that came to power in colonial Latin America and (as depicted in the novel) persisted into the revolutionary period in Mexico. In framing the novel as an exposé of counterrevolutionary despotism, Ospovat's proposal prioritizes

[15] RGALI, f. 613, op. 10, ed. khr. 5407, l. 196. See Appendix for the full original text of Ospovat's proposal.

[16] Ibid., 198. Ospovat refers to *Pedro Páramo* as a novella [*povest'*].

its political message—a common strategy used by Soviet critics to facilitate the publication of foreign literary works that contained potentially subversive content.

The difference between Ospovat's earlier evaluation of the novel and his praise for the novel in the proposal is striking. The intervening decade had seen momentous changes in the country and, accordingly, in Soviet letters. Nikita Khrushchev's revelation of the extent of Stalin's crimes at the Twentieth Communist Party Congress in 1956 sent shockwaves throughout leftist circles worldwide. Marxist literary critics in Western Europe and socialist bloc began to re-evaluate their understanding of socialist realism. In a cross-cultural exchange that spanned both East and West, the "revisionists," led by the French communist Roger Garaudy, debated with the Soviet "orthodox" critics such as Boris Suchkov over "whether or not socialist realism should be the only acceptable form of literary creation, and whether non-socialist realist literary works should be rejected by Communists as the expressions of 'bourgeois decadence.'"[17]

The revisionist trend gradually gained support from established Soviet critics, such that by the mid-1960s, literary theorists discussed realism not as a literary method defined by a particular style, but rather as a matter of worldview and political consciousness. This trend enabled Soviet publishers to expand the canon of translated literature further and further, including modernist works that had been previously rejected as expressions of bourgeois ideology. A symbiotic relationship gradually emerged between literary criticism and published translations in which critics strove to make certain writers more accessible, thereby making it possible for publishing houses to commission translations of their works. Ospovat's proposal to translate Rulfo's works clearly fits within this dynamic with its appeals to foreign criticism and

[17] Ann Demaitre, "The Great Debate on Socialist Realism," *The Modern Language Journal* 50, no. 5 (May 1966): 263. For more on revisionist literary criticism, see Chapter 1 of this dissertation.

comparisons of *Pedro Páramo* to works by Faulkner, Updike, and Böll, all well-known to Soviet readers by the middle of the decade.

Proposals like the one written by Ospovat were the first step in what was often a lengthy publication process in large state publishing houses. Once approved by the editorial board and the publishing house, the work would be officially commissioned and the assignment could be given to one or more translators. After the manuscript of the translation was submitted, it would be subject to two internal reviews. These internal reviews, sent to the manuscript author anonymously, were supposed to evaluate the quality of the translation and identify deficiencies in the text, including any material that could potentially run afoul of the censor.[18] Editors could suggest revisions and corrections of both an aesthetic and ideological nature; in rare cases, the manuscript could be rejected. Once the manuscript passed the internal review, the editorial board would commission a critical paratext, usually in the form of a foreword. These forewords provided information about the writer, the literary works included in the volume, and the context in which they were written. They also imposed an interpretation on the work that would help guarantee the translation's approval by the officials at the publishing house. Once a foreword was submitted to the editorial board, it also had to pass an internal review to secure official approval. Each of these steps in the publication process amounted to a form of ideological gatekeeping—a necessary compromise to have the translation published through official channels. The shifting boundaries of literary realism in official criticism in the post-Thaw era forced translators and editors to develop an acute awareness of what could and could not be published. By the mid-1960s, editors and translators were also increasingly held responsible for censoring their own work with little direct oversight from Glavlit, the state censorship organ. As

[18] See Chapter 1 for a detailed discussion of Soviet censorship in literary translations as well as the internal review process at major publishing houses.

this analysis of the publication of *Pedro Páramo* in Russian will demonstrate, editors and translators did not always agree on how to navigate this unstable landscape.

Glazova's translation and the internal review process

At the end of his proposal, Ospovat warned that translating Rulfo, "a first-class stylist," will not be an easy task, and calls for the translation assignment be given to "the most experienced translators."[19] The person chosen for the job was Perla Glazova, an experienced translator who had previously studied Romance philology and taught Spanish before pursuing a career in translation.[20] Her past work for Khudozhestvennaia literatura, which included translations of works by Thomas Mann, Anna Seghers, Manuel Rojas, and Rafael Alberti, had earned her a reputation as a skilled professional, making her an ideal candidate.[21] The contract that Glazova signed in June 1967 stated the book was to be published within 24 months.[22] The final product—a one-volume collection titled *Ravnina v ogne. Pedro Paramo* [*The Plain in Flames. Pedro Páramo*]—appeared in print in 1970, a full year behind schedule. The delay was the result of a contentious internal review process regarding both the text of the translation itself as well as the manner in which the work was to be presented to readers in the foreword. In a series of lengthy letters from Leningrad to the central office of the publishing house in Moscow, Glazova

[19] RGALI, f. 613, op. 10, ed. khr. 5407, l. 199.

[20] A graduate of Leningrad State University, Glazova (1922-1980) translated numerous literary works from Spanish, French, and German in the last twenty years of her life. V. S. Bakhtin and A. N. Lur'e, *Pisateli Leningrada; Biobibliograficheskii spravochnik. 1934-81* (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1982), 83.

[21] Valerii Stolbov, the head editor of the editorial board for the literatures of Latin America, Spain, and Portugal at Khudozhestvennaia literatura, named Glazova "one of the best translators" at the publishing house in a report on her translation of the Spanish poet Rafael Alberti's memoir *La arboleda perdida* (1959; translated as *Zateriannaia roshcha*, 1968). RGALI, f. 613, op. 10, ed. khr. 5292, l. 76.

[22] RGALI, f. 613, op. 10, ed. khr. 5407, l. 195.

provided a detailed account of her translation strategy as well as an impassioned defense of her translations of individual passages. Examining this contentious correspondence with her editors—amounting to nearly as many pages as the book itself—provides a unique insight into the state of Soviet translation practices in the late 1960s, an era in which critics and scholars began to write about foreign literature in new ways. The conflict between Glazova and her editors reflects the tensions of this cultural moment as the old mentality clashed with the new.

Glazova submitted her manuscript to her editor Maiia Filippova in December 1968.[23] Like all manuscripts submitted to Khudozhestvennaia literatura, Glazova's was subject to two internal reviews. In this case, the two internal reviews—one each for the translations of *El llano en llamas* and *Pedro Páramo*—were authored by Evgeniia Lysenko, an accomplished translator from Spanish and Polish.[24] Lysenko's comments in her review can be categorized into four general types of manipulation of the original text: additions of extraneous details, stylistic distortions, inaccurate rendering of direct dialogue, and excessive variation in verbs reporting speech. Each of these has potentially far-reaching implications for the reader's interpretation of this carefully constructed novel.

Addition of extraneous details

Lysenko noted that numerous passages in Glazova's translation were marred by verbosity, contrasting starkly with the terseness of the original. "This is not a chance occurrence or the result of carelessness," Lysenko writes:

> It appears that the translator, carried away by J. Rulfo's bright, unique prose and by how well it all turned out for her in Russian, cannot always resist—and not without extra

[23] The manuscript was originally due in August 1968 according to the contract, but Glazova requested an extension as she was trying to meet other deadlines. Ibid., 193.

[24] At the time she was chosen to write the review, Lysenko (1919–2005) had translated works by Eliza Orzeszkowa, Bolesław Prus, Horacio Quiroga, and José Rizal, among others. Lysenko was later renowned for her canonical translations of Jorge Luis Borges and Julio Cortázar as well as her widely-read Russian rendering of Henryk Sienkiewicz's *Quo Vadis*.

> "filling"—repeating the author's thought once again in other words or adding yet another word, yet another turn of phrase, or even another sentence. This "filling" is not so noticeable during a usual reading of the translation, but when you compare it with the Spanish text, you see that it often would have been possible to say the same thing more concisely and closer to the original.[25]

Glazova's translation abounds with such additions on virtually every page, often simply repeating the meaning of the original. Her wordiness is most notable in lyrical passages, such as in Pedro's internal monologues about his beloved Susana San Juan:

> Pensé: "No regresará jamás; no volverá nunca." (24)
>
> I thought: "She will never come back; she will never return.
>
> Я подумал: „Она не вернется". И я несколько раз повторил про себя: „Сусана никогда не вернется. Никогда. Никогда" (160)[26]
>
> I thought: "She will not return." And I repeated to myself several times: "Susana will never return. Never. Never."

Rulfo has Pedro reflect on Susana's absence in a balanced sentence composed of two clauses with nearly identical syntax and meaning. Glazova's translation captures the sense of the sentence at the expense of its form, emphasizing the repetitiveness of Pedro's thoughts. Glazova also finds it necessary to make it clear that the "she" in this passage refers to Susana, thus definitively identifying Pedro as the speaker.

In other instances, Glazova tends to add in explanatory details and logical connections that smooth over Rulfo's fragmented juxtaposition of images. Throughout the novel, various narrators evoke the silence that pervades Comala using incomplete sentences and suggestive

[25] RGALI f. 613, op. 10, ed. khr. 5407, l. 18–19. See the Appendix for the original Russian texts of my excerpts from Lysenko's review.

[26] The pagination for the original text of the novel corresponds to Juan Rulfo, *Pedro Páramo*, 6th ed. Colección popular. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1964. I could not locate the manuscript of Glazova's translation. However, the excerpts from the manuscript in Lysenko's review were left unchanged in the final publication, and internal correspondence suggests few changes were ultimately made to the final manuscript. RGALI f. 613, op. 10, ed. khr 5407, l. 30. The pagination for Glazova's translation refers to the final publication.

sound imagery. An example of this can be observed near the beginning of the novel, when Juan awakes from fitful sleep during his first night in Comala:

> Al despertar, todo estaba en silencio; sólo el caer de la polilla y el rumor del silencio. (36)
>
> Upon waking up, everything was silent; only the fall of a moth and the murmur of silence.

Rulfo paints a picture with a just a few strokes, pairing together the ambiguous image of a falling moth and the oxymoronic sound of silence. The subtlety of Rulfo's original is lost in Glazova's rendering, which offers a logical explanation for the ambiguity:

> А когда я пришел в себя, вокруг стояло мертвое безмолвие, и только падали в гулкой тишине на пол, ударившись об оконное стекло, ночные мотыльки. (171)
>
> And when I regained consciousness, all around there stood a dead silence, and in the resounding quiet only moths were falling onto the floor, having struck the windowpane.

In combining the dependent clauses into one complete sentence, Glazova distorts the almost poetic form of the original passage. The accumulation of similar interventions throughout the Russian text produces a skewed impression of Rulfo's style and simplifies the task of interpretation for the reader. In other passages, however, Glazova's attempts to make obscure passages more intelligible lead her to misunderstand the context. In another one of Pedro's wistful monologues, he recalls Susana leaving Comala in their youth:

> Pasaste rozando con tu cuerpo las ramas del paraíso que está en la vereda y te llevaste con tu aire sus últimas hojas. (122)
> You passed by with your body brushing the branches of the paradise tree beside the path and you took its last leaves with your air.

Evidently assuming that "paradise" in this context is an explicit religious reference, Glazova adds in details that connect Pedro's thoughts to the afterlife:

> Ты прошла мимо, и на твоем пути зашелестели задетые твоим случайным прикосновением ветви деревьев, цветущих в обители блаженных. И вместе с твоим дыханием развеялись по ветру лепестки их облетевших цветов — последнее воспоминание о рае. (248)

> You passed by, and on your path, brushed by your accidental touch, the branches of the trees that bloom in the abode of the blessed rustled. And together with your breath the petals of its fallen flowers scattered in the wind—the last memory of paradise.

Lysenko proposed an alternative translation for this passage in her review that more closely follows the meaning and laconic style of the original:

> Ты прошла, задев ветви коричного дерева, что растет вон там, у дороги, и ветерок, поднявшийся от твоих шагов, унёс его последние листья.[27]
>
> You passed, having brushed the branches of the cinnamon tree that grows over there, by the road, and the breeze that rose up from your steps carried off its last leaves.

Glazova's addition of extraneous details in other passages reveals information deliberately withheld from the reader in the original, subverting one of Rulfo's signature techniques. Near the end of the novel, when Susana is visited by Padre Rentería on her deathbed, she mistakes him for her deceased father, Bartolomé:

> Pregunta:
> —¿Eres tú, padre?
> —Soy tu padre, hija mía. (96)
>
> She asks:
> "Is that you, father?"
> "I am your father, my daughter."

Rentería's answer to her question deceives the reader as well, who learns only on the next page that it is indeed the priest, not her father's ghost, who has come to visit her. Glazova's rendering of the dialogue inserts a sentence that immediately identifies the visitor as Rentería:

> — Это ты, отец? — спрашивает она.
> — Да, дочь моя, я твой отец. Отец во Христе. (224)
>
> "Is that you, father?" — she asks.
> "Yes, my daughter, I am your father. Father in Christ."

[27] RGALI f. 613, op. 10, ed. khr. 5407, l. 188. The tree in question is most likely the chinaberry tree (*Melia azedarach*), sometimes known as the "cinnamon tree" in Mexican Spanish.

This particular premature revelation has only minor consequences, giving away information that Rulfo provides at the end of the same fragment. In other fragments, however, Glazova's liberties with Rulfo's precise wording omit certain clues that are revealed to be significant only later.

Jonathan Tittler characterizes these authorial misdirections as a device he names "deferred illumination," in which "the reader's difficulty stems from the narrator's refusal to declare his frame of reference: the rules become apparent only after the game is well under way."[28] Rulfo uses this device in the opening lines of the novel, which appear to orient the reader in a direct and clear manner:

> Vine a Comala porque me dijeron que acá vivía mi padre, un tal Pedro Páramo. Mi madre me lo dijo. Y yo le prometí que vendría a verlo en cuanto ella muriera. Le apreté sus manos en señal de que lo haría; pues ella estaba por morirse y yo en plan de prometerlo todo. (7)
>
> I came to Comala because they told me that my father lived here, a man named Pedro Páramo. My mother told me. And I promised her that I would come to see him as soon as she died. I squeezed her hands as a sign that I would do it, since she was near death and I was ready to promise her everything.

It is only after reaching the halfway point in the novel some fifty pages later that the reader learns that there is a sort of inverse dramatic irony at play: Juan has been dead since the beginning of the narration, and his story about his search for his father is addressed not to the reader, but rather to Dorotea Dyada, a woman with whom he lies in a tomb. The first sentence provides clues that become significant only after this revelation: Juan came to Comala and still remains there (so to speak); he is also well aware that his father Pedro had died long ago. Glazova's translation of the opening lines omits these clues altogether:

> В Комалу я отправился, когда узнал, что там живет мой отец, некий Педро Парамо. Сказала мне про это мать. И я обещал ей, что после ее смерти тотчас пущусь в дорогу и разыщу его. Я сжал ее руки, подтверждая нерушимость данного мною слова. Она умирала, и я готов был обещать ей все, что угодно. (145)

[28] Jonathan Tittler, *Narrative Irony in the Contemporary Spanish-American Novel* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 70–71.

> I set off for Comala when I learned that my father, a certain Pedro Páramo, lived there. It was my mother who told me about this. And I promised her that after her death I would set out on the road right away and track him down. I squeezed her hands, affirming the inviolability of my word that I had given her. She was dying, and I was ready to promise her anything.

In Glazova's rendering, Juan begins his narration not analeptically as an explanation of how and why he ended up "here" (*acá*) in Comala, but rather in a straightforward diegetic past, explaining simply that he went "there" (*tam*). As the fragment continues, the discrepancies between the original text and Glazova's translation become even more accentuated:

> Pero no pensé cumplir mi promesa. Hasta que ahora pronto comencé a llenarme de sueños, a darle vuelo a las ilusiones. Y de este modo se me fue formando un mundo alrededor de la esperanza que era aquel señor llamado Pedro Páramo, el marido de mi madre. Por eso vine a Comala. (7)

> But I did not intend to keep my promise. Soon I began to fill with dreams and give flight to illusions. And in this way I began to build a world around the hope that was that man named Pedro Páramo, my mother's husband. That's why I came to Comala.

> Это были только слова, я не собирался выполнять их. Но потом, после смерти матери, сам не знаю отчего, на меня вдруг нахлынули непривычные мысли: я начал воображать себе бог весть что, мечтать, жил в каком-то выдуманном мире. Мир этот родился из надежды, а надеждою был Педро Парамо, муж моей матери. И тогда я отправился в Комалу. (146)

> These were just words, I wasn't planning on fulfilling them. But later, after my mother's death, not knowing why, I was suddenly flooded with unusual thoughts: I began to imagine God knows what, to dream; I lived in some make-believe world. This world was born from hope, and this hope was Pedro Páramo, my mother's husband. And then I set out for Comala.

Once again, Glazova adds in her own content, inserting logical connectors and emotional inflections to Juan's unadorned narration. She has Juan qualify his statements about his illusions of his father by labeling them "unusual thoughts" and "God knows what"; in the original, such judgments are left to the reader. Her translation also explicitly states that Juan's mother died before he set off for Comala, reflecting a patronizing concern for the reader's comprehension.

Stylistic distortions

Throughout her review, Lysenko notes that Glazova's translation frequently fails to render the condensed, poetic nature of Rulfo's prose. The review focuses on a fragment in which Juan's narration is interrupted by the voice of his mother wistfully recalling Comala:

> Allí, donde el aire cambia el color de las cosas; donde se ventila la vida como si fuera un puro mumurar; como si fuera un puro murmullo de la vida… (62)
>
> There, where the air changes the color of things; where life flows by as if it were a pure murmur; as if it were a pure murmur of life...

Lysenko writes that Glazova's translation of this passage replaces the "restrained and impassioned tone of the original" with "an interpretation that is wordy, sentimental and at times strays far from the text":[29]

> … другим становится воздух, и вместе с воздухом меняется цвет предметов. Жизнь там течет, нашептывая тебе свою быль, и ты вслушиваешься в нее, вслушиваешься и уже ничего не слышишь, кроме этого немолчного, извечного шепота жизни. (193)
>
> … the air changes, and the color of things changes along with the air. Life flows there, whispering its story to you, and you listen to it, you listen and no longer hear anything save for that incessant, eternal whisper of life.

The original passage manages to be both evocative and succinct, comprising three balanced subordinate clauses. Glazova adorns her translation with additional detail and orders the fragmentary thoughts into a complete sentence. In Lysenko's opinion, the additional detail in Glazova's translation of this passage misinterprets the novel's central motif of disembodied voices and otherworldly murmurs: "it is not that 'life whispers its story,' etc., but rather that life flows muffled, like a whisper; it is not full-blooded life, but a quiet emptiness [*proziabanie*]."[30]

[29] RGALI f. 613, op. 10, ed. khr. 5407, l. 186.

[30] Ibid., 187. It is no coincidence that one of Rulfo's working titles for the novel was *Los murmullos* [*The Murmurs*].

Here and throughout the translation, Glazova's divergences from the poetic form of the original have significant implications for the interpretation of key elements of the novel.

Rulfo occasionally uses paronomasia to forge unexpected connections between seemingly disparate images. One prominent example can be found early on in the novel, when Juan describes the photograph of his mother that he keeps in his shirt pocket as he descends down the path to Comala:

> Decía que los retratos eran cosa de brujería. Y así parecía ser; porque el suyo estaba lleno de agujeros como de aguja, y en dirección del corazón tenía uno muy grande donde bien podía caber el dedo del corazón. (10)
>
> She used to say portraits were a tool of witchcraft. And it seemed to be that way, because hers was riddled with holes like from a needle, and in the location of her heart there was a very big one where the middle finger could easily stick through.

Readers of the original passage would immediately recognize the similar sound forms of the images of his mother's heart (*corazón*) and the middle finger that can pass through it (*dedo del corazón*, literally "finger of the heart"). The holes (*agujeros*) in Juan's mother's photograph also resemble the sound form of the needle (*aguja*) that caused them. These jarring metonymic shifts call attention to the sound forms themselves and undermine the logical reading of the passage. Glazova does not attempt to reproduce the effect of Rulfo's paronomasia in her Russian rendering:

> Она говорила, что через портрет можно наколдовать человеку и дурное и хорошее. И верно, фотография была вся в крохотных дырочках, словно ее кололи иголкой, а на груди, где сердце, зияла большая дыра, в которую свободно мог бы пройти средний палец. (148)
>
> She said that one can conjure both good and evil things for a person through a portrait. And truly, the photograph was all in tiny holes, as if it had been stabbed with a needle, and in her chest, where her heart was, there gaped a large hole, through which the middle finger could freely pass.

Rulfo uses a similar technique in another scene, in which Susana dies with Pedro at her side in Media Luna. The funereal church bells ringing in nearby Comala are mistaken for those of a holiday festival, attracting crowds from the neighboring towns. The third-person narrator informs the reader that Susana's burial goes unnoticed by the people in Comala:

> La Media Luna estaba sola, en silencio. Se caminaba con los pies descalzos; se hablaba en voz baja. Enterraron a Susana San Juan y pocos en Comala se enteraron. (121)
>
> Media Luna was alone, in silence. One walked around with bare feet; one spoke in a low voice. They buried Susana San Juan and few in Comala realized it.

Rulfo exploits the similar sound forms of the verbs "to bury" (*enterrar*) and "to find out" (*enterarse*) as if to emphasize the ironic incongruity of Susana's tragic death and the celebration in the town. Glazova's translation neglects to convey the effect of the wordplay and renders Rulfo's passive voice constructions in active voice by naming the "servants and laborers" who do the walking and talking:

> Медиа-Луна стояла всеми забытая, притихшая. Челядь и батраки ходили разувшись, говорили шепотом. Сусану Сан-Хуан похоронили, но из Комалы на похороны не явился почти никто. (246)
>
> Media Luna stood forgotten by everyone, quiet. Servants and laborers walked shoeless, they spoke in whispers. They buried Susana San Juan, but almost nobody from Comala appeared at the funeral.

Rulfo's use of paronomasia to disrupt and reconfigure the expected logical connections between words has been interpreted in various ways. William Rowe attributes this device to an archaic attitude toward language typical of oral cultures in which the sound form of a word contains magical properties in itself.[31] Steven Boldy similarly ascribes this device to a kind of magical thinking, comparing it to Jorge Luis Borges's conception of "magical analogy," in

[31] Rowe argues that Rulfo creatively uses this technique in his stories "to subvert rationalist views of the world and language." William Rowe, *El llano en llamas* (London: Grant & Cutler, 1987), 75.

which such irrational connections replace traditional causality in narrative prose.[32] In failing to recreate this aspect of Rulfo's language, Glazova's translation not only misrepresents his style, but also produces a different impression of the narrative world of the novel. Similar claims could be made regarding Glazova's treatment of other unexpected poetic images in the novel. Juan's narration of his first impression of Eduviges upon meeting her in Comala uses a striking metaphor:

> Me di cuenta que su voz estaba hecha de hebras humanas, que su boca tenía dientes y una lengua que se trababa y destrababa al hablar, y que sus ojos eran como todos los ojos de la gente que vive sobre la tierra. (12)
>
> I noticed that her voice was made of human threads, that her mouth had teeth and a tongue and opened and closed when she spoke, and that her eyes were like all of the eyes of the people who live on the earth.

His description of Eduviges is startling for the reader, who at this point in the novel has no reason to suspect she would be anything other than a living human being. The unexpected image of the human voice in material form recurs later in the novel in the "thread of sobs" in Pedro's mother's voice as she announces that his father has been murdered (71). As Patrick Dove argues, the abundance and nature of such unexpected metaphors and similes throughout the text "produces a tremendous strain on formal-ideational cohesion in the narrative," undermining their ability to signify meaning at all.[33] Glazova's Russian translation denies readers the defamiliarizing effect of such startling juxtapositions of images. Her translation of the passage replaces the metaphor with the message it is meant to convey, diminishing the ironic effect:

> Ничего особенного я в женщине не заметил. Обыкновенный человеческий голос. Во рту — зубы, а за ними — быстрый язык. Я видел, как он шевелится, когда она говорит. И глаза точно такие, как у всех других людей на земле. (149)

[32] Steven Boldy, *A Companion to Juan Rulfo* (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2016), 140.

[33] Patrick Dove, *The Catastrophe of Modernity: Tragedy and the Nation in Latin American Literature* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2004), 153.

> I did not notice anything peculiar about the woman. It was an ordinary human voice. In her mouth there were teeth, and behind them a quick tongue. I saw it move when she spoke. And her eyes were exactly the same as those of all other people on the earth.

Skaz and dialogue

The oral quality of Rulfo's prose has proved to be one of the most notable and controversial aspects of his work. Like the first-person narrators of the stories in *El llano en llamas*, many of the characters in *Pedro Páramo* speak in a literary rendering of the somewhat archaic Spanish spoken by the peasants of the Jaliscan lowlands. On multiple occasions, Rulfo himself characterized the orality of his works as a decentering of traditional prose style, claiming his intention was "not to speak like one writes, but to write like one speaks."[34] His critics have interpreted the significance of this in various ways. Ángel Rama discusses Rulfo's orality as part of a wider trend of Latin American writers resisting Western literary modernism by returning to traditional, regional, and oral narrative forms and structures. In Rama's view, Rulfo's use of a regional variant of Spanish is not an outsider's representation of a traditional community's language and worldview; rather, it is evidence of a "linguistic perspective" in which "the author has become reintegrated with the linguistic community and speaks from within it." Other critics, such as Neil Larsen, question the merits of this approach, arguing that Rulfo's orality "served precisely to disguise, in a kind of populist masquerade, a deeper, reactionary and pathologizing representation of rural peasant culture." [35]

In the Soviet context, Rulfo's use of colloquial speech in his stories had been celebrated as a representation of the "people's language" beginning with Mancisidor's early review of his

[34] Luis Harss, *Los nuestros* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1966), 335.

[35] Ángel Rama, *Transculturación narrativa en América Latina* (Mexico City: Fundación Ángel Rama, 1989), 42–43; Neil Larsen, *Determinations: Essays on Theory, Narrative and Nation in the Americas* (London: Verso, 2001), 138.

works. Glazova renders the monologues and dialogues in the novel much in the same way as she did in the stories, employing a folksy Russian equivalent reminiscent of the *skaz* narrators of the early Soviet period. Lysenko criticized this choice in her review, arguing that Glazova's rendering of narration and dialogue "is the same as in the stories: colorful, dense skaz saturated with all kinds of 'podi,' 'gliadi-ko*'* and provincial words" that clash with the overall "mystical mood" of the novel.[36] In many instances, Glazova uses colloquialisms and regionalisms in conveying the speech of the inhabitants of Comala, often for dramatic effect. When Juan meets Damiana Cisneros, she tells him a story about meeting the ghost of her dead sister during a funeral procession:

> Soltó el rebozo y reconocí la cara de mi hermana Sixtina. (46)
> She loosened her shawl and I recognized the face of my sister Sixtina.

Glazova has Damiana recount the memory with exaggerated emotional coloring:

> И шаль откинула. Батюшки! Да ведь это Сикстина, сестра моя. (179)
> And she threw off her shawl. Goodness! That's Sixtina, my sister.

In a similar manner, Glazova portrays Fulgor's internal thoughts during a confrontation with Pedro with more expressive language:

> Sintió que llegaba su oportunidad. «Ahora me toca a mí», pensó. (39)
> He felt that his opportunity had come. "Now it's my turn," he thought.

> Теперь пришел его черед. «Погоди, голубчик, сейчас я тебя поставлю на место».
> Now his time had come. "Just you wait, darling, now I'll put you in your place."

Glazova has the women of Comala speak almost in the manner of Russian peasants, often rendering neutral utterances with a vibrant, folksy lexicon. When Donis and his sister let Juan stay the night in their home, he overhears the incestuous couple argue over him as he sleeps:

[36] RGALI f. 613, op. 10, ed. khr 5407, l. 185. *Podi* – the colloquial form of the imperative "go!" or, alternatively, an interjection that can either mean "perhaps," "most likely," or express surprise. *Gliadi-ko* – the imperative of "to look" with a particle suffix that renders the command informal and familiar.

> Oía: —Se rebulle sobre sí mismo como un condenado. Y tiene todas las trazas de un mal hombre. ¡Levántate, Donis! Míralo. Se restriega contra el suelo, retorciéndose. Babea. Ha de ser alguien que debe muchas muertes. Y tú no lo reconociste. (53)
>
> I heard: "He's thrashing around like the damned. He has all the marks of an evil man. Get up, Donis! Look at him. He's writhing on the ground, twisting and turning. He's drooling. He must have killed a lot of people. And you didn't even recognize it."

Glazova peppers her rendering of this snippet of conversation with various colloquialisms (such as *vidat', rastiapa,* and the particles *-to, -ka,* and *nebos'*), noticeably altering the tone of the original:

> — Вон как с боку на бок ворочается, — услышал я снова. — Скажи, черти его на адском огне поджаривают. А рожа-то, разбойник разбойником. Вставай, Донис! Ты погляди-ка, как его корежит, так по полу и катается, и слюна изо рта течет. Не одну душу, видать, загубил. Ты-то, растяпа, пустил ночевать, а кто он, небось и сам не знаешь. (186)
>
> "Look at him turning from side to side," I heard again. "Say, devils are roasting him in the fires of hell. And his mug – a bandit for sure. Get up, Donis! Just you look at him writhing, rolling on the floor, and drool flowing from his mouth. He's obviously killed more than one soul. And you, scatterbrain, let him stay the night, and I bet you don't even know who he is."

In other instances, Glazova's manipulation of certain characters' speech allows readers to more easily differentiate the speaker and his or her social background. Father Rentería's speech is given a distinctly ecclesiastical character in the Russian translation, incorporating Church Slavicisms and even references to scripture. The effect of these changes is at times reminiscent of the depictions of the clergy in works by Nikolai Leskov and other nineteenth-century Russian writers:

> El asunto comenzó —pensó— cuando Pedro Páramo, de cosa baja que era, se alzó a mayor. Fue creciendo como una mala yerba. (73)
>
> The whole thing began, he thought, when Pedro Páramo, from the low thing that he was, made something of himself. He grew up like a bad weed.

> «Всему причиною то, — размышлял он, — что Педро Парамо, обретавшийся прежде в ничтожестве, сделался нежданно-негаданно важной фигурой. Тогда-то и заросла его душа плевелами. (203)
>
> "The reason for all of this," he pondered, "is that Pedro Páramo, having previously lived in insignificance, made himself an important figure out of the blue. It was then that his soul was overgrown with tares."

Glazova gives Rentería's characterization of Pedro's rise to power a moral judgment not included in the original text with the use of the Biblical *plevely,* which echoes the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares from the Gospel of Matthew, rather than the more neutral *sorniaki* (weeds). When Rentería seeks reconciliation for the sin of failing to condemn Pedro's evil rule in Comala, the priest in Contla turns him away, telling him to go confess elsewhere:

> —¿Quiere usted decir, señor cura, que tengo que ir?
> —Tienes que ir. No puedes seguir consagrando a los demás si tú mismo estás en pecado. (75)
>
> "Do you mean to say, father, that I must go?"
> "You must go. You cannot continue to consecrate others when you yourself are in sin."

In the Russian, the Contla priest sends Rentería off to the bishop with a reprimand that includes Church Slavicisms (*ibo, vo grekhe*):

> — Вы хотите сказать, ваше преподобие, что я должен поехать к епископу?
> — Должен, да. Ибо как можешь ты разрешать, когда сам живешь во грехе? (205)
>
> "Do you mean to say, your reverence, that I must go to the bishop?"
> "Yes, you must. For how can you absolve if you yourself live in sin?"

By intensifying the ecclesiastical character of the priests' speech, the translation further emphasizes the hypocrisy of their inability to protect the physical and spiritual lives of the people in Comala. Much like Glazova's decision to highlight Rulfo's use of the "people's language," her choice to convey the priests' speech in this manner enables certain political interpretations of the novel.

Reporting speech clauses

Lysenko notes that while Rulfo limits himself to using the basic verbs *decir* (to say), *preguntar* (to ask) and *contestar* (to answer) in reporting his characters' speech, Glazova introduces a variety of alternatives:

> Evidently not having sensed here the stylistic device that also 'works' to create a particular mood, P. Glazova strives to include diversity; the characters of the novella in her rendering 'communicate,' 'respond,' 'pronounce,' 'assure,' 'wonder,' etc. I think that doing this was a mistake.[37]

In addition to the basic verbs *otvetit'* (to answer), *govorit'* (to say), and *sprashivat'* (to ask) and their aspectual pairs, Glazova frequently renders Rulfo's reporting clauses using verbs that connote different shades of meaning, such as *soobshchit'* (to communicate), *proiznesti* (to pronounce) *progovorit'* (to utter), *bormotat'* (to mutter), and *protianut'* (to drawl), among others.

As Lysenko noted, however, in many of her reporting clauses, Glazova uses verbs that do not readily combine with an indirect speech complement, usually with a characteristic inversion of the subject and verb. A clear example appears early in the novel, when Eduviges leads Juan to the room where he will spend his first night in Comala:

> —Aquí no hay dónde acostarse —le dije. (14)
> "There's nowhere to sleep here," I told her.
>
> —Но ведь здесь нет кровати, — удивился я." (151)
> "But there is no bed here," I was surprised.

Later in that same conversation, Eduviges speaks about Dolores, Juan's mother, as if she were still alive. In Glazova's Russian, Juan responds "petrified":

> —Mi madre —dije—, mi madre ya murió. (14)
> "My mother," I said, "my mother is dead."
>
> — Мама? — остолбенел я. — Мама умерла." (151)
> "Mama?" I was petrified. "Mama is dead."

[37] Ibid. It is tempting to read Lysenko's sensitivity to Rulfo's use of *skaz* and the "murmur" motif in light of her familiarity with the work of Mikhail Bakhtin: Lysenko and her husband, the philologist and dissident Leonid Efimovich Pinskii, were ardent supporters of Bakhtin's work.

Glazova uses a long list of such expressive verbs in reporting clauses, including *zametit'* (to note), *vozrazit'* (to object), *otozvat'sia* (to respond), *osvedomit'sia* (to enquire), *tverdit'* (to say repeatedly), *nakazyvat'* (to order), *utochnit'* (to specify), *privetstvovat'* (to greet), *poliubopytstvovat'* (to be curious, to pry), *uprekat' sebia* (to reproach oneself), *ostanovit'* (to stop), *otkliknut'sia* (to respond), *obratit'sia k komu-libo* (to address someone), *uteshat' sebia* (to comfort oneself), *rastolkovat'* (to explain), *vmeshat'sia* (to intervene), and *zvat'* (to call). While the use of such verbs in reporting clauses in English—so-called "said-bookisms"—is generally considered archaic or in poor taste, it has no such connotations in Russian and was a typical stylistic trait of Soviet literary and journalistic writing.[38] For many Soviet translators, replacing reporting verbs with expressive and explanatory alternatives was a convenient means of making a foreign text more accessible: they could identify manner of speech, physical setting, emotional status, and medium of interaction, all while creating a more engaging narrative for the prospective reader by breaking up the monotony of the original.[39] However, by providing more contextual clues for each utterance, the translator inevitably imposes a new interpretation on the text. The consequences are particularly severe for Glazova's translation. In *Pedro Páramo*, a novel composed of echoes, snippets of overheard dialogue, and fragments of inner monologues, these reporting speech verbs play a particularly important role in (dis)orienting the reader and thus have significant implications for the effect of the translation as a whole. In the example quoted above, by having Juan Preciado respond "petrified" ("ostolbenel") to Eduviges's comment that his mother warned her of his arrival, Glazova's translation loses the eerie effect of

[38] Jonathan E. M. Clarke, "Speech Report Constructions in Russian," *Acta Linguistica Hungarica* 52, no. 4 (November 2005): 378.

[39] For more on the particular issue of reporting speech verbs in translation, see Sara Laviosa, Adriana Pagano, Hannu Kemppanen, and Meng Ji, *Textual and Contextual Analysis in Empirical Translation Studies* (Singapore: Springer, 2017), 91.

the original, in which Juan's reactions are not so much bewilderment as a gradual acceptance of his own confusion. In other instances, Glazova goes even further, inserting reporting speech clauses that explicitly identify the speaker or the addressee where Rulfo leaves no such clues. One prominent example can be seen in Juan's first-person narration in the first half of the novel, which is periodically interrupted by interpolations of direct speech rendered in italics and set off by quotation marks. Over the course of the first few fragments, the reader gradually comes to understand that the speaker of these interpolations is Juan's mother, Dolores, and her words seem to be conjured in Juan's memory. Glazova makes this technique explicit right away by inserting the reporting clause "govorila ona" ("she said," 146), identifying Dolores as the speaker. In other instances, Glazova's reporting clauses explain the purpose of an utterance or add emotional inflections, e.g., "voskhishalsia" ("he was delighted," 177), "nastaival" ("I insisted," 215).

Many of the reporting clauses that Glazova adds in her translation serve only to make it clear to the reader that the passage that follows is an internal monologue. In one fragment, Fulgor Sedano surveys the crop at Media Luna when his thoughts suddenly shift to Pedro's son Miguel:

> Le preocupaba la merma porque aún tardaría la cosecha. A decir verdad, apenas si se había sembrado. «Quiero ver si nos alcanza». Luego añadió: «¡Ese muchacho! Igualito a su padre»… (68)
>
> He was worried about the short supply because the harvest was already going to be late. In fact, the crop had just been planted. "I want to see if it will be enough." Then he added: "That boy! Just like his father"…

Glazova combines Fulgor's worries about the harvest with the reporting speech verb and then finds it necessary to explain to the reader the fact that his attention turned to Miguel:

> До нового урожая не близко, по правде сказать, только-только отсеялись. «Хватит ли прошлогодних запасов?» — тревожился Фульгор. Потом — и сам не приметил как — мысли перекинулись на Мигеля. «Беда с этим парнем. Весь в отца»… (198)

> The harvest was still far off, to tell the truth, it had just been sown. "Will last year's stock be enough?"—Fulgor worried. Then—and he himself didn't notice how—his thoughts turned to Miguel. "That guy's in trouble. Just like his father"…

In other cases, Rulfo's passages in third-person narration combine indirect free discourse with the characters' thoughts given as direct speech. In one such passage, Susana's father, Bartolomé San Juan, foresees his own death:

> Bartolomé San Juan, un minero muerto. Susana San Juan, hija de un minero muerto en las minas de La Andrómeda. Veía claro. «Tendré que ir allá a morir», pensó. (88)
>
> Bartolomé San Juan, a dead miner. Susana San Juan, daughter of a dead miner in the mines of La Andrómeda. He saw it clearly. "I will have to go there to die," he thought.

Glazova inverts the narration, conveying the indirect free discourse as direct speech and vice versa, preceding the passage with an introductory reporting clause that clearly serves to orient the reader:

> Ему уже чудились голоса: «Бартоломе Сан-Хуан? А! Это тот, знаете, что погиб на руднике „Андромеда". Сусана Сан-Хуан? Дочь того погибшего рудокопа». Он понял: ему придется вернуться в горы, и там его настигнет смерть. (216)
>
> He was already imagining voices: "Bartolomé San Juan? Ah! That's him, you know, who died in the Andromeda mine. Susana San Juan? The daughter of that dead miner." He understood: he will have to return to the mountains, and there death will reach him.

In explaining the context, Glazova's reporting speech clauses—much like her addition of extraneous details and exaggerations in rendering dialogue—reflect a patronizing concern for the reader's comprehension that was typical of Soviet translations of foreign literature. The cumulative effect of these manipulations produces a significantly simpler reading experience for the reader.

Lysenko concluded her report with comments suggesting that Glazova substantially revise her translation: "It would be preferable for the mood and the concept, the style and the rhythm of this truly artistic work to reach the Russian reader in all of its entirety, without any

concessions. The translator has both the talent and the ability sufficient for this."[40] Under normal circumstances, such an implied request would not have incited a scandal. These were not normal circumstances, however, and Glazova's reaction to the internal review put the fate of the translation's publication in jeopardy.

Glazova's response

Glazova responded to the internal review in an extended essay addressed to her editor, Maiia Filippova, defending her translation against what she considered unjustified criticism. Over the course of eighty typewritten pages, Glazova's essay—which she titled "On the Russian Language"—addresses the individual points raised in Lysenko's review and questions the entire premise of judging a translation by comparing it with the original text. She prefaces her comments by arguing that such comparisons are "founded on the principle of literal translation," framing her response as a defense of "the basic truths of the theory of literary translation and poetics, to prove the legitimacy of commonly-used words and expressions of the Russian language and so forth."[41] In labeling Lysenko's approach as one grounded in "literal translation" (*bukvalistskii perevod*), Glazova attempted to frame the entire enterprise as ideologically suspect. Literalism, or an excessive attachment to the formal structure of the original text, had been deemed a cardinal sin in Soviet translation since the 1950s, when Ivan Kashkin articulated a theoretical grounding for a socialist realist "method" of translation. In Kashkin's view, only "free" translations were capable of depicting reality in its revolutionary development; he denounced "literal" translations along the same lines as the attacks on formalism under the

[40] RGALI, f. 613, op. 10, ed. khr. 5407, l. 188.

[41] "В основу сличения моей рукописи с подлинником положен принцип буквалистского перевода. [...] Многое, как в характере замечаний, так и в тоне, которым они делаются и в «Реценизии», и на полях моей рукописи, удивило меня ... Она обширна, но это не грех, когда дело идет о серьезных вещах, тем более, что порой мне приходится в ней отстаивать азбучные истины теории художественного перевода и поэтики, доказывать правомерность общеупотребительных слов и выражений русского языка." Ibid., 42, 35.

Zhdanov doctrine.[42] Although there is little evidence that most Soviet translators used Kashkin's theoretical writings in practice, the preference for free over literal translation remained. In their widely-read books of translation criticism, practitioners such as Kornei Chukovsky and Nora Gal' critiqued literalism as a matter of bad taste, associating it with a particular kind of "translationese"—*kantseliarit*, or abstract, stultified bureaucratic language.[43] According to this approach, in mimicking the syntax of the original language and freely resorting to using calques rather than using well-known Russian phrases, bad translators not only failed to make the foreign text accessible to the Soviet reader; they did harm to the Russian language itself. Glazova appeals to similar logic in her response, justifying her divergences from the original text as an attempt to produce an expressive Russian translation:

> The Russian literary language operates with different laws, it uses different means of expression […] and if we translate modern colloquial speech into Russian using the aesthetic standards of Spanish-language literature, we create a grey Russian text that is deprived of living color, bloodless—in short, this will be that smoothed-out, unexpressive, bleak, distilled language that, unfortunately, tarnishes some of our translations from Spanish.[44]

She further acknowledges that her "free" translation and liberal use of paraphrase allowed her to censor provocative passages, such as Susana's erotic delirium on her deathbed: "Our literature, as far as I am aware, strives as much as possible to avoid such themes. I attempted to provide a translation that did not reveal the eroticism without removing the author's idea."[45]

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[42] For more on this topic, see Chapter 1 of this dissertation.

[43] Kornei Chukovskii, *Vysokoe iskusstvo* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1964); Nora Gal', *Slovo zhivoe i mertvoe: iz opyta perevodchika i redaktora* (Moscow: Kniga, 1972). The term *kantseliarit*, coined by Chukovsky, resembles the names of diseases in Russian (a more literal translation would be "officialitis").

[44] "В языке русской литературе действуют иные законы, применяются иные средства выразительности... и если пользоваться при переводе современного просторечия на русский язык эстетическими мерками испаноязычной литературы, мы создадим русский текст серый, лишенный живых красок, бескровный – словом, это будет тот сглаженный, невыразительный, унылый, дистилированный язык, которым, к сожалению, грешат некоторые наши переводы с испанского." RGALI f. 613, op. 10, ed. khr. 5407, l. 122.

Kashkin's realist method effectively sanctioned implicit censorship along with its endorsement of free translation. It was common practice among translators to resort to euphemism or paraphrase in translating passages that contained sensitive political themes as well as graphic depictions of sex or violence. In some cases, entire passages or even storylines could be simply excised in the translation. Authors were rarely consulted on this practice, and the published translations did not always contain a disclaimer that the text was an abridged (or in this case, augmented) translation.

Glazova defends her use of colloquialisms, dialectisms and other "provincial expressions" along similar lines, arguing that Lysenko's critique of her rendering of dialogue was evidence of "excessive rationalism in approaching language phenomena."[46] Nevertheless, Glazova cites dictionary definitions and usages of such words in classic realist works by Maxim Gorky, Vladimir Korolenko, and Mikhail Sholokhov, devoting two pages alone to a justification of her use of the word *morok*.[47] She addresses Lysenko's criticism of her choice of using a diverse array of verbs for reporting speech by insisting on a kind of functional equivalence: Rulfo's use of a limited set of verbs is simply the norm in Spanish-language literature, whereas the use of such emotionally-inflected verbs is common in contemporary Russian.[48] Lysenko's

[45] "Что касается моего «вольного толкования», то боюсь: восхищаясь тем, что у Рульфо в этом месте нет «никаких посторонних образов», рецензент не вдумался в те образы, которые все-таки у Рульфо здесь есть. Полагаю, что если бы рецензент вдумался, то одобрил мой «вольный» перевод, позволяющий обойти некоторые детали эротического предсмертного бреда Сусанны. Речь идет о двух строчках печатного текста Рульфо. Наша литература, насколько мне известно, стремится по возможности избегать подобных тем. Я старалась дать перевод, который, не снимая авторской мысли, не размазывает эротики." Ibid., 39.

[46] "…чрезмерный рационализм в подходе к явлениям языка." Ibid., 117.

[47] *Morok* (darkness, gloom, murk), a nonstandard word, is the pleophonic doublet of the Church Slavic *mrak*, which is standard in contemporary Russian. In Russian literature, the word was "resurrected" by the modernist poet Velimir Khlebnikov (1885–1922) in one of his early heavily neological poems.

[48] RGALI f. 613, op. 10, ed. khr. 5407, l. 125–126.

claim that *Pedro Páramo* is a novel imbued with a "mystical mood," Glazova concludes, is the end result of her literalist approach.

Both the length and the intensity of Glazova's response to the internal review as well as her refusal to accept the vast majority of the proposed changes to her manuscript were unprecedented. The editorial board responded by removing the Rulfo translations from the publishing plan for 1969, leaving the fate of the publication uncertain.[49]

Presenting the novel

From the moment Ospovat submitted his proposal to Khudozhestvennaia literatura, it was assumed that the translation of *Pedro Páramo,* like virtually all other translations of foreign literature, could only be published with an accompanying foreword. The foreword would have to find the correct interpretive key to make the novel acceptable to the Soviet literary environment. The stakes were particularly high considering the negative early reception of the novel at the beginning of the Thaw. Having sensed this, Glazova appealed to the Latin American editorial board at Khudozhestvennaia literatura, proposing to write the foreword herself: it would be "standard, short (5–6 typewritten pages)" and not written in an overly technical, scholarly manner.[50] In her letter, Glazova wrote that it would be misleading to put Rulfo "in the ranks of the existentialists with their inherent sins […] there's no need to give away to existentialism a writer who is by all accounts already basically 'ours'."[51] She further compares the high ideological stakes of the foreword to the reception of Federico García Lorca, whom the

[49] Ibid., 34.

[50] Ibid., 192.

[51] "В разряд экзистенциалистов со всеми присущим им грехами […] отдавать экзистенциализму писателя в общем-то «нашего» по всем статьям, не стоит." Ibid., 191.

Francoists had tried to appropriate as their own: "our critics, thank God, figured things out and didn't take the clever bait. Now no one doubts that Lorca is 'ours', and the very thought of doubting this would seem crazy."[52] These notions of possession and partisanship reflect the utilitarian and partisan mentality that translators and editors often exhibited with regard to writing forewords: the goal was to use whatever rhetorical and ideological maneuvers necessary to get the work into print. However, besides the past negative critical evaluations of *Pedro Páramo* in Soviet print, the foreword would also have to contend with the novel's distinctly non-realistic elements and complex structure.

Glazova was unaware that Ospovat had written the original proposal for the translation when she made this request. Perhaps unsurprisingly, in February 1969 the Latin American editorial board offered Ospovat a contract to write the foreword instead. The foreword he submitted, titled "Mir Khuana Rul'fo" ("The World of Juan Rulfo"), contains many of the expected elements of the genre, including a short biographical sketch of the author's life and literary career, the historical and cultural context in which he wrote, and short synopses of his major works intertwined with short excerpts of key passages. As he did in the original proposal for the translation, Ospovat prefaces his discussion of the novel with a discussion of Rulfo's international reputation and stresses the realist character of the novel in its denunciation of caciquism. He goes a step further, however, by arguing that such fantastical elements of the novel as the uncertain ontological status of the wandering souls in Comala are, in fact, amenable to a realist worldview:

> It is necessary to immediately emphasize that in the plot of Rulfo's novella, despite all of its fantasticity, there is no mysticism. Wandering in the kingdom of the dead is the traditional situation of the *menippeia*, an ancient, but still living genre of world literature that has played an enormous role in its development and is represented by a multitude of

[52] "Наша критика, слава богу, разобралась, что к чему, и не попалась на эту хитроумную удочку. Теперь уже никто не сомневается, что Лорка «наш», да и сама мысль усомниться в этом показалась бы дикой." Ibid., 192.

works in various languages, starting with Lucian's *Menippus or The Descent Into Hades.*[53]

Ospovat cites Mikhail Bakhtin's characterization of the menippeia (or Menippean satire) in his *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1963) as a genre whose fantastic elements are "internally motivated, justified by and devoted to a purely ideational and philosophical end: the creation of extraordinary situations for the provoking and testing of a philosophical idea, a discourse, a truth…"[54] Clearly following Bakhtin's example, Ospovat mentions other examples of the genre in works by Dante, Calderón de la Barca, Fontenelle, Sartre, and Dostoevsky. Despite this impressive pedigree, however, Ospovat claims that Rulfo's use of the device was not inspired by the traditions of the Western canon, but rather was "the direct influence of the people's [*narodnogo*] worldview, which called the menippeia into life and nourished it over the course of centuries. For Mexico is one of few countries where this worldview in its specific national form has been preserved to this day and still permeates everyday customs [*byt*] and folklore with itself." (16) Ospovat's insistence upon the autochthonous inspiration for Rulfo's use of a literary device with clear Western analogues helps to present him as a representative of his national and local community. This was a strategy commonly used in justifying the publication of Latin American writers: emphasizing the "national" character of a given author's work was a relatively simple way to suggest that it was of a realist orientation and thus compensate for any ideological deficiencies. Ospovat had taken a similar approach in his criticism on the Guatemalan writer

[53] L. Ospovat, "Mir Khuana Rul'fo," in Rul'fo, *Ravnina v ogne. Pedro Paramo*, 15. I refer to the pagination of the final published version of the foreword.

[54] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, edited and translated by Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 114. Bakhtin kept a copy of the book inscribed to him by Ospovat in his personal library. I. V. Kliueva, L. M. Lisunova, *M. M. Bakhtin—Myslitel', pedagog, chelovek* (Saransk: Krasnyi Oktiabr', 2010), 95.

Miguel Ángel Asturias, whose surrealist style he characterized as a literary recreation of the indigenous Mayan worldview.[55]

Throughout his discussion of *Pedro Páramo* in the foreword, Ospovat warns readers about the formal difficulty of the work:

> The reader—especially at first—requires notable patience in order to make sense of the kaleidoscope of apparently unconnected scenes, monologues, and conversations, the true connection of which is revealed only gradually. New voices burst into the narration, and we often must guess to whom they belong. Sometimes, having read a monologue, we learn only from the conversation that follows who is saying or thinking this; other times, an identifying sign appears only at the end of a scene—a name or some other detail, allowing one to define when and where the scene takes place. True, Rulfo's inherent art of speech characteristics lessens the task of the reader, who rather quickly begins to 'recognize by voice' each of the characters. (17)

Despite this warning, however, Ospovat also makes sure to stress that even the novel's complex structure contributes to an ultimately realist goal:

> Real life is presented in *Pedro Páramo* as if broken into pieces, which the writer consciously rearranges, placing them in a complex, intersecting composition. But, first of all, each of these pieces remains a particle of living reality. And secondly, the system of their juxtapositions and contrasts [...] is entirely subject to the author's design, which destroys extrinsic verisimilitude in the name of a deeper comprehension of reality. And as soon as the reader begins to orient himself in this system, before him arises a uniquely logical aesthetic world, the marked conditionality of which does not turn away from life, but serves to study its tragic contradictions. (17)

Ospovat suggests that it is precisely Rulfo's divergence from the mimetic principle of realism as it is traditionally conceived that allows him to depict the destructive effects of caciquism in Mexican society. The notion that the "realism" of Rulfo's novel is defined by its political utility clearly reflects the gradually changing critical discourse on literary realism during the 1960s outlined above.

Ospovat's foreword was also subject to an internal review. The editorial board chose to assign this task to Glazova, who submitted another extensive essay in which she clearly

[55] See Chapter 2 of this dissertation for a detailed discussion of this topic.

articulates her ideological position with regard to the novel, the nature of its literary realism, and how Rulfo's work should be presented to readers. She begins her review with a positive appraisal of Ospovat's discussion of Rulfo's biography and the historical and cultural contexts within which he wrote. She approves of Ospovat's treatment of Rulfo's psychological depth and interest in social problems, remarking that the "tension of his heroes' spiritual lives, their lack of moral complacency, the theme of conscience" all reflected the writer's interest in Russian literature.[56]

Glazova argues against Ospovat's claims about the novel's denunciation of caciquism, which she considers too abstract of a concept to comprise one of Rulfo's main concerns, stating that "it is significant that the author himself acknowledged that his book is dedicated to serious social problems, and not to solving some abstract questions severed from real life or to proving the meaninglessness of human existence on earth."[57] She notes that Pedro is not explicitly identified as a cacique in the novel and claims that this is evidence that Rulfo's intention was to avoid the primitive ethnographic and local scope of his predecessors in favor of more universal themes: "greed and private-property psychology, with truly animalistic individualism as its highest expression, become the subject of artistic investigation."[58] Nevertheless, she stresses the social and historical grounding of Rulfo's exploration of these themes: "In my view, the most important thing for Rulfo was that cardinal conflict that split the Mexican countryside—the conflict between the peasantry and the landowners, the latifundistas. Everything else is derivative

[56] "…напряженность духовной жизни его героев, их нравственная неуспокоенность, тема совести…" RGALI, f. 613, op. 10, ed. khr. 5407, l. 46.

[57] "На мой взгляд, очень существенно здесь признание самим писателем того обстоятельства, что книги его посвящены серьезным социальным проблемам, а не решению каких-то абстрактных, оторванных от жизни вопросов или доказательству бессмысленности человеческого существования на земле." Ibid., 50.

[58] "Объектом его художнического исследования становится стяжательство, частно-собственническая психология, и поистине звериный индивидуализм, как ее крайнее выражение." Ibid.

of this main conflict."[59] In Glazova's view, Rulfo's depiction of his characters reflected a deep understanding of historical processes in Marxist terms: "Lenin's characterization of peasant psychology (as laborers and private owners) is incarnated in the figure of Fulgor with striking artistic insight."[60]

Glazova attributes the uncertain ontological status of the characters in the novel to a particular Mexican conception of the relation between death and life "inherited from indigenous beliefs that stretch back to the earliest stages of human consciousness."[61] However, contrary to Ospovat, she argues that Rulfo's depiction of the living dead should not be attributed to Menippean satire, but rather should be understood as a realized metaphor: the resurrection of the past, just as whispers are the voices of the past.[62]

Glazova critiques Ospovat for his insufficient discussion of Rulfo's anticlericalism and atheism, arguing that this constitutes not only one of the writer's most salient characteristics, but that it reflects his wider humanist "thesis": "religion and humanity are incompatible."[63] Glazova provides a strained interpretation of the character development of Padre Rentería in the novel in order to justify her claims regarding Rulfo's critique of the Catholic Church. Not only does Rulfo never explicitly call Rentería a *cristero*—at the end of the novel, she claims, he leaves the church

[59] "На мой взгляд, главное для Рульфо – тот кардинальный конфликт, который расколол мексиканскую деревню – конфликт между крестьянином и хозяевами земли, латифундистами. Все остальное – производного от этого главного конфликта." Ibid., 56–57.

[60] "Ленинская характеристика крестьянской психологии (труженик и частный собственник) воплощена Рульфо в фигуре Фульгора с поразительной художнической проницательностью." Ibid., 93. A note in pencil appears to the left of this passage: "?!"

[61] "В сюжете и психологии героев […] много связано с народным мексиканским, унаследованным еще от индейских верований, восходящих к самым ранным стадиям человеческого сознания, представлением об умерших, как живых." Ibid., 80.

[62] Ibid., 97.

[63] "Тезис, выдвинутый Рульфо в повести гуманистичен: религия и человечность несовместимы." Ibid., 98.

not to join the *cristeros* in their rebellion, but rather to fight on the part of the revolutionary state.[64] Glazova later elaborated on the supposed optimism of the novel in a letter to her editor, Filippova, in which she argues that Ospovat's belief that *Pedro Páramo* is "static and dark" must be "the result of some strange misunderstanding—and not, I hope, of prejudice."[65] Reiterating her claim about Rulfo's historical grounding of universal concerns, she characterizes Abundio's murder of his father Pedro as the "oppressed […] taking historical vengeance on their oppressors […] and this is in full agreement with the history of Mexico. Rulfo is a realist in the fullest sense of the word. The long-dead class leaves the stage of history and turns to dust."[66]

Both Ospovat's foreword and Glazova's review share an underlying assumption that *Pedro Páramo* is a work of literary realism. Ospovat emphasizes Rulfo's critique of caciquism as the realist orientation of the novel, justifying its complex form as a means to this end. The fantastic elements of the novel also contribute to the novel's realism as they reflect both the heritage of the Menippean satire in the Western literary tradition as well as the Mexican national character and popular worldview. Glazova, in contrast, insists that Rulfo's realism lies in his accurate depiction of local historical processes in order to articulate his denunciation of individualism. Insisting that Rulfo's works were essentially optimistic, she proposes highly unconventional readings that few critics could agree with.[67]

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[64] Ibid., 102. The comments in pencil along the margins of this passage (presumably Ospovat's own)— "neverno!" ("incorrect!") and "natiazhka!" ("a stretch!")—clearly reject this interpretation.

[65] "Его убеждение, будто «П. Парамо» повесть статичная и мрачная есть результат какого-то странного заблуждения, – надеюсь, не предубеждения." Ibid., 5 ob.

[66] "Итак заблуждение? Конечно! Убита не Дамиана, а Педро и всходит солнце, и тени расточаются. Угнетенные (в лице Абундио) вершат историческое возмездие над своими угнетателями (Педро) – и это в полном соответствии с историей Мексики. Рульфо – реалист в самом полном смысле слова. Давно мертый класс уходит с подмостков истории, обращается в прах." Ibid., 6.

[67] In a similarly strained interpretation of Rulfo's story "¿No oyes ladrar los perros?," Glazova again insists on the writer's optimism: "This is a hymn to the glory of the human spirit, which is capable of defeating physical infirmity,

These assertions starkly contrast with Western criticism of the novel, which by the late 1960s had begun to emphasize Rulfo's importance as an early practitioner of "magical realism" and a precursor to the modernist "Boom" Generation. In order to understand the reason behind this contrast, it is important to consider the intended audience and various purposes of forewords and other paratexts in Soviet translations of foreign literature. While forewords ostensibly addressed the mass reader, they served a critical role in guaranteeing the final publication of a given text by providing an interpretation that could be presented to readers as authoritative and in accordance with official ideology.[68] As the case of *Pedro Páramo* demonstrates, while the interpretations Soviet readers encountered in translation forewords may have been unconvincing, if not dismissed out of hand, their apparently predictable form was nevertheless the subject of heated debate.

Ultimately, despite Glazova's detailed criticism in her review, the editorial board approved Ospovat's foreword, and the translation was included in the publishing plan for 1970.[69] Upon approving Ospovat's foreword, Filippova wrote the final editorial conclusion as the publishing house's official summary and evaluation of the publication.[70] She begins her remarks

prejudice, bitterness, and anger for the sake of saving another person! A deed in the name of humanity, dictated by high moral consciousness—that's what the story is about." Ibid., 59.

[68] See Chapter 1 for a detailed discussion of translation paratexts.

[69] There were other external circumstances that factored into the struggle to include Rulfo in the publishing plan: in September 1969, Diana Suvorova, a senior editor at the editorial board, informed Glazova that "the plan has been confirmed and so far everything is going according to plan. But, considering that now everything has become much more difficult with the paper [shortage] and the printing houses—even more so, since it is a jubilee year—no one—not even our minister [of the State Committee for Publishing] Mikhailov—can say for certain if Rulfo will come out in the year 1970." RGALI, f. 613, op. 10, ed. khr. 5407, l. 25.

[70] In Soviet publishing, *redaktorskoe zakliuchenie* (often abbreviated as *redzakliuchenie*) denotes an editor's review of a given manuscript submission—an intermediate step in the review process in which the manuscript could be rejected. The editors working in the Latin American editorial board at Khudozhestvennaia literatura typically composed these only as the final step in the editorial review process, what was sometimes labelled *okonchatel'noe redzakliuchenie* (final editorial conclusion). For more on this topic, see Chapter 1 of this dissertation.

with the expected assertion that it is "essentially a profoundly realistic novel" and borrows from Glazova's focus on class conflict, stating that "the central concern is the antagonism of the peasant and the landowner."[71] In her discussion of the novel's complex form and its fantastic elements, however, Filippova writes in a vague and belletristic manner:

> The stylized (*uslovnaia*) form of the novel is far from accidental, it is based on a vast literary tradition that is not only justified, but necessary in this work. The past of Mexico—has it died? People have died, but the past lives on. The dead are living—this is what Rulfo wishes to say, and he manages to do this. Their life was terrible, appalling, no life at all, but rather sheer hell, life in a ring of fire, no, even more terrible, and when you learn about this, a very specific thought arises—to destroy this ring, escape from hell, do away with all fanaticism and vice. Mexico—cleanse yourself, free yourself, become free and beautiful.[72]

This evocative summary of the themes in the novel avoids any mention of the specific techniques Rulfo uses and the challenges they would pose for the work's reception. This was likely intended to facilitate the publication process and ensure that no objections would be raised by the publishing house officials who had the power to approve or reject proposed publications at this stage. Somewhat atypically for an editorial conclusion, Filippova does not mention the contentious review process for both the translation and the foreword, providing only one brief comment on the latter at the end of the document:

> Considering the complexity and multifaceted nature of Rulfo's stories and novel, a very serious foreword was necessary for the book, and, one must say, L. Ospovat's foreword fully meets this requirement. […] I think that the publication of Rulfo's book [sic] by our editorial board will be received by readers as a big event in their acquaintance with the modern literature of Mexico.[73]

Conclusion

[71] RGALI, f. 613, op. 10, ed. khr. 5407, l. 23. See the Appendix for the Russian text of Filippova's conclusion.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Ibid.

Glazova's translations of *El llano en llamas* and *Pedro Páramo* were published together in one volume in May 1970. The book's print run of 100,000 copies, typical for the first translation of a foreign writer from a major Soviet publisher, was nearly equal to the total number of copies of the novel that had been published in Mexico at the time.[74] The book went largely unnoticed by critics, overshadowed by the sensational publication of a Russian translation of Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* later that summer.[75] The scant Soviet criticism on Rulfo that appeared over the following decade was largely the work of Ospovat and Kuteishchikova. In their 1976 monograph on the "new Latin American novel," they refined their characterization of the realism in Rulfo's novel: "*Pedro Páramo* is sometimes called a novel about caciquism, which indeed it is. But here the phenomenon of caciquism is not only investigated as a concrete example, but also elevated as a symbol that concentrates in itself the centuries-long experience of the people's history."[76] However, as Soviet readers and critics began to associate Latin American literature with magical realism, such appeals to Rulfo's symbolic representation of Mexican history soon became outmoded. The sudden appearance of previously untranslated writers such as Jorge Luis Borges, Adolfo Bioy Casares, and José Donoso during *perestroika* shifted readers' sensibilities toward the postmodern. Rulfo's reputation fared somewhat better in this context: Glazova's translation of *Pedro Páramo* was reprinted with only minor revisions in a 1989 anthology of Latin American novellas.[77] The

[74] By 1969, when the Fondo de Cultura Económica published the tenth edition of the novel, 120,000 copies had been printed. Zepeda, *La recepción inicial de* Pedro Páramo, 293.

[75] Gabriel' Garsia Markes, *Sto let odinochestva*, trans. Valerii Stolbov and Nina Butyrina, *Inostrannaia literatura* 6–7–8 (1970): 5–69, 140–199, 6–105. The full translation appeared in book format the following year and was an instant success: a total of ten editions of the translation were published by the fall of the Soviet Union.

[76] V. Kuteishchikova and L. Ospovat, *Novyi latino-amerikanskii roman. 50-60e gody. Literaturno-kriticheskie ocherki* (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1976), 159.

editions of her translation that have been published since the fall of the Soviet Union, in much smaller print runs, categorize Rulfo as a magical realist.[78] Compared to other writers of his stature, he remains a relatively obscure figure in the Russophone reception of Latin American literature. The Russian *Pedro Páramo* is only a minor classic, highly regarded by specialists, who acknowledge that the novel deserves an updated translation.[79]

In her memoirs, Kuteishchikova recalls the challenge that faced her husband Ospovat in writing the foreword to *Pedro Páramo*: "like no other literary work, the novel needed a preliminary interpretation of its genre, its composition, its mythology, as well as the concrete details of Mexican reality."[80] In her opinion, writing the foreword was not an empty ritual, but rather an opportunity to express, in Aesopian terms, that the novel's treatment of Mexican history resonated with the Soviet experience of tyranny. "Considering his personal historical experience," Kuteishchikova writes, the Russian reader would clearly perceive Rulfo's articulation of "the problem of the cult of personality, which corrupts both the person as well as those who knelt before him."[81]

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[77] Rul'fo, *Pedro Paramo*, in *Latinoamerikanskaia povest'*, ed. V. Zemskov (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1989), 77–186.

[78] In 1999, the St. Petersburg-based publisher Amfora included the novel in its book series titled "Borges's Personal Library." Another St. Petersburg publisher, Azbuka, published Glazova's translation of the novel in 2004 alongside other novels by Adolfo Bioy Casares and others in the anthology *Romany magov* [*Novels of the Magicians*].

[79] Writing about Rulfo's work as a whole, Svetlakova notes the "acute need for a new translation of the Mexican genius in Russian" written outside of the boundaries of the Soviet context. Svetlakova, "Rul'fo po-russki," 458.

[80] Vera Kuteishchikova, *Moskva – Mekhiko – Moskva. Doroga dlinoiu v zhizn'* (Moscow: Akademicheskii proekt, 2000), 328.

[81] Ibid.

Conclusion

As the Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges became an international literary celebrity toward the end of his life in the 1970s, he remained virtually unknown in the Soviet Union, where he had long been denounced as a "preacher of the ideas of bourgeois decadence."[1] His explorations into the nature of reality and its literary representation were diametrically opposed to the official ideological positions of socialist realism. In contrast to Stalin's slogan "socialist in content, national in form," Borges's work was, for the Latin Americanist Vera Kuteishchikova, "militantly antisocial in content and cosmopolitan in form."[2] To make matters worse, he publicly denounced communism, praised Francisco Franco's regime in Spain, welcomed Augusto Pinochet's coup in Chile in 1973, and later spoke in favor of Jorge Rafael Videla's right-wing military dictatorship in his home country. The Soviet press declared him a persona non grata, labelling him "a blind man who does not want to see."[3] Like very few writers of his stature, Borges was unofficially blacklisted.

Nevertheless, within a few years, he became a cult figure of the perestroika era. In 1981, Boris Dubin's Russian translation of Borges's famous story "The Garden of Forking Paths" was quietly included in an anthology of short stories by Argentine writers.[4] An entire volume of Borges's stories appeared in 1984, the latest book in the prestigious series Mastera sovremennoi

[1] Lev Ospovat, "Borkhes," in *Kratkaia literaturnaia entsiklopediia*, v. 1, edited by A. A. Surkov (Moscow: Sovetskaia entsiklopediia, 1962), 699-700.

[2] Vera Kuteishchikova, *Roman Latinskoi Ameriki v XX veke* (Moscow: Nauka, 1964), 265.

[3] "Slepets, kotoryi ne khochet prozret'," *Inostrannaia literatura* 5 (1978): 275.

[4] Khorkhe Luis Borkhes, "Sad raskhodiashchikhsia tropok." Translated by Boris Dubin. In *Argentinskie rasskazy*, edited by Ella Braginskaia (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1981), 28–38. A few years earlier in 1975, three of Borges's poems translated by Sergei Goncharenko were included in an expansive anthology of Latin American poetry published for the prestigious series The Library of World Literature.

prozy [Masters of Modern Prose].[5] A flood of Borges translations followed over the next decade. Konstantin Akinsha recalls that Borges "became obligatory reading for every intellectual. He was a part of the cultural code, a shortcut to communication—"What do you think about Borges?" was a frequently asked question when people would meet in the early '80s. Garcia Márquez, by contrast, was nearly a pop idol, a kind of profane knowledge; Borges was the sign of the initiated—those people whose paths would cross in the semisecret garden of the Soviet intelligentsia."[6] Echoes of Borges's postmodern experimentation soon resounded in the work of the first generation of post-Soviet writers such as Viktor Pelevin. After decades in the Soviet doghouse, how did this transformation come about?

The behind-the-scenes story of how Borges's short stories finally came to be translated into Russian illustrates many of the dynamics discussed in this dissertation.[7] Braginskaia prepared the proofs for an anthology of short stories by Argentine writers and submitted them for approval from the authorities. Her superiors at the central publishing house Khudozhestvennaia literatura objected, as did the Communist Party functionaries in the Central Committee's Department of Culture. By chance, however, the communist Argentine writer Alfredo Varela happened to be visiting Moscow at the time. Braginskaia decided to ask him, an official friend of the Soviet Union and Stalin Prize laureate, to lobby on her behalf—after all, how could an anthology of Argentine short stories be published without anything from Borges? Varela agreed, and spoke with officials from the Central Committee, who were virtually obliged to satisfy his

[5] Khorkhe Luis Borkhes, *Proza raznykh let*, edited by Inna Terterian (Moscow: Raduga, 1984). 100000 copies.

[6] Konstantin Akinsha, "From Russia with Love," *Review: Literature and Arts of the Americas* 32, no. 59 (1999): 74.

[7] Ella Braginskaia recounts this anecdote in "A chto u nas bylo s Borkhesom? Siuzhet s intrigoi pro to, kak vpervye velikii argentinets iavilsia russkomu chitateliu," *Literaturnaia gazeta* 10 (2002): 14. For more on the Soviet and post-Soviet reception of Borges, see Dina Odnopozova, "Russian-Argentine Literary Exchanges," PhD diss. (Yale University, 2012), 146–185.

request. In order to see the anthology into print, Braginskaia also had to get special permission from the Writers' Union. Thankfully, the head secretary at the time was Rimma Kazakova, who was sympathetic to Braginskaia's plans. Her approval was enough to convince Aleksandr Puzikov, the director of Khudozhestvennaia literatura. The anthology was published without further delay in 1981, and Borges finally made his debut as a prose writer in Russian.

What does this anecdote illustrate? By the 1980s, the last barriers were falling. The official processes for selecting and presenting texts had taken on a nearly entirely performative nature. The whole system designed to monitor and mediate Soviet readers' encounters with Latin American literature had seemingly outlived its original purpose. All of the people in positions of power in Braginskaia's anecdote eventually approved of her request, but they initially feared retribution from the authorities above them. The reigning logic of the system was to find any means possible to get the foreign author translated and into print rather than to strictly determine whether a given work was actually suitable for translation and publication.

This could also be observed in the increasingly tenuous justifications for publication offered in forewords, and in the fact that readers sometimes disregarded the former altogether. As the scope of literature that was translated widened, the paratexts used to contextualize them began to break out of the partisan strictures of past criticism: totalizing interpretations began to soften, and critics felt free to emphasize more literary and aesthetic concerns. While the social relevance of the work in question was still almost always highlighted, it was no longer the predominant criterion used to justify its inclusion in the Soviet canon of translated literature.[8]

[8] In her study of translation paratexts in the journal *Inostrannaia literatura*, Tatiana Chulanova similarly finds that "during the periods of stagnation and perestroika, the ideological value of the works chosen for translation decreased, whereas their artistic value increased." See "The Politics of Paratexts: Framing Translations in the Soviet Journal *Inostrannaia literatura*," PhD diss. (Kent State University, 2020), 132.

These were the consequences of the state's decision to try to "open up" the monological processes after Stalin. Mass publications of translations were just one technology that allowed regular citizens a private sphere. The state's attempt to maintain some control over what crossed the membrane into the private sphere—blacklists, selective publishing, censorship, strained interpretations in literary criticism—proved ineffective in the end. Those entrusted with enforcing these controls had themselves begun to see them as empty rituals.

The fall of the Soviet Union heralded the end of an era: as the political system was rapidly disassembled, so was the formerly state-supported publishing industry. For decades, members of the intelligentsia had enjoyed the privilege of pursuing careers in literary translation. Within just a few years, translation was no longer a state-supported profession. Contemporary translators frequently lament that all of the benefits of the Soviet system were suddenly taken away from them. Natal'ia Malinovskaia recalled that translation had been a special, protected "niche" where one could devote one's life to publishing all of world culture without concern for financial gain.[9] Despite all of its restrictions and drawbacks, the old system was still preferable to what followed it. Translators today argue that the market acts as its own kind of censor, and they lament the lack of knowledgeable and capable editors.

The lack of infrastructure has also changed the practice of translation. Viktor Toporov noted that the end of the Soviet system has led to more literal, "foreign-sounding" translations that closely follow the form of the original as younger generations prefer Russian renderings that transform the act of reading into an "interactive" exercise in interpretation.[10] The translator

[9] Natal'ia Malinovskaia in conversation with the author, March 2019. Not all translators working within the official system would have agreed with the latter comment: judging from internal publishing house documents, contracts for translations and forewords offered generous sums in comparison to the average citizen's salary.

[10] Elena Kalashnikova, *Po-russki s liubov'iu: Besedy s perevodchikami* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2008), 496.

Aleksandr Bogdanovskii, whose career has spanned over the late Soviet and post-Soviet eras, acknowledges the advantages that contemporary translators have, but still prefers the "magic" of the Soviet-style translation with its "noble patina."[11]

The most characteristic example of the prestige of the canonical Soviet-era translations is undoubtedly the controversy about the competing Russian translations of Gabriel García Márquez's novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude.* An international bestseller, the novel was a runaway success with both critics and readers in the Soviet Union. The first edition of the Russian translation by Nina Butyrina and Valerii Stolbov appeared in the journal *Inostrannaia literatura* in 1970 and was reprinted in book form a year later.[12] García Márquez's biographer Sergei Markov recalls the impact the book had in stagnation-era Moscow:

> Latin America invaded, swooped in, and burst into our poor but quiet and comfortable life in the 1960s. It brought perplexing emotions. We began to realize that we were simply vegetating when this sort of thing was going on somewhere! And since the Soviet people was the best-read in the world, a record number of people read the novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* [...] Once, as I was heading out of town, I counted sixty-six men and women reading *One Hundred Years of Solitude* in the park, on the tram, on the escalator, in the subway car, outside three train stations, and on the commuter trains.[13]

Vera Kuteishchikova recalled that it was so difficult to find copies of the translation in bookstores that a friend of an acquaintance decided to copy the translation by hand—a feat that took months yet nevertheless became "the happiest moments of her life." Years later, García

[11] "Aleksandr Bogdanovskii: 'Chem sil'nee na tebia daviat, tem luchshe delaesh' svoe delo.'" *Moskva 24*, July 16, 2015. https://www.m24.ru/articles/literatura/16072015/78908.

[12] Gabriel' Garsia Markes, *Sto let odinochestva*, trans. N. Butyrina and V. Stolbov, *Inostrannaia literatura* 6–7–8 (1970): 5–69, 140–199, 6–105; idem, *Sto let odinochestva*, trans. N. Butyrina and V. Stolbov (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1971).

[13] See Part II, Chapter 2 of Markov, *Gabriel' Garsia Markes* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 2012), 277–332.

Márquez declared that this "anonymous Penelope" was the best reader he ever had.[14] Butyrina and Stolbov's translation would be printed in over ten editions by the time the Soviet Union dissolved, and "Márkes" (as he was known in Russian) quickly became a familiar name to all.

The translation was so beloved that Margarita Bylinkina sparked a controversy when she decided to make a new translation of the novel in the early 1990s. She was dissatisfied with the Stolbov-Butyrina translation, which she considered more of a paraphrase of the original than an accurate translation: in her opinion, it was marred by numerous stylistic inaccuracies, mistranslations, and euphemisms. The translators' self-censorship was evident: certain erotic scenes were "softened" or simply left out altogether. In her memoirs written a decade later, Bylinkina claimed that she had pointed out these deficiencies to Stolbov in the form of an internal review for the publishing house Khudozhestvennaia literatura. However, as the head of the Latin American editorial board, Stolbov paid little attention to this criticism and easily managed to see the work into print.[15]

In 1995, Bylinkina wrote a sensational article for *Literaturnaia gazeta* in which she criticized the Stolbov-Butyrina translation of the novel and announced her plans to publish her own version.[16] The first translation had been published just a few years before the Soviet Union signed the Universal Copyright Convention in 1973. Now, she claimed, García Márquez himself had decided it was time for a "new, corrected and totally full translation" of the novel. The following month, the newspaper published an open letter in response by a united group of Bylinkina's former colleagues at Khudozhestvennaia literatura, including Ella Braginskaia,

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[14] Vera Kuteishchikova, *Moskva – Mekhiko – Moskva. Doroga dlinoiu v zhizn'* (Moscow: Akademicheskii proekt, 2000), 323–326. Gabriel García Márquez, *El olor de la guayaba: Conversaciones con Plinio Apuleyo Mendoza* (Mexico City: Diana, 1982), 81.

[15] Margarita Bylinkina, *Vsego odin vek* (Moscow: Grifon, 2005), 350.

[16] Margarita Bylinkina, "I snova – 'Sto let odinochestva'," *Literaturnaia gazeta* 24 (June 7, 1995): 7.

Natal'ia Vankhanen, Anatolii Geleskul, Boris Dubin, Natal'ia Malinovskaia, Lev Ospovat, Liudmila Sinianskaia, and Natal'ia Trauberg.[17] The letter strongly objected to Bylinkina's disparaging attitude toward certain stylistic choices that were necessitated by the ideological demands of the era, calling her criticisms not a matter of accuracy, but rather one of taste.. When Bylinkina's translation appeared in 1996, it was marketed as the first "full translation from the Spanish."[18] The controversy continued: several months later, Geleskul wrote a negative review for *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, to which Bylinkina responded in the same journal.[19] Bylinkina later attributed her colleagues' rejection of her work to personal jealousy and vengeance for her collegial relationship with Iurii Dashkevich, an editor whom they accused of anti-Semitism.

In 2011, after a decade-long legal battle, the Russian publishing house AST finally bought the rights to García Márquez's works from the Spanish agency Carmen Balcells. The publishing house announced that it would publish the first "authorized" Russian translation of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* in early 2014.[20] When it appeared in November later that year, readers were likely surprised to learn that AST had chosen not Bylinkina's "full," corrected translation, but rather the beloved original version by Stolbov and Butyrina. Eight more editions of the "authorized" translation have since followed, solidifying its status as canonic. Both readers and publishers alike, it seems, prefer the "noble patina" of the Soviet-era translation, censorship and all, to the supposedly more "complete" and modern rendering.[21]

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[17] E. Braginskaia et al., "'Nalitso perebory figovykh listkov': O neiavlennykh miru dobrodeteliakh perevodchika," *Literaturnaia gazeta* 29 (July 19, 1995): 7.

[18] Gabriel' Garsia Markes, *Sto let odinochestva* (Moscow: Redaktsiia gazety "Trud", 1996).

[19] Anatolii Geleskul, "Invektivy," *Nezavisimaia gazeta – Ekslibris* (August 21, 1997); Margarita Bylinkina, "Nazad k murashkam (ili topornye metody napisaniia restenzii)," *Nezavisimaia gazeta – Ekslibris* (December 4, 1997).

[20] RIA Novosti (April 21, 2014). https://ria.ru/20140421/1004849793.html.

If the Butyrina-Stolbov *One Hundred Years of Solitude* can be considered the most "successful" translation of a Latin American novel in the post-Stalin era, the other translations I examine in this dissertation were less so, in various respects. Margarita Bylinkina and Natal'ia Trauberg's rendering of *El Señor Presidente* helped establish Miguel Ángel Asturias as a major figurehead for indigenous protest against imperialism and firmly secured his status in the canon of Latin American literature throughout the socialist bloc. For better or worse, however, in both East and West, Asturias's politically engaged writing in the aftermath of the Guatemalan coup in 1954 cast his reputation for good, overshadowing his creative innovations at the start and end of his career. Bylinkina's translation of Carlos Fuentes's *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* similarly promoted the writer as a committed activist during the height of enthusiasm for the Cuban Revolution. The updated, post-Soviet editions of the translation have largely abandoned the politicized framing of the novel and its author, correcting some of the deficiencies of the first edition. Perla Glazova's rendering of Juan Rulfo's prose, in contrast, has proved less successful, as the writer remains relatively obscure to most Russian readers—a situation that strangely mirrors the reception of his work in English.

In structuring this dissertation as a set of case studies, my goal has been (to paraphrase Lawrence Venuti) to make the translator and his or her efforts "visible." In this regard, Russian readers and publishers have increasingly begun to pay attention to Soviet-era translators as creative figures who left their own personal imprint on their work. Since 2011, the Rudomino Book Center has been releasing the book series Mastera khudozhestvennogo perevoda [Masters

[21] A similar, more exaggerated episode occurred with Russian translations of J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*. The 1960 publication of Rita Rait-Kovaleva's translation (titled *Nad propast'iu vo rzhi* [Over the Abyss in the Rye]) was a major event of the Thaw era. In 2008, free from puritanical official censorship, Maksim Nemtsov translated the novel under the title *Lovets na khlebnom pole* [The Catcher in the Grain Field]. Critics and readers strongly objected to the fact that Nemtsov dared to "update" the dialogue and challenge the beloved translation by Rait-Kovaleva. See Reed Johnson, "If Holden Caulfield Spoke Russian," *The New Yorker* (September 11, 2013).

of Artistic Translation], each volume of which consists of translations organized not by original author, but by translator.[22] The compilers have included critical introductions that allow readers to become familiar not only with the translations by such prominent figures as Solomon Apt, Ella Braginskaia, Nora Gal', and El'ga Linetskaia, but also with their lives and the circumstances under which they worked. In a similar vein, the journalist and scholar Elena Kalashnikova has been interviewing translators for the last two decades, preserving the cultural memory of the Soviet intelligentsia.[23] While the creative output of the translators who worked within official institutions continues to gain more attention both in Russia and abroad, scholars have also turned their sights on the forgotten history of early Soviet translation studies. Ivan Kashkin's dismissal of "literal" translations in the 1950s has long obscured the theoretical approaches to translation associated with the Russian Formalists in the 1920s and 1930s. Scholars are currently re-evaluating the "literalist" heritage, which is now sometimes named *khudozhestvenno-filologicheskii perevod* [artistic-philological translation].[24]

Returning to the topic of translations of Latin American literature, it is important to note that this dissertation does not claim to be comprehensive. In limiting the scope of this study to translations of twentieth-century modernist Latin American novels, I have not discussed the rich tradition of Soviet translations of Latin American poetry.[25] The significant contribution to

[22] The series has an important predecessor: from 1963 to 1985, Progress Publishers similarly published volumes by individual poet-translators in the series Mastera poeticheskogo perevoda [Masters of Poetic Translation].

[23] Many of her interviews can be found in her book *Po-russki s liubov'iu*. Since 2016, Kalashnikova has continued to interview translators as part of her ongoing project "Kak rozhdaetsia slovo. Vstrechi s perevodchikami" [How the Word is Born: Meetings with Translators].

[24] See, for example, M. E. Baskina, V. V. Filicheva, eds, *Khudozhestvenno-filologicheskii perevod 1920–1930-x godov* (St. Petersburg: Nestor-Istoriia, 2021), a recent collection that reexamines the work of such figures as Boris Iarkho, Gustav Shpet, Georgii Shengeli, and Mikhail Lozinskii.

[25] To give an impression of the importance of translations of Latin American poetry, see the anthology produced for the Library of World Literature series: V. Stolbov, E. Riauzova, M. Vaksmakher, eds. *Poeziia Latinskoi Ameriki* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1975). This anthology featured a pantheon of major poet-translators,

Russian literature from such poet-translators as Ovadii Savich, Pavel Grushko, Anatolii Geleskul, Natal'ia Vankhanen, and Boris Dubin through their renderings of works by César Vallejo, Pablo Neruda, Gabriela Mistral, and Octavio Paz (to name just a few) surely merits a separate study.[26] The case studies that comprise the central chapters of this dissertation exclusively discuss Russian-language translations, a further limitation that must be recognized. The translation and reception of Latin American literature in other languages of the Soviet Union sometimes diverged significantly from the Russophone context. Readers of Estonian became familiar with Borges as an author of short stories a decade before their Russian counterparts, for example, and the magical realism of such writers as García Márquez resounded differently in Ukraine, where the postcolonial experience inspired a similar trend, *khymerna proza* [chimeric prose].[27] Finally, the story of the trailblazing cultural mediators who introduced Soviet audiences to Latin American literature has interesting parallels in other national and linguistic contexts. A study comparing the impact of the translator and critic Fedor Kel'in in the Soviet Union with that of Roger Caillois in France, Frank Waldo in the United States, or Zofia Chądzyńska in Poland would surely uncover further intertwined narratives and enlighten our understanding of the global significance of Latin American literature.[28]

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including Mikhail Zenkevich, Pavel Antokol'skii, Leonid Martynov, Semyon Kirsanov, El'ga Linetskaia, Margarita Aliger, Boris Slutsky, David Samoilov, and Inna Lisnianskaia.

[26] William Rougle devotes a chapter of his dissertation to the reception of Neruda; see "The Soviet Reception of Latin American Literature (1917–1975)," PhD diss. (University of California, Santa Barbara, 1980), 353–407.

[27] The Ukrainian writer Iuryi Pokal'chuk, for example, was a scholar of Latin American literature and translated works by Amado, Borges, Vargas Llosa, and Cortázar, among others.

[28] For an English-language account of Roger Caillois's influential book series La Croix du Sud (1945–1970), see Jason Weiss, *The Lights of Home: A Century of Latin American Writers in Paris* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 41–45. On Waldo Frank, see Irene Rostagno, S*earching for Recognition: The Promotion of Latin American Literature in the United States* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997). On the Polish reception of Latin American literature and the popular book series Ibero-American Prose (1971–1989), see Małgorzata Gaszyńska-Magiera, "Po latach o boomie. Wokół serii 'Proza Iberoamerykańska,'" *Przekładaniec* 21 (2010): 196–211.

Appendix

1) Lev Ospovat's proposal for a Russian translation of Juan Rulfo's *El llano en llamas* and *Pedro Páramo* submitted to Khudozhestvennaia literatura (1967):[1]

Литературная судьба мексиканского писателя Хуана Рульфо (род. в 1918 г.) необычайна. В 1963 г. он выпустил свою первую книгу «Равнина в пламени и другие рассказы», в 1955 г. – повесть «Педро Парамо», и с тех пор больше не публикует ничего, по слухам – разочаровавшись в литературной деятельности.

Между тем, удельный вес двух этих книг в мексиканской литературе не уменьшается, а увеличивается год от году. «Равнина в пламени» на родине автора вышла уже седьмым изданием, «Педро Парамо» также выдержал несколько изданий. Обе книги Рульфо переведены на многие языки (в частности, «Равнина в пламени» издана в Чехословакии, а «Педро Парамо» – в Венгрии); критическая литература о его творчестве в несколько раз превышает объем всего, им написанного. По мнению ряда исследователей, Хуан Рульфо явился зачинателем тех тенденций, с которым вошло в мексиканскую и – шире – латиноамериканскую литературу целое поколение писателей, оплодотворивших национальные традиции опытом современной мировой прозы.

Книга «Равнина в пламени» включает в себя пятнадцать рассказов. Время действия этих рассказов – от мексиканской революции 1910–1917 г. до недавней поры, место действия – главным образом, мексиканская деревня. Все это и до Рульфо неоднократно становилось предметом изображения писателей. И тем не менее его рассказы стали открытием целого мира – внутреннего мира крестьян-индейцев, обитателей мексиканской деревни, показанного «изнутри», с такой полнотой знания и глубиной проникновения, что, казалось, – сами эти люди заговорили с читателем.

Чудовищная нищета мексиканских крестьян, гнет, которому они подвергаются, насилие, темнота, религиозный фанатизм, жертвами которых они становятся, – все эти явления изображены в рассказах Рульфо на сами по себе, но воплощены в судьбах его героев. И в тех же судьбах воплощены гордость, мужество, сдержанная сила индейцев, воплощена суровая поэзия, пронесенная ими через века угнетения. Чуждый и враждебный какому-либо экзотизму, Рульфо, в то же время, по-настоящему национален. Герои его рассказов не только говорят, как мексиканские индейцы – они мыслят и чувствуют, как индейцы.

Необходимо отметить еще одну черту рассказов Хуана Рульфо – их лаконичность и, одновременно, необыкновенную емкость, заставляющую вспомнить о Хемингуее, у которого мексиканский писатель, без сомнения, многому учился. Трудно, пожалуй, назвать другого такого писателя в Мексике, который одной только речью своего персонажа, буквально несколькими интонациями умеет нарисовать целый характер. Рульфо вообще предпочитает вести рассказ от лица того или иного героя – деревенского мальчишки, жалеющего свою сестренку, которая станет гулящей, потому что погибла корова, ее единственное приданое («Все из-за того, что мы очень бедны»), безымянного крестьянина, одного из

[1] RGALI f. 613, op. 10, ed. khr. 5407, l. 196–199.

четырех, бредущих по выжженной равнине, где правительство предоставило им земельные участки («Нам дали землю»). Но и в тех случаях, когда рассказ ведется от третьего лица, главное в нем – диалог или монолог, каков, например, трагически-безответный разговор старика с раненым сыном, которого он тащит на плечах («Не слышно лая собак»).

Повесть «Педро Парамо» многими чертами близка рассказам Хуана Рульфо: то же место действия (в широком смысле, разумеется), та же эпоха, такие же лаконизм и выразительность языка. Особенностями этой повести является ее своеобразная композиция, возрастание в ней роли условных форм.

Начинается повесть вполне традиционно: герой, от имени которого ведется повествование, едет верхом на лошади на поиски своего отца, деревенского касика,[2] Педро Парамо. Он попадает в деревушку Комала, узнает, что Педро Парамо умер, и с этого момента повествование усложняется: настоящее перемешивается с прошедшим; в голос рассказчика вплетаются голоса других персонажей – живых и умерших – женщину, которую любил Педро Парамо, человека, который убил его, многих людей, которых разорил и уничтожил этот неукротимый старик.

Важно подчеркнуть, что подобные приемы повествования – свобода обращения со временем, смещение планов, взаимодействие рассказа с воспоминанием, – роднящие Рульфо с такими писателями, как Фолкнер, Апдайк, Бёлль, подчинены вполне реалистической задаче: художественному разоблачению касикизма, остающегося и сегодня одной из самых страшных социальных язв Мексики. И задача эта решена блистательно: зловещий образ Педро Парамо, встающий из повести Рульфо, по своей обобщающей, типической силе принадлежит к лучшим достижениям мексиканской литературы.

Всего вышесказанного, по-моему, достаточно для того, чтобы пожелать издательству «Художественная литература» как можно скорее опубликовать на русском языке сборник произведений Хуана Рульфо и тем заполнить один из самых досадных пробелов, существующих в знакомстве советских читателей о современной литературой Латинской Америки. Я считаю, что в сборник должны войти все 15 рассказов, составляющих книгу «Долина [sic] в пламени» и повесть «Педро Парамо».

Как уже говорилось, Хуан Рульфо – первоклассный стилист. Поэтому следует пожелать также, чтобы перевод его произведений был поручен наиболее опытным переводчикам, чувствующим сказовую стихию.

Л. Осповат

[2] Касик в данном случае, – местный богач, ставший фактическим хозяином округи, господином над жизнями и душами всех, кто там проживает. [Footnote from the original text.]

2) Excerpts from Evgeniia Lysenko's internal review of Perla Glazova's translation of *El llano en llamas* (1969):[3]

> Рассказы Х. Рульфо почти сплошь написаны в сказочной манере – повествование, как правило, ведется от лица человека из народа. Переводчица отлично справилась с передачей особенностей сказа. Она широко и умело пользуется русским просторечьем, вульгаризмами, областными словами и оборотами, изобретательно и творчески преобразует синтаксическую структуру оригинала. Перевод хорошо читается, в нем не встретишь неуклюжих буквализмов, книжных или казенных оборотов – радует богатство лексики, мастерство и точность в передаче тональности сказа.
>
> Единственное, что я могла бы поставить в упрек П. Глазовой – это встречающиеся местами длинноты и даже добавления, в той или иной мере развивающие или повторяющие в другой словесной форме мысль, изложенную автором более сжато. Повидимому, в такой квалифицированной работе это не случайное явление, не результат небрежности. Очевидно, здесь определенная, сознательная тенденция, которая, однако, мне представляется спорной. Создается впечатление, что переводчица, увлеченная яркой, самобытной прозой Х. Рульфо и тем, как это все у нее по-русски хорошо получается, не всегда может удержаться от того, чтобы – не без нажима – еще раз и по-другому не повторить мысль автора или не добавить еще одно словечко, еще один оборот, а то и предложение. При обычном чтении перевода этот «нажим» не так заметен, но когда сличаешь с испанским текстом, видишь, что часто можно было бы сказать то же самое и короче и ближе к оригиналу. Что ни говори, в задачи переводчика входит и передача авторского лаконизма, адекватность оригиналу не только качественная, но и количественная. Тем более, что и здесь «количество переходит в качество» – в строгую, сурово простую прозу Рульфо вносится некая ей присущая «красивость».
>
> > 1. El viejo Esteban mira las serpentinas de colores que corren por el cielo: rojas, anaranjadas, amarillas.
> >
> > По небу многоцветьем карнавального серпантина побежали, запереливались рассветные краски: пурпурные, оранжевые, желтые. Старик Эстебан загляделся.
> >
> > По небу цветным серпантином побежали рассветные краски и т.д.
>
> Это характерный образец склонности П. Глазовой к амплификации, и хотя, повторяю, делает она это не без искусства, вряд ли стоит переводчику украшать оригинал, а также досказывать за автора, развивать его мысль.
>
> > 2. Pero, a todo esto, es mi madrina la que dice lo que yo hago y ella nunca anda con mentiras.

[3] RGALI f. 613, op. 10, ed. khr. 5407, l. 18–21.

Ну, да ничего не поделаешь, раз крестная говорит, что озорничал, стало быть, озорничал, не станет же она выдумывать. Она всегда правду говорит.

3. Somos cuatro. Yo los cuento: dos adelante, otros dos atrás. Miro más atrás y no veo a nadie.

Мы шагаем попарно. Двое впереди, двое сзади. Я оглядываюсь, словно хочу еще раз проверить, действительно ли позади, за второй парой, уже никого нет.

Подчеркнутые слова можно безболезненно убрать, причем будут переданы более точно и смысл и ритм оригинала.

4. Ya lo verá usted. Se planta en Ludivina prendiéndose de las cosas como si las mordiera.

Вы сможете в этом убедиться сами. Ветер терзает Лувину со свирепостью дикого зверя; действительно, вас не оставляет ощущение, что это какой-то хищник рвет зубами свою добычу.

Вы сможете в этом убедиться сами. Ветер набрасывается на Лувину со свирепостью дикого зверя. Да, да, вас не оставляет ощущение, что это не ветер, а хищник, который терзает зубами свою добычу.

5. Mi madrina también dice eso: que la gritería de las ranas le espantó el sueño. Y ahora ella bien quisiera dormir.

Крестная встала и говорит: «Я из-за ихнего кваканья всю ночь глаз не сомкнула, теперь хоть пойду сосну».

Из-за добавленного в переводе «встала», непонятно, в какое время дня происходит действие – судя по переводу, как будто утром, а в действительности скорее вечером.

3) Excerpts from Evgeniia Lysenko's review of Perla Glazova's translation of *Pedro Páramo* (1969):[4]

Мне кажется, однако, что в испанском тексте повести тональность сказовых пассажей и диалогов несколько иная, чем в рассказах – она здесь как бы приглушена, подчинена общему мистическому настрою, не так самодовлеюща. В переводе это не всегда чувствуется – здесь такой же, как и в рассказах, красочный, густо замешанный, насыщенный всякими «поди», «гляди-ко», и областными

[4] RGALI f. 613, op. 10, ed. khr. 5407, 185–188.

словечками сказ, который сам по себе хорош и интересен, но как-то не вполне увязан с общим колоритом повести.

[…]

Видимо, не почувствовав тут стилистического приема, тоже «работающего» на создание определнного настроения, П. Глазова старается внести разнообразие, персонажи повести у нее «сообщают», «откликаются», «произносят», «заверяют», «недоумевают», и т. Д. Думаю, что этого делать не стоило.

[…]

Тут сдержанно патетический тон оригинала нередко подменяется многословным, сентиментальным и порою удаляющимся от текста толкованием.

> Жизнь там течет, нашептывая тебе свою быль, и ты вслушиваешься в нее, вслушиваешься и уже ничего не слышишь, кроме этого немолчного, извечного шепота жизни.
>
> Allí, donde el aire cambia el color de las cosas; donde se ventila la vida como si fuera un puro murmurar; como si fuera un puro murmurar de la vida…

Это почти стихи, каждое слово значительно, весомо. Не будем уж говорить о том, что в переводе довольно длинное, самостоятельное предложение соответствует в испанском тексте второму из двух подчиненных в небольшом периоде (каждое начинается с союза «donde») и, следовательно, какой-то нюанс утерян. Но и мысль у автора другая. Не то, что «жизнь нашептывает себе свою быль» и т. Д., а то, что жизнь там течет приглушенно, как шепот, что это не полнокровная, полнозвучная жизнь, а тихое прозявание….Тема этого «шепота» (murmullo) важно для всей концепции повести, и жаль, что в переводе она затерялась среди обилия слов.

[…]

> Mi cuerpo transparente suspendido del suyo. Mi cuerpo liviano sostenido y suelto a sus fuerzas.
>
> Висеть в пространстве мне нужно было невесомой иголочкой, притянутой магнитом; лодочкой, качающей его тело, прозрачной, покорной его силе и власти.

Рульфо здесь опять-таки почти стихи, патетически лапидарные, с характерными повторами, никаких посторонных образов. Перевод же представляет собой скорее толкование, и на мой взгляд, не очень удачное.

[…]

> Ты прошла мимо, и на твоем пути зашелестели задетые твоим случайным прикосновением ветви деревьев, цветущих в обители блаженных. И вместе с твоим дыханием развеялись по ветру лепестки их облетевших цветов — последнее воспоминание о рае.
>
> Pasaste rozando con tu cuerpo las ramas del paraíso que está en la vereda y te llevaste con tu aire sus últimas hojas.
>
> Ты прошла, задев ветви коричного дерева, что растет вон там, у дороги, и ветерок, поднявшийся от твоих шагов, унес его последние листья.

[…]

Хотелось бы, чтобы настроение и мысли, стиль и ритм этого подлинно художественного произведения дошли до русского читателя во всей полноте, без каких-либо скидок. У переводчицы для этого достанет и таланта, и уменья.

4) Excerpts from Maia Filippova's editorial conclusion to Glazova's translations (October 17, 1969):[5]

> Большой художник, Рульфо с необыкновенным мастерством, не навязчиво, а как бы «само-собой» вскрывает такие стороны жизни мексиканского крестьянина, показывает такие его страдания, что даже понять трудно, как только человек и выдержать может. Правда, герой Рульфо чаще всего и не выдержают – калечатся их души, ожесточаются характеры, но при всем этом даже у самых ужасающих его героев остается что-то человеческое, при других социальных условиях способное сделать этих же людей совершенно другими.
>
> Первые рассказы, показывающие ужасающую нищету мексиканского крестьянина, одурманивание религией и полно невежество, – существование, которого и животное не выдержит, подводят к центральному рассказу «Равнина в огне», рассказу о мекисиканской революции. И зная о жизни крестьянина, о том, как он рос («Макарио»), можно понять и жестокость и стихийность крестьянских выступлении, в которых как бы сконцентрировалась ненависть к четырехстолетнему гнету. А дальше? Что же дала революция крестьянину. Снова все, как было.
>
> [...]
>
> Педро Парамо по сути своей роман глубоко реалистический.
>
> Основная проблема – антагонизм крестьянина и помещика. Время действие романа – предреволюционная Мексика, где царят беззаконие, продажность судебной власти (нотариус), церковь, беспощадная к беднякам и прощающая богатых (падре Рентериа); разврат, истинный феодализм с правом первой брачной

[5] RGALI f. 613, op. 10, ed. khr. 5407, 22–23.

ночи, или точнее – помещик (касик) со своими правами и крестьянин, лишенный всех прав, даже права на жизнь.

Условная форма романа далеко не случайна, она опирается на огромную литературную традицию, в данном произведеии не только оправданную, но и необходимую. Прошлое Мексики – умерло ли оно? Умерли люди, но прошлое живо.

Мертвые – живы – вот, что хочет сказать Рульфо, и это ему удается. Их жизнь была страшной, ужасающей, не жизнь, а ад кромешный, жизнь в огненном кольце, нет, еще страшнее, и когда узнаешь об этом, возникает совершенно определенная мысль – разорвать это кольцо, вырваться из ада, покончить со всеми изуверствами и пороками.

Мексика – очистись, освободись, стань свободной и прекрасной.

Учитывая сложность и многоплановость рассказов и романа Рульфо, к книге было необходимо очень серьезное предисловие, и, надо сказать, предисловие Л. Осповата полностью отвечает этому требованию. [...] Думаю, что издание книги Рульфо нашей редакцией будет встречено читателями, как большое событие в ознакомлении с современной литературой Мексики.

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