The Spanish Translations of *Manhattan Transfer*

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ABSTRACT
The Spanish translation(s) of *Manhattan Transfer* deserves special attention. Despite the difficulties, due to Dos Passos' innovative narrative technique and its strong American cultural component, the translation has been a success in terms of readers' acceptability, as shown by the number of editions and re-prints of the novel in Spain. However, a closer analysis of the translation(s) suggests that there are grounds for a new, revised Spanish version of *Manhattan Transfer*. Furthermore, the translations have been credited to two different translators, namely José Robles Pazos (1929) and a non-existing José Robles Piquer (1984). Several authors have considered this as a case of one translation under two names; however, a contrastive analysis of various editions shows there are various translators'voices present.

Keywords: literature translation, realia, review.

RESUMEN
La traducción al español de *Manhattan Transfer* merece una atención especial. Por un lado, por la enorme dificultad de trasladar al español una novela innovadora técnicamente, plagada de referentes culturales; la traducción ha sido un éxito, prueba de ello son sus constantes reediciones. Sin embargo, un análisis detallado basado en ejemplos concretos indica la necesidad de revisión de algunos aspectos de la traducción. Por otro lado, existen dos traducciones publicadas de *Manhattan Transfer,* la de José Robles Pazos (1929) y la atribuida a José Robles Piquer (1984) (traductor inexistente). Diversos autores han mencionado que se trata de una única traducción, pero su análisis contrastivo, indica que existen varias voces en la traducción y, por tanto, más de una versión de la obra.

Palabras clave: traducción literaria, referentes culturales, revisión.

The story of the friendship between John Dos Passos and José Robles Pazos, the Spanish translator of *Manhattan Transfer* (1925), has been recorded by various authors and from different perspectives. Initially, I read about it in *A Twentieth Century Odissey*, John Dos Passos' biography written by Townsend Ludington (1980: 366-374). As a translator, I immediately felt sympathy for the special relationship that was built between the two young men –Pepe and Dos as they were called familiarly– who had first met on a train trip to Toledo in the winter of 1916 when they were both students, during Dos Passos' first visit to Spain. Their friendship built up over the years, first through correspondence and then also through visits after Robles and his wife Márgara moved to the U.S. when Pepe became a lecturer at John Hopkins University in Baltimore at the end of 1920. In 1929, the translation of *Manhattan Transfer* by Robles was published in Madrid by Cenit. The tragic death of Robles, an officer of the Republican army working as a translator for the government, possibly executed by

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the Russians under suspicion of espionage, meant the total departure of Dos Passos from the communist cause; for many, this ideological shift made him less popular among American intellectuals and critics, and his literary reputation as an icon of the leftist cause turned into that of a traitor to communist ideas.

More than 70 years after his death, Robles' case is still a matter for controversy, as part of the civil war literary "boom" that has taken place in Spain in the last few years. But beyond the historical or human interest in the relationship between Dos Passos the writer and his translator, the Spanish translation of *Manhattan Transfer* deserves special attention. On the one hand, from a traductological point of view, Robles had to face the enormous difficulty of rendering into Spanish a novel which is one hundred per cent American, full of cultural references; he succeeded in his enterprise, as evidenced by the recurring re-editions of the novel and its popularity in Spain. Francico Ayala, who wrote one of the first reviews of the Spanish edition of *Manhattan Transfer* in *Revista de Occidente* (1929), did praise Robles' translation but remarked the difficulties in rendering the peculiar shades of meaning, localisms, invented words, etc. Apart from Ayala who mentioned difficulties, Spanish critics have never objected to Robles' translation. Nonetheless, a detailed analysis of some fragments of the novel indicates that there are grounds for a new, revised translation of *Manhattan Transfer* into Spanish. There is yet another issue regarding the Spanish translation of *Manhattan Transfer* that remains unclear. To date, there have been twenty-six editions of *Manhattan Transfer* between 1929 and 2009, but in ten of them, from 1984 onwards, the translation is not credited to José Robles Pazos, but to a non-existent José Robles Piquer. Rabadán, without explaining further (1989) thinks that the translation credited to Robles Piquer could be a case of plagiarism (170). For critics Manuel Broncano Rodríguez (1992), and Ignacio Martínez de Pisón (2005), it is just one translation with slight variations, and the duplicity of translators would be explained by an unforgiveable typing error. To further complicate things, in the current editions of *Manhattan Transfer* available in Spain from booksellers, some are credited to Robles Pazos, some to Robles Piquer. And they *are* different to various degrees.

The general assumption that there is only one Spanish version of the novel under two different names has never been sufficiently supported by evidence. It is for that reason that I will start by analyzing some fragments in particular versions in order to establish that there are some differences which cannot be explained without a conscious intention on the part of the more recent translator or translators of *Manhattan Transfer* (sometimes under the name of an apparently non-existent Robles Piquer) to modify Robles Pazos´version; those variations occur independently of the translators' names. Having said that, I also think all of these versions are clearly based on Robles Pazos' original translation of 1929, since some of the translated segments are clearly a copy of Pazos' version. This can be seen in the way some of the English source text segments are interpreted and rendered into Spanish where there would have been room for other translation solutions; for example, the translation of *"He had a monkey's face puckered up in one corner"* for *"Tenía una cara de mona toda torcida de un lado"* or *"Bud's road swelled shoes"* by *"zapatos deformados por la caminata"*. These are not straight-

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forward translation solutions into Spanish and coincide in every of the versions consulted. Although it could be said that the various versions do not differ greatly in quantitative terms (i.e. in the number of translation units that vary from the original version to the more recent ones), the changes that are made clearly denote intentionality and, at times, the use of different translation criteria result in different target texts.

I will start by comparing the original 1929 edition by Cenit with the two versions which were the starting point of my research, i.e. the edition by Planeta in 1961, credited to Pazos, and the edition by Círculo de Lectores in 1989, credited to Piquer. The reason for this choice is that both Planeta and Círculo de Lectores are major publishers in Spain, and their editions are extremely popular; chronologically speaking, those editions (1961 and 1989) have been available to a generation of readers that constitute the Spanish receptors of *Manhattan Transfer* of the second half of the 20th century. After that, I will compare the edition by Cenit 1929 with the two latest editions of *Manhattan Transfer* which are currently in print in Spain, Edhasa 2008 and Debolsillo 2009. For the analysis of the translation approaches used in the translations, I have chosen –for convenience but representative for my purposes- the opening paragraphs of the novel, Chapter I., titled "Ferryslip" or "Embarcadero" in the Spanish versions.

The variations between versions may be divided into different categories, according to the language level that is affected by the translation process in each case and the final result. Among them, some are minor variations that –had they been isolated- might have been explained by the manipulation of editors working on the texts for print, whether deliberate or unintentional; changes of this type are less frequent than others, and would include things such as the use of capital letters ("norte"in Pazos and in Círculo, ; "Norte" in Planeta) or minor lexical variations such as "joven" in Círculo and "muchacho" in Planeta, or "afirmativo" in Planeta and "de afirmación" in Círculo . Variations of this type, whether intentional or not, do not necessarily indicate the presence of another translator, so they alone would not support my thesis.

I am more interested in other variations: those that would never have happened without a reconsideration of the original translation process by one or more translators and/or editors checking not only Robles Pazos' version but also Dos Passos' original text. Under this category, one can find lexical variations; morphological variations; additions in the Spanish version to correct omissions in Cenit and Planeta; instances where the diferring translation criteria by the various editors/translators are patent.

I will start with the more superficial -though potentially significant- lexical variations. When I use the term "lexical variations" I am referring to variations in the choice of synonym or quasi synonym words by each translator. These variations in choice do not alter the meaning, but affect the target text mainly at a stylistic level, or in terms of register. Examples of these would include, for example:"corta el agua" or "hiende el agua" for *skidding on the tide;* "puertas" or "compuertas" for *gates;* "silleta" or "orinal" for *bedpan.* It is worth mentioning that Círculo's version (credited to

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Piquer) is closer to the original one by Pazos at a lexical level. However, if compared with Planeta's edition (credited to Pazos), *there are* obvious variations at a lexical level.

Under morphological variations, I have included those segments that use similar lexical items but are morphologically different, i.e. changes in the use of verb tenses or post modification through adverbs versus preposition+ noun compounds. Examples of these would include the translations of "se retorció" or "se retorcía" for *squirmed;* "un signo de afirmación" or "un signo afirmativo" for *nodded,* among others. These examples might have been the result of intentional changes, but they might also have been the result of unintentional reformulations of the original translation made by a careless typist/editor manipulating the text for print. Again, these examples alone would not necessarily indicate the presence of a new translator, and once more, it is Planeta's translation which differs from the earlier and later translations.

Some of the more revealing variations for the purpose of our thesis are those changes incorporated by Círculo in order to "correct" Pazos' omissions (also omitted in the edition by Planeta), by including segments in the Spanish version that did not appear in the original translation of *Manhattan Transfer.* These variations are more revealing because they necessarily indicate that whoever was reviewing and/or re-editing Pazos' translation for Círculo, was doing so by checking Dos Passos' original and intentionally changed whatever he or she deemed necessary. Here follow some additions found in Círculo's translation (attributed to Piquer) which were not present in either version by Pazos. The translation of the following segments appeared for the first time in 1989's edition by Círculo: *buckling the little slapping scalloped waves of the river,* translated as "cabalgando sobre la rizada superficie del río"; *I want to get to the center of things,* translated as "Quiero ir al centro, al centro de todas las cosas"; *the eggs sizzling and netted with brown,* translated as "huevos crepitantes y tostados"; *but please, miss?* as "pero dígame señorita...".These examples clearly denote an intention on Círculo's part to "improve" the original translation, by incorporating phrases that had been left untranslated by Pazos and Planeta. They also indicate that whoever was reprinting *Manhattan Transfer,* was also re-translating it, or at least some of it. Detecting omissions requires a careful check of the source text and the target language text by a translator.

The next set of variations I will focus on are, I think, particularly interesting, because they show Círculo's clear disagreement with some of Pazos' translation options. They are the result of a different interpretation of the meaning of particular phrases or words in the source language text, and convey different meanings in the target language versions. The translators' diferring criteria are evidenced in the following examples (see Chart 1)

Chart 1. Diferring translation criteria

English original	**Translation by Pazos (Cenit 1929)**	**Translation by Pazos (Planeta 1961)**	**Translation by Piquer (Círculo 1989)**
...As she set her basket down...	...Al dejar la cesta en el sue-	...Al dejar la cesta en el suelo...	...Al dejar la cesta en su sitio...

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	lo…		
…brush the hayseeds out o yer suit a bit	…cepíllese el traje, que está lleno de pajas…	…cepíllese el traje, que está lleno de pajas…	…cepíllese el traje, que está lleno de pelusas…
I walked fifteen miles this mornin.	…esta mañana hice quince millas	…esta mañana anduve quince millas.	…esta mañana hice veinte kilómetros.
The plank walls of the slip closed in…	…los tablones del embarcadero se juntaron…	…los tablones del embarcadero se unieron…	…los tablones del embarcadero chocaron…
EAT on a lunchwagon halfway down the block…	EAT en un figón antes de la esquina…	Entró en un figón antes de la esquina…	EAT escrito sobre un remolque antes de la esquina… (N.E.: Eat: infinitivo e imperativo de eat, comer)
Accountant. I hope before long to be a certified accountant.	Contable. Espero que pronto me nombrarán en propiedad.	Contable. Espero que pronto me nombrarán definitivamente.	Contable y pronto espero ser censor jurado de cuentas
These here crazy tradeunion socialists and bomsters...	…esos locos de socialistas y dinamiteros…	…esos locos de socialistas y dinamiteros…	…esos locos de socialistas y sindicalistas siempre pidiendo.

Each of the above examples of variations are the result of different translation processes; I will deal with each one of them separately.

When Dos Passos uses the phrase "as she set her basket down" he is describing the action by the nurse who had been carrying the baby in a basket, but Dos Passos does not say where she actually put the basket; the odds are that the nurse did not place the basket on the floor with the baby inside it, as Pazos wrote, so I think Círculo 1989 was right when trying to render the source language segment in a different way. Círculo 1989 's option "en su sitio" is more satisfactory than Pazos' "en el suelo", simply because the former is more likely than the latter if we picture the nurse, the baby in the basket and the hospital ward. There are other, more neutral translation options, such as "al dejar la cesta", which in my opinion is just as unspecific as the English original.

In our next example, I think it is Pazos who rendered the idea more adequately, translating "hayseeds" by "pajas". Korpenning, just arrived in New York from the countryside, used to live on a farm. The hayseeds reveal his country origins and the man at the lunchwagon is giving him advice on how to find a job in the city. So the "hayseeds" on Bud's clothes are part of his characterization, and the change from "pajas" into "pelusas" does alter the Spanish reader's reception of Bud as a character. It is hard to tell what moved Círculo 1989 to change "hayseeds" into "pelusas" (which mean fluff or dust in English).

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The next thing I would like to focus attention on is the use by Pazos of "millas" for "miles", whereas Círculo 1989 decided to make the conversion into kilometres. In my opinion, this functional approach in this particular case is unnecessary, since the word "milla" is perfectly possible and understandable in Spanish; it also "colours" the text by reinforcing its American cultural context. Conversion of units of measure in general (feet, inches, miles, etc) is necessary when the target reader needs the exact equivalence in order to follow a cooking recipe or follow a planned route, for example. In a literary text, that accuracy in the information is not always needed; in our particular case, the reader does not need to know the exact distance Bud has walked, the "millas" are in my opinion acceptable and locate Bud in a particular geographical and cultural context, America, which is relevant in the plot. I am not saying the mile conversion into kilometres is wrong, but it is not the approach I would use in this particular context.

One of the least acceptable renderings in the fragment under analysis is the translation of the segment "The plank walls closed in, cracked as the ferry lurched against them (...)", which is used by Dos Passos to describe the visual perception from the ferry as it approaches the slip before it comes alongside or ties up. In my opinion, none of the versions manage to describe the scene adequately, since the three use misleading images: "los tablones del embarcadero chocaron" in Círculo 1989 's version, (the planks crashed); or, in Pazos' and Planeta's versions, "los tablones del embarcadero se juntaron" or "se unieron" ·(the planks joined together). None of them have specified that it is the plank *walls* that closed in. Although it is not an easy phrase to translate, I would suggest "al aproximarse al paramento de madera del muelle, los tablones crujieron al chocar el ferry contra ellos". I think the three Spanish versions under analysis are in this case unsatisfactory, since they are not faithful to the original and, at the same time, do not help the target reader visualize the action as described by Dos Passos.

Another translation unit that has been interpreted in different ways in the three versions is "certified accountant". In the United States, a certified accountant is an accountant who has passed certain examinations and met all other statutory and licensing requirements to be certified by one particular state. Given the fact the term has cultural connotations without an exact equivalent in the Spanish culture, it was necessary to use a functional approach in the translation. From that point of view, the three translators have used different functional approaches, and in the three instances –though by different means- the idea that the speaker, Ed Thatcher, is hoping to be promoted and succeed is rendered adequately.

The last example I will analyze shows how Círculo over-translated one of the character's statements regarding the socio-economic situation in New York, by expressing in a more explicit way an idea that was only suggested. At the bar, while drinking to their children's births, two characters talk about future prospects. One of them is a German printer named Zucher –who only appears briefly in this first chapter-, and the other one is Ed Thatcher, Ellen's father. At one point in the conversation, Zucher says: "...vot mit wages going up und these here crazy tradeunion social-

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ists and bomsters..." In the Spanish versions by Cenit and Planeta, Pazos omitted the word *tradeunion*, thus translating the sentence by "y los salarios que suben mit esos locos de sosialistas y dinamiteros". Círculo detected the flaw, but instead of simply adding the idea of tradeunion workers, it "censored" the word *bomsters* and added "siempre pidiendo"; the result in Círculos's version therefore omits one important concept too. It could have been solved by simply adding to Pazos' original version the idea that those socialists and bomsters were in the tradeunions: "esos locos de sosialistas y dinamiteros *de los sindicatos*...", more faithful to Zucher's words.

My analysis would not be complete without some research into what has happened in the more recent, 21st century Spanish versions of *Manhattan Transfer* currently in print. In the last six years (from 2004 onwards) two publishers have been re-editing Manhattan Transfer in Spain: Debolsillo (2009; 2006, 2004) and Edhasa (2008, 2007, 2005). I will now compare the following editions: Edhasa 2008 (also credited to Pazos) and Debolsillo 2009 (credited to Piquer) with Cenit 1929. In my analysis of this set of editions, I will proceed as with the earlier versions above.

The first group of translation segments I have looked at refer to lexical variations between Pazos' original translation and the two later ones by Edhasa and Debolsillo. From this analysis I have concluded that, at lexical level, recent versions of Chapter I under analysis are quite faithful to Pazos' translation, as seen by the smaller number of changes detected. Regarding the text fragments that had been left un-translated by Pazos in the editions by Cenit and Planeta, the analysis shows that both Edhasa and Debolsillo have incorporated the additions/corrections made in the 1989 edition by Círculo. No new omissions have been detected in the newer versions in the fragment under analysis.

Regarding diferring translation criteria, some of the changes that were incorporated in the 1989 edition by Círculo have remained both in Edhasa and Debolsillo. As discussed above, I think the segment describing where the baby-basket was placed by the nurse –"en su sitio"- is an improvement if compared with Pazos' option "en el suelo". The new use of the word "capacho" for *baby basket* by Edhasa is also adequate, since it is the word used in peninsular Spanish to refer to baskets which are specially meant for carrying babies. However, the rest of the changes do not, in my opinion, improve the translation in any way. If anything, they are an attempt to fidelity to the source text, such as in "chartered accountant", which has become "censor jurado de cuentas"; a Spanish equivalent in some contexts, or "the plank walls closed in" which is now translated into "los tablones...se acercaron" (came closer), although the *walls* are still missing in the Spanish versions. Among the changes I do not agree with, the "hayseeds" have turned into "pelusa", the miles into "kilómetros" and the "tradeunion...bomsters" are merely "sindicalistas". In my opinion, these changes mean losses if compared with Pazos' options. As for the phrase "EAT on a lunchwagon halfway down the block...", where EAT has –inadequately in my view- been left in English in most versions, including Pazos', it has been finally translated by Edhasa, but followed by the unnecessary addition of a personal verb form "estaba

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escrito" (was written), instead of the past participle "escrito" which would be perfectly adequate in Spanish and more in the line of Dos Passos' "camera eye" style.

Apart from the above, the 2008 edition by Edhasa has introduced some other changes which make it different from earlier versions under analysis. This difference consists in the translation into Spanish of some of the expressions that had been left in English by Pazos, usually related to adverts, signs, expressions, etc. The reason why Pazos left some of those signs or expressions in English is not known; in modern translation practice, leaving terms un-translated in the target text is only common when it is totally impossible to find an equivalent in the target language. Broncano notices that one of the most striking things about the amount of un-translated segments Pazos left in the target text is that he did not always follow the same criteria. He used three different approaches for no apparent reasons; inverted commas or italics with or without footnotes were used for "ferry" or *jackstones*, for example. Explicitation was also used by Pazos in cases such as "Conozco las rosas *Jack*", where in the original text the word "rose" was not present. In a number of other cases, he simply left the word or words in English with no further help to the reader, such as the above "EAT" example or, as Broncano cites, "Beefsteak Parties Upstairs" (1992:236-237). The only reason I can think of for Pazos' inconsistency regarding what to do with some of these translation units is the fact that Dos Passos' innovative style was so new at the time that Pazos found it hard to convey; he may have tried to give the text that sense of "modernity" and "newyorkness" by leaving signs or expressions in English, in the same way a Spaniard would read them or hear them if travelling in New York in the mid-twenties. Quite rightly in my opinion, the 2008 edition by Edhasa reviewed the segments which had been left in English and translated them into Spanish. In Chapter I, there are two instances of this. One of them we have already discussed: it is the EAT sign on a lunchwagon. The other example is found towards the end of the chapter, when a man decides to buy a new Gillette blade to get rid of his beard. When the man is looking at the shop-window wondering whether to enter the drugstore, he reads a sign that says: "NO STROPPING NO HONING". This sign has been left in English in every Spanish edition under analysis, except in Edhasa's 2008, where it says: "NI FIJARLAS NI AFILARLAS". Although I do not think this translation option is the only possible one, I do think it is much better to translate the motto into Spanish, so that the target reader does not lose the meaning conveyed in the English original. Other options such as "No necesitará cuero ni piedra de afilar", or "OLVÍDESE DE AFILARLA" would also work.

I have found some other examples of intentional variations in Edhasa's edition that are particular to that publisher. However, they do not represent an overall improvement in the final translation as a whole, but are limited and not always justifiable. For example, the expression "knot of earthworms" to describe the movements of the baby in the basket had been translated into "hervidero de gusanos" in all other versions, whereas Edhasa preferred "nido de lombrices", making not much difference in meaning but clearly indicating an intentional change. Similarly, the "mecheros de

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gas" that light the hospital ward in the other versions, become "lámparas de gas" in Edhasa's. Contradicting Edhasa's approach of eliminating unnecessary English words, the "droguería" in Allen Street where the small man bought his first Gillette blade is inexplicably a "*drugstore*" in Edhasa's edition.

Regarding the edition by Debolsillo 2009, as far as I can see it is an exact reproduction of Círculo's 1989 translation. The translation copyright for this edition belongs to José Robles Piquer and was assigned to Debolsillo by Planeta. However, the 1961 edition by Planeta was credited to Robles Pazos and, as seen earlier, was quite different to the 1989 version by Círculo. There must be some logic behind this apparent chaos; further research is needed in order to trace at what point in the Spanish publishing history of *Manhattan Transfer* Planeta decided to use a different version to the one they originally published back in 1961. The irony is the 2009 translation, credited to Piquer, is closer to Pazos' original translation than the 2008 translation, credited to Pazos[i].

Although the scope of my analysis has been limited to the opening paragraphs of the novel, I think there is enough evidence to say that this is not a case of one translation under two names. Throughout the translations of *Manhattan Transfer* into Spanish, variations of the kind dealt with above are a constant and show that translators' authorship has not been particularly valued by editors. The changes introduced by Planeta 1961, Círculo 1989, and Edhasa 2008 make them qualitatively different to Pazos' *Manhattan Transfer* as published by Cenit in 1929; in my opinion those changes are significant enough to consider them as different versions.

Regarding the quality of the translation(s) of the selected fragments, I have followed these steps: (i) A detailed analysis of the source text; (ii) identification of "translation problem-areas" in terms of expression, cultural references, use of literary devices, etc; (iii) selection of translation units that exemplify the above; (iv) comparison between versions with special focus on the types of changes and possible reasons for them; and (v) determination of translation approach and overall quality assessment. The chosen text is found in the opening chapter of *Manhattan Transfer*. The author takes the position of an objective narrator, acting with a cinematic technique that would later on be developed in the USA trilogy and coined as the "camera eye". In spite of its apparent objectivity, it is a naturalistic eye, focusing on the less agreeable details. Behind the camera, the narrator acts as a movie director that chooses the details he wants to film, and the type of light he is going to use. In barely 30 lines, the reader is presented with two simultaneous settings in New York, a ferry slip and a hospital. Both settings are starting points for two of the multiple characters of the novel, Bud Korpenning, just arriving in the city in search of new opportunities, and Ellen Thatcher, who has just been born. The description uses negative associations such as the noise of chains, the bad smells, a comparison of the baby with a knot of worms, the decadence in the buildings. That environment into which Bud Korpenning and Ellen Thatcher arrive is already signalling their fate. Eventually neither of them will be very fortunate in their city venture. Both the themes and the use of language may be ranked as familiar for the standard American reader, and the writer

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plays with feelings that many may have experienced when at the docks or in hospital- in this way he captures the readers' attention through sensations that belong to almost everyone's past experiences.

The last two scenes included in Chapter I include a conversation at a bar and a lighter, humorous fragment describing how a little bandylegged man surrendered to Gillette's publicity and cut his beard, including a picturesque description of Allen Street. At the bar, the conversation takes place between Ed Thatcher (Ellen's father), and a German printer, Marcus Antonius Zucher. The peculiar way in which Zucher speaks English, with a strong German accent, is an example of the way in which Dos Passos conveyed New York's multi-cultural setting. Dos Passos' mastery use of light and colours may be seen in the description of Allen Street, *up the sunstriped tunnel hung with skyblue and smoked salmon and mustardyellow quilts*...The little man's speech also denotes his foreign origins: *'Vat's a matter? Dontye like it?'* he tells his wife when she starts moaning at the sight of his naked face.

We can say that the text is a descriptive narrative. There is action from the very first line, expressed through long sentences with plenty of action verbs: *wheel, heave, spume, crashes, gulps, slides, settles, whirl, fold, step out, press, opened, squirm, move, stir, get, want, do, walk.* There are hardly any state verbs (*there was; he had; his feet were; he was*). Dos Passos' choice of evoking images and personal associations for his descriptions is expressed through semantic expansions, either by the use of pre-modification or post-modification. Pre-modification is abundant. Thus, in the opening paragraph we can read: *broken boxes; green waves; round bow; broken water; manuresmelling wooden tunnel.* At the hospital: *big dry hot room; greenish distempered walls; faint sourish squalling; pursed-up lips.* On the ferry: *cracked patent leather shoe; little slapping scalloped waves; road-swelled shoes; skinny turkey's throat; broken-visored cap.* There are also examples of semantic expansion through post-modification, with prepositional complements (*air tinctured with smells of alcohol and iodoform*); relative clauses (*cabbage heads that heave between the splintered plank walls; the red wrist that stuck out*); participle clauses (*skidding on the tide; holding the basket; hung writhing a faint sourish smell; bucking... the waves; watching him*)

The lexical choice is amplified with metaphors and comparisons: *men and women...jostling like apples fed down a chute into a press; holding the basket as if it were a bedpan; the new born baby squirmed...like a knot of earthworms; he had a monkey's face; something warm and tingling shoot through all his veins; skinny Turkish throat.* The conversation between Bud Korpenning and the arrogant young man is like an allegorical warning of the difficulties of succeeding in New York. When Korpenning asks *"how fur is it into the city...? /....I want to get to the center of things",* he gets this reply: *"That depends where you want to get to.../You'll find the center of things if you walk far enough."* The cocky attitude of the city-wise character answering is already foretelling adversity for Korpenning, who will commit suicide a few pages later.

On his next encounter with a New Yorker, the redhaired waiter, Kopperning is again threatened by the possibility of not succeeding in his adventure "*it's looks that count in this city*", he is told. In this dialogue Dos Passos' characters use a colloquial language which he conveys by the use of shortened forms or peculiar spellings to

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"colour" the characters' speech. These can be seen in phrases like: *cup o coffee; want 'em turned over; you look all in, feller; mornin; comin; it won't cost you nutten; somthin; out o yer suit; you go an git a shave; I'm tellin yez.*

In my opinion, there are three major translation difficulties in the text which in the Spanish versions sometimes have meant "losses". The first one has to do with the abundant use of pre-modification or post-modification to describe things such as the movement of the ferry, feelings or smells. Here are some examples.

The *manuresmelling wooden tunnel* is translated by "el maloliente túnel de madera" in all versions. The Spanish versions fail to render that the bad smell was that of manure, since the word "maloliente" in Spanish may refer to any type of bad smell. However, I can see why the translator(s) made this decision; the only other way to convey the full sense of the phrase into Spanish would probably be through post-modification, perhaps by using a relative clause such as "el túnel de madera que huele/apesta a estiércol"; this option –which may seem more accurate from a semantic point of view- sounds less fluent and natural. Therefore, I think the translator(s) made a balanced decision between fidelity to the source text and acceptability by the target reader, despite the semantic loss.

The *faint sourish squalling* at the hospital becomes "ásperos berridos" in all Spanish versions. There are two ideas which are somewhat lost in this translation process. First, the idea of "faint" is not present in the Spanish version, which might be due to an unwilling omission, but more likely to the difficulty of combining two apparently contradictory concepts in the description: "*faint*" and "*squalling*"; second, the change from "sourish sound" into "ásperos berridos", which is in my opinion a negative change of meaning, since "áspero" in Spanish may mean harsh or rude, but not "an incorrect or improper pitch", a sour note, which would be "desafinado" in Spanish, although it inevitably loses the taste component. I think the translator(s) decision in this case is disappointing since neither the semantic nor the functional meaning of the original has been satisfactorily conveyed in the target text. I am aware of the difficulty of rendering this idea into Spanish with any fidelity to the form of the source text, so I would suggest here the use of a functional translation approach such as: "un débil coro de llantos desafinados", although a more literal "débiles berridos desafinados" would also work.

On the river, the *little slapping scalloped waves* disappear from Pazos' version, and become "la rizada superficie del río" in Piquer's. This is not an easy phrase to translate; apart from the difficulty of reproducing the alliteration of the "l" and "s" sounds in Spanish within the semantic field of water and sailing, the word "scalloping" has a visual component not quite rendered by the Spanish option "rizada" (curly). I would suggest a functional approach which was closer to the meaning conveyed by the original, such as: "las suaves ondas que juguetean en la superficie del río."

The next translation problem-areas are found in the last few paragraphs, when Kopernning sits at a lunch wagon and talks to the waiter. The road sign "EAT" makes him feel hungry and stops for some coffee and fried eggs. The use of road

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signs which is a constant in the novel was interpreted by the various editors/translators in different ways. Planeta 1961 ignored it altogether, which I think is a voluntary omission in this case. Círculo 1989 decided to leave the word EAT, just as it appears on Pazos' version, and included the following footnote: "Eat, infinitivo e imperativo de eat, comer". I think both options are disappointing, since they turn into a problem something which could be easily solved with a functional approach: a sign saying COMIDAS would produce a similar effect. On the other hand, as mentioned earlier, Edhasa does translate the word EAT, but adds an unnecessary element.

The word "lunch wagon" refers to a typically American type of diner that was common in the 1920's in New York, where you could eat cheaply and fast. They were housed in wagons or wagon-like structures, often similar to streetcars. Pazos decided to use a functional approach, which in this case is in my opinion unfortunate; in his version, the "lunch wagon" becomes a "figón" which in early 20th century Spanish meant "a place where simple food is cooked and sold", but with strong Spanish culture connotations, just as lunch wagon has in American English. In today's Spanish, a "figón" is usually a restaurant where they serve traditional Spanish food, often roast meat in special furnace-type ovens. The Spanish reader gets a misleading idea of the type of place the character is eating at, and loses the cultural reference.

When Thatcher is visiting his wife and baby at the hospital, he brings some roses, *Jacks*, his wife calls them. This is a cultural reference that has been left in English in all of the translations under analysis, as if it were either un-translatable or, on the contrary, a word commonly used in Spanish. Neither applies here. *Jacks* is the short, colloquial for "Jacqueminot" roses, a variety of red roses with long-stemmed, shapely buds and velvety flowers, with an intense perfume. The word "jacks" is totally meaningless for a Spanish reader; a possible translation would be "rosas rojas" or the old fashioned name "rosas de té" that was used in Spain to refer to the more expensive, imported variety of roses at the turn of the 19th century.

Finally, Dos Passos' use of lower register language for Kopperning and a peculiar socio- geographical dialect for the red haired man is not easy to reproduce. All versions tried to lower the register in both cases, which I think is a possible solution, but the idea that the red haired man speaks with an accent is lost. One of the characteristic features of *Manhattan Transfer* is that it is "peopled" by individuals from many different social and geographical backgrounds, a portrait of a city full of immigrants from all over the world. Whereas the red-haired man's and the bearded man's peculiar ways of speech are left unmarked in the target text, Zucher's German accent is indeed marked in all the editions under analysis. The German accent is conveyed in Spanish by the use of "s" instead of "c", "cr" instead of "gr", "p" for "b" and "t" for final "d". The German words that colour the original have been left in German in the Spanish version too.

We have seen there is inconsistency regarding the translation approach of English words or expressions with a strong cultural component; a similarly inconsistent approach is used throughout the novel when translating the characters' speech, which is such an important part of Dos Passos' style. The Spanish versions of *Manhattan Trans-*

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fer are still being republished today, some 80 years later. In terms of reader acceptability it has been a successful work. But the translation can be improved in terms of adequacy, fidelity to the source text and literary worth.

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[i] An interesting area for research that remains open is a study of publishers' policies and practices towards the authorship and copyright of the translations of *Manhattan Transfer* in Spain through the years.

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