

5 The Fictional Turn in Latin America

As theorists in Brazil have turned to poets such as Oswald de Andrade and Haroldo and Augusto de Campos for ideas on which to base a theory of translation, much of the rest of Latin America has turned to its fiction writers. Translation has not become a subject for postgraduate research in Spanish-speaking universities in the Americas, nor has there been much conference activity, with perhaps the exception of recent conferences in Argentina and Peru. As far as governments and universities are concerned, translation remains primarily a technical activity, considered more a vocational skill than a creative activity, and the training programs that do exist focus primarily upon practice rather than theory. Economics plays a role here, too, as many universities simply do not have the research funds equivalent to those of their American neighbors in the United States, Canada, and Brazil, although United States institutions on the whole remain largely indifferent to translation studies (see Chapter 2). This state of affairs within the academy, however, belies the fact that among Latin American fiction writers the theme of translation has figured prominently in investigations of culture and identity. In this chapter, I suggest that translation is perhaps the *most* important topic in Latin American fiction, more important even than the widely circulated magic realism theme featured by most (North American) scholars. In this chapter, I look at the work of writers such as Jorge Luis Borges, Gabriel García Márquez, and Mario Vargas Llosa, tracing their use of translation as a theme and showing how understanding translation becomes a key to understanding both the fiction itself, and, by extension, the cultural formation in Spanish-speaking South America. I also show how this appreciation of translation's presence in the novels and stories of Latin American authors reciprocally informs the field of translation studies. Translation in South America is much more than a linguistic operation; rather, it has become one of the means by which an entire continent has come to define itself.

The Brazilian translation studies scholar Else Vieira was the first person to recognize this trend. In an essay titled "(In)visibilidades na tradução: Troca de olhares teóricos e ficcionais" [(In)visibilities in Translation: Exchanging Theoretical and Fictional Perspectives] (1995–1996a), Vieira

coins the phrase the “fictional turn” in translation studies to refer to this phenomenon. She writes, “Denominaria esta etapa o *fictional turn* dos Estudos da Tradução” [I call this stage the *fictional turn* in translation studies] (1995–1996a: 50). Drawing on the discourse of translation in the writings of fiction writers such as the Brazilian novelist Guimarães Rosa, referring to theories such as those of Charles Sanders Peirce, Jacques Derrida, and Luce Irigaray, and situating her work in line with translation studies scholars such as Susan Bassnett, Nelson Ascher, and Lawrence Venuti, Vieira develops a theory of translation that challenges mimetic theories that emphasize fidelity to the source text. Instead, similar to her reading of Haroldo de Campos’s translation work (see Chapter 4), she shows how translation is invariably a *creative* activity: translators are never totally invisible, but rather always writing themselves into the texts they translate. In “O espelho” [The Mirror] (1962), for example, Rosa ironically plays with scientific notions of *mimesis*, not only invoking the ability of the mirror to reflect reality but also incorporating various indigenous superstitious beliefs associated with mirrors, moving his realistic fiction closer to the realm of magic realism. Vieira suggests that there is always a reciprocal play between invisibility/visibility, covering/discovering present in every fictional work as well as every translation, which Vieira sees as empowering for the translator.

As this book reflects upon issues of translation and identity formation, it should come as no surprise that fiction becomes a source for theoretical inquiry. As a medium for recording a culture’s evolution, fiction narrates a culture’s history and traditions as well as individual characters’ experiences and growth. In Canada, novelists such as Nicole Brossard in *Le Désert mauve* (1987) used translation in her fiction to articulate multiple borders—both language and gender—that her characters need to negotiate in their lives, as well as to enlarge that in-between space where Canadians in general, and Quebec women in particular, whether Anglophone, Francophone or bilingual, find themselves culturally situated (see Chapter 3). In Brazil, novelists such as Mário de Andrade in *Macunaíma* (1928) used translation both figuratively and physically to show how indigenous peoples of the Americas are enmeshed in a web of linguistic and racial codes that define and constrain their very existence (see Chapter 4). In both cases, the fiction writers, with their focus on the topic of translation, engendered theories of translation that also apply to a theory of cultural identity formation.

A group of new translation studies scholars are emerging who examine the relationship between fiction in translation and translation theory. Rosemary Arrojo looks at fiction as a source for translation theory in the works of Latin American writers such as Jorge Luis Borges and João Guimarães Rosa, and then expands her corpus to include Central Europeans Franz Kafka and Dezső Kosztolányi (Arrojo 2002). Adriana Pagano (2002) analyzes the work of Julio Cortázar, who not only uses translation as a theme in many of his works, but also includes characters who are translators

themselves. Christopher Larkosh (2002) dwells upon the work of several Argentine writers and translators, including Borges, and Victoria Ocampo. Anibal González (1989) rereads Gabriel García Márquez's novel from the perspective of translation, with multiple fascinating new insights. To their pioneering studies, in this chapter, I add my own readings of Borges, García Márquez, and Mario Vargas Llosa, focusing on how the topic of translation in fiction can inform both translation theory and theories of identity formation.

Beginning with Borges

The study of the fictional turn in translation studies must begin with Jorge Luis Borges, whose fiction is everywhere concerned with the theme of translation. For Borges, translation is more than a metaphor for the cultural conditions of the twentieth century; it is the determining aesthetic characteristic of all writing from antiquity to the present. He began addressing the question of translation and writing as early as 1926 with an article in the newspaper *La Prensa* titled "Sobre las dos maneras de traducir" [On the Two Ways of Translating]. In 1932, he wrote a prologue to the translation of Paul Valéry's novel *The Marine Cemetery*. That same year he issued his first major essay on translation titled "Las versiones homéricas" [The Homeric Versions], included in his collection *Discusión* (1989c [1932]) (cf. Larkosh 1996: 25). Borges's insights are further developed in the essay "Los traductores de las 1001 Noches" [The Translators of *1001 Nights*], first published in the volume *Historia de la Eternidad* (1989d [1936]). Borges's thinking about translation culminates in the story "Pierre Menard, autor del Quijote" [Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*], collected in his *Ficciones* (1989a [1944]). I suggest that Borges's foregrounding of translation is inherently present in all of his writing, including later fiction such as the stories included in *The Aleph* (1989f [1949]).

In addition to translation, the theme of identity formation is crucial to understanding Borges's work. Argentina during the early parts of the twentieth century was a nation in formation, with many of its citizens having been born overseas, or first-generation immigrants. In Buenos Aires, where the recent European immigrants—mostly from Spain, Britain, and Italy—met with the rural population—mostly earlier immigrants and indigenous peoples—many languages were spoken, and traditions could be traced back to diverse cultures. Fiction writers and intellectuals during this period, including José Ingenieros, Ricardo Rojas, and Manuel Gálvez, were obsessed with forming a national literature and tracing the nation's history, language, and traditions. Borges, born into this cultural and intellectual climate, found that certain sources for such thinking were far from unified and stable. That he developed a form of parody/essay to satirize such *ficciones* (fictions), calling into question the unity of such diverse groups of immigrants and migrants, might come as little surprise. In the early twenty-first

century, as scholars increasingly question the category of nations and/or nation-states as a map, or territory, for thinking about culture and identity, it also should come as no surprise that scholars turn to Borges for their reconceptualizations.

In "The Homeric Versions," Borges talks about translation in terms of his conception of the labyrinthian nature of all literary studies. In this essay, he includes multiple avatars often cited by critics of translation, including "Ningún problema tan consustancial con las letras y con su modesto misterio como el que propone una traducción" [There is no problem as fundamental to letters and to its modest mystery as that proposed by a translation] (1989c [1932]: 239); "La traducción, en cambio, parece destinada a ilustrar la discusión estética" [Translation, on the other hand, seems to be destined to illustrate the aesthetic discussion] (*ibid.*: 239); and, most significantly, "El concepto de texto definitivo no corresponde sino a la religión o al cansancio" [The concept of a definitive text does not correspond with anything but religion or weariness] (*ibid.*: 239).

Borges calls the notion of the inferiority of translation a superstition rather than fact. *The Odyssey*, argues Borges, is a veritable international library of works in both prose and verse, ranging from the couplets of Chapman to the authorized version by Andrew Lang, from the classical drama in French by Bérard to the ironic novel by Samuel Butler. The myriad versions of Homer in English translation illustrate the heterogeneous nature of writing and reveal perhaps more about the diverse characteristics of the translators than anything unified about the "original." According to Borges, it has become difficult to know what belongs to the poet and what now belongs to the tradition of language. Borges next looks at various passages as translated by different translators, including "literal versions" such as those by Buckley, archaic versions such as those by Butcher and Lang, or more oratorical versions such as those by Pope. The versions are characterized by the strategies and motives employed by the respective translators: Pope's use of luxurious dialects and spectacular discourse; Chapman's ardent, passionate lyrical verse; and Butler's aversion to the visual and emphasis on the facts. By the end, Borges is wondering not which version is most faithful but what translation has to do with faithfulness at all. Ironically, though, in a network of intersemiotic connections and differences, *all* of them have come to represent Homer. Over the past two decades, translation studies research also demonstrates that fidelity is an impossible standard; all translators make choices, favoring one artistic or ideological feature over another, and their translations reflect such preferences. In many ways, Borges's theory precedes translation studies in dissecting basic concepts such as faithfulness and equivalence with his much more humane and ironic stance regarding fidelity. His work also connects translation to history and identity formation, for it is by their collective, intersemiotic *history* of translation that the contemporary cultural representation of Homer is formed.

Borges's reading of Homer also destabilizes certain notions of literary tradition, especially ones that attempt to provide a single literary tradition, clean separations between national literatures, and neat theories of how cross-cultural communication takes place. Borges's *Odyssey* is a collage of French, Spanish, and especially English translations, all consciously and unconsciously intersecting and informing each other. In the essay, Borges quotes Chapman and Pope, but in Spanish, not in English, further complicating the process of ciphering any "original" intent. In many ways, such single-nation literary tradition, be it English, French, or Spanish, is already fiction. What better vehicle to illustrate this network than a paradigm of translations? One could argue that Borges's entire work is a kind of a detective story aimed at uncovering this network of deception and at complicating simplified notions of authorship, language, and nationality.

Borges continues his reflection on translation with its connection to identity formation in "The Translator of *1001 Nights*," his most extended essay on translation. Many of the themes raised in "The Homeric Versions" resurface in "1001 Nights," including the lack of any fixed original, the performance quality of the translations, the influence of national literary traditions on the process, and, of course, the subjective idiosyncrasies and even personal vendettas of the individual translators. Borges first comments on the obscurity of the source text: derived from various oral tales from a variety of cultures and historical periods, the Arabic version—*Qitab alif laila wa laila*—generally is *not* the source for European translators. Rather, the source text is actually the translated text, or a series of translated texts. Jean Antoine Galland's translation into French in the early eighteenth century, published in twelve volumes from 1707 to 1717, which became the canonical European version for years to come, includes both translations from the Arabic text and, according to Borges, an additional supplementary text by an "obscure consultant" (1981: 74), a Maronite whom Borges calls "Hanna," not wanting to omit the author's/translator's name. It is this (infidel) Christian outsider in the Arab world who brings us stories such as "Aladdin," "The Forty Thieves," "Prince Ahmed and the Fairy Peri-Banu," and "The Sleeper and the Waker," invariably attributed to the Arabic original. Galland's translation thus becomes the ur-text in the West for *1001 Nights*, and no translator who follows can omit tales that he included, although, according to Borges, none since mentions this obscure co-author Hanna.

Borges's "The Translators of *1001 Nights*" (1981) traces the translation work of four translators: Edward Lane, the British translator who lived five years in Cairo and offered a puritanical version in the 1840s; Richard Francis Burton, the legendary English world adventurer, who offered a more eccentric version in 1885; J.C. Mardrus, another French translator, whose 1899 embellishments and Gallicisms prefigure later cinematic versions; and finally the more sober Enno Littmann, the fourth of a series of German translators, whose translations in 1923–1924 have become, for many

European Orientalists, the definitive version. Borges comments how *none* of the translators covered in his essay, nor other well-known translators of *1001 Nights*, including Coleridge, Stendhal, Tennyson, and Edgar Allan Poe, uses the Arabic as the source text; rather, Galland has become the standard. In addition, Galland's text has also become the source for later translations into Arabic and Hindustani, reversing traditional translation studies definitions of source and target texts (see Larkosh 1996: 39). While in this book, I do not touch upon the impact of such back-translations on identity formation in Asian and African cultures, other scholars, such as Tejaswini Niranjana in *Siting Translation* (1992), have made such connections. Borges, however, being from Argentina, was well aware of the colonizing process of cultural importation and translation by North American and European Latin American specialists interpreting and explicating Latin American culture to Latin Americans.

Borges's essay is uncharacteristic of typical translation criticism; rather than focusing on fidelity and equivalence, he emphasizes instead the differences, digressions, and accidents. Many of the embellishments and contrasts by the translators he cites are not due to mistakes or errors but instead are attributed to the literary traditions and values of the respective cultures of which the translators form a part and to which they contribute. Burton's translations, with their energy and eloquence as well as their vulgarity and imperfections, were inconceivable, according to Borges, without John Donne's obscenities, Shakespeare's myriad vocabularies, Swinburne's archaisms, and the British colonial arrogance of the age. In Mardrus's translations, Borges sees *Salammbô* and *La Fontaine*, the *Mannequin d'osier*, and the *ballets russes*. In Littmann's versions, Borges finds the erudition of an age of German folklorists, a probity and honesty that is consistent with the scientific nature of scholarship of the period. Ironically, far from being critical of the subjective interpretations and deviations from the "original," Borges finds that much of the meaning is captured in those digressions. The texts in his mind are much about magical operations, fabulous scenes, battles, dawns, lovers, comedy, palaces, kings, and gods. The supernatural plays a role as well as the natural, and the more sober and puritanical translations, perhaps more linguistically correct, miss something, in Borges's opinion—that is, the *pleasure* of the text. Despite their flaws, the more poetic versions of Galland, Burton, and Mardrus transform the mysteries and suspense because the writers draw on genres and literary devices that develop the fantastic in their own traditions. The more literal versions of Lane and Littmann, according to Borges, lack the imagination, resorting to literal equivalences and linguistic equations. Borges suggests that he would like to see the German version rethought precisely because Germany also possesses a grand tradition of the fantastic. He wonders, in the conclusion, what Kafka might have done if he had translated and intensified the tales in line with the more creative German tradition.

The process of drawing upon the *local* in the target culture in translation has a long tradition in Latin America, as can be seen from the anthropologist tradition in Brazil (outlined in Chapter 4). Borges shows, however, that this cannibalist tradition is not limited to Latin America but present in European translation traditions as well. For example, while Borges admits that Galland's versions are the "worst written" and the "most fraudulent" (Borges 1981: 74), readers at the time felt that these versions captured the pleasure, astonishment, and bedazzlement, indicative more of French literary taste and of an exoticization process of translated writings from "the Orient" at the time. Lane's version is more erudite and "corrects" Galland's indiscretions and poetic licenses, but for all Lane's knowledge and scholarship, Borges feels that the latter's version is a mere "encyclopedia of evasion" (ibid.: 75), reflecting British morals and modes of responsibility at the time. Lane not only would delete offensive passages but would add notes such as "I suppress a repugnant explanation," or "Here a line too coarse for translation" (ibid.: 75), which, in a Freudian way, draw more attention to the purported offensive passage than its mere omission.

For Borges, Burton's version epitomizes the drawing upon all resources available to capture the richness and color of the original. Burton's persona is clearly present in the translations, as is his desire to distance himself as much as possible from Lane. He circumvented the censorship problem in England by publishing his version as a single private edition limited to the Burton Club members. In some ways, the audience of the original oral tales—roguish, prone to exaggeration, appreciative of remote, adventurous tales—had much in common with the Burton Club members. Burton's version adds copious notes explaining everything from jails, food, legends, colors, deities, horses, politics, dress, and, of course, obscenities, in the Islamic culture, which he personalizes with his own direct experiences. His vocabulary is as prolific as his notes, adding all sorts of archaic words, slang, dialects of sailors and prisoners, neologisms and foreignisms, usually derived from French and Arabic, in the translated English text. Borges, rather than criticizing these foreign-sounding and hybrid terms, praises them: "Each of those words may be just, but their intercalation implies a falseness. Not a bad falseness, since those verbal antics—and others, syntactic—divert the sometimes wearisome course of the *Nights* (1981: 81). J.C. Mardrus's translation, which draws similar praise from Borges, also resists the prosaic and literal. Mardrus enhances the wonder by drawing on visual cues, adding adjectives, similes, and metaphors to increase the splendor and the "magical." Borges writes, "With a persistence not unworthy of Cecil B. de Mille, he [Mardrus] strews about viziers, kisses, palm trees, and moons" (ibid.: 83). Mardrus continues to embellish, adding obscenities, comic interludes, circumstantial details, and visual markers. Borges suggests that Mardrus is translating not the book's words but the book's scenes, perhaps more in line with painting or film adaptation than translation.

Thus, the mounting infidelities in the differing versions, which for Borges are indicative of the labyrinthine intersemiotic network in which all literature is embedded, draw him to speculate on the larger topic of translation theory. In the infidelities arise the personal traits that give translations their character. In the local traditions arise the vocabularies and images to give life to the stories of the original. Translation for Borges is a heterogeneous activity, and the best translators draw on a broad repertoire of personal experience and literary knowledge to convey and contribute to the source text. In the case of *1001 Nights*, Borges seems to prefer those versions that heighten the fabulous, the magical, and the fantastic, those versions that expand the language of the source and target culture by creatively coining neologisms and foreignized terms, and those translations that reveal the personality of the translator as well as the “original” author. For in Borges’s mind, the two are indistinguishable: translators are authors; translation is as creative as original writing; and disorder is as acceptable as order. Because *1001 Nights* has no known source text, as its origin is scattered across various cultures, dialects, and performances, all versions are to a certain degree “un-authorized,” or, indeed, found only already in translation.

In fact, the themes of the stories themselves foreground deviation, supplementarity, and deferral. At the center of the story’s intrigue is the fact that the narrator, Shahrazad, is a storyteller/translator, who embellishes at will, delaying the end so that King Shahiyar, the authority figure, does *not* put an end to her life for her alleged infidelities. Each story thus adds to its own telling; there is no set original with a beginning, middle, and an end. The telling of the story with its inventions and deviations becomes an ironic act of resistance to the king and the authority of the state, all the more reason for a Latin American writer such as Borges to foreground not the original but the translation, not the fidelity of the translators but their infidelities. Borges’s clever story has an air of innocence and accepted literary criticism to it; yet underneath it contains a parody of traditional translation studies, Eurocentric literary histories, Arabic studies in Germany, and institutions of literary authority. Extended interpretations also allow for seeing it as a Latin American rebellion against the colonizing European monarchies.

While “Translators of the *1001 Nights*” contains a covert parody, in “Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*” the parody is played out on center stage. Perhaps because of its earlier availability in English translation, included in the pioneering anthology *Labyrinths* (Borges 1962), translated by Donald Yates and James Irby, it has become Borges’s most discussed text in translation circles. The story itself is rather simple. Pierre Menard, a fictional writer, scholar, and translator from early twentieth-century France, decides to “translate” Cervantes’s *Quixote*. He does not want to translate another version of the Quixote, but he wants to write the definitive version of *the* Quixote by becoming Miguel de Cervantes, knowing Spanish equally well, becoming Catholic, fighting against Moors or Turks, and forgetting the

entire history of Europe between 1602 and the present. Menard's goal was not to translate or interpret, but to *reproduce*, word for word and line for line, the very words of the original. The parody of course is a critique of translation theories that call for translators to totally identify with the author and to transport themselves across three hundred years of history as if the intervening years had not happened. The impossibility of anyone totally giving up their own identity to such a degree—the impossibility of ignoring the intervening ideas and events and how they shape a translator's life—is manifest to all the readers. Borges's critique extends to literary interpretation, philosophical thought, and even to theological exegesis.

The parody reaches its peak toward the end of the *ficción*, when Borges begins a comparison of the two identical texts, and yet claims that Menard's is actually superior to Cervantes' original. While Cervantes' local color often reflected the "reality" of the land during the early seventeenth century, Borges suggests that Menard must elude the now much-changed local color of the twentieth century. Menard had to articulate and defend ideas that often were the opposite of those he personally held. Borges concludes that "Cervantes' text and Menard's are verbally identical, but the second is almost infinitely richer," satirizing in the process translation theories that claim that the original is invariably superior to the translation, no matter how good the translation is. Borges, in his playful style, quotes a passage illustrating the curious discourse with which Don Quixote discusses the subject of arms, letters, and history. Twice Borges cites "truth, whose mother is history, rival of time, depository of deeds, witness of the past, exemplar and adviser to the present, and the future's counselor" (1989a: 94) Borges argues that the first version, written in the seventeenth century, is merely transparent praise of history, whereas the second version, although word for word the same, is, in light of intervening philosophical thought, much more complex. History in the latter version becomes not what happened but what we judge to have happened. Citing the work of William James, Borges claims the latter version to be "staggering" and "brazenly pragmatic" (*ibid.*: 94). Borges's fiction not only parodies traditional translation theories but also anticipates translation theories governed by reception theories, discourse theories, and target-text approaches. He ironically shows how every translation, even in its fidelity, is always different, just as every reading of a text by different readers yields a unique interpretation, not right or wrong but different, conditioned by historical and cultural factors of the culture.

Once one begins to trace the translation theme in a few stories, one sees the thread in other Borges stories. "The Library of Babel" (1998c) echoes the labyrinthine nature of all writing, the impossibility of any two books ever being alike, the arbitrariness of systems design to classify texts by their content, and the unlimited creative possibilities of language. In the library of Babel, while the books are organized in an orderly, hexagonal fashion, the texts are all written in random and accidental combinations of letters

that seldom make any sense. No scholar can break the code or discover the original. No one can even be certain that the central text is Spanish. The point Borges seems to be making is a Joycean one: all texts, even originals, are multilingual, embedded in wild semiotic systems and modes of inscription that challenge the possibility of ever understanding the ideas and the language of the source. In Borges's library, the accident is not the foreignizing term, the alienating construction, or the non sequitur; rather, the "accident" becomes the line that appears to be fluid, transparent, and homogenous. For Borges, all of literature, even the clearest and most unified texts in standard Spanish (English, French, etc.), resemble hybrid texts and translations. Borges's perspective on the Spanish language is indicative of one held by writers in Latin America, in which the Spanish is always infused with multiple languages and dialects, preserving archaic and Arabic traces, adding new and native American terms, and combining with English and Portuguese to form new hybridized terms.

In the "The Garden of Forking Paths" (1998d), Borges further develops this concept of infinite possibilities of language. The story refers to a Chinese spy for the Germans in World War I, who is also the great-grandson of a famous Chinese astronomer, writer, and architect named Ts'ui Pên. While pursued by an English agent, the spy flees to his ancestor's home to discover a unique kind of labyrinth: a novel. Whereas fiction in the West is generally governed by linear time and characters making choices that eliminate other possibilities, in Ts'ui Pên's fiction characters can simultaneously choose all the alternatives. The result is chaotic: each decision results in multiple forkings and possibilities, all of which are followed; sometimes the different paths converge, yet often they do not, resulting in an infinite variety of rhetorical possibilities, offering multiple possible endings. Enemies become allies, allies enemies; some live, some die. The analogy to translation is clear: so too does translation involve forking paths, opening up often infinite creative opportunities based upon initial decision. If one decides to translate a word or a sentence in one fashion, that decision sets up a paradigm for the rest of the text; however, if that same word took an even slightly different turn, the resulting text would be correspondingly different. In "On Matching and Making Maps: From a Translator's Notebook" (1988), the Dutch-English translator James Holmes makes a similar argument.

A small body of scholarship is beginning to grow that thinks about Borges's fiction as a source for translation theory. In the first chapter ("In the Place of a Theory of Translation: Translating Migrant Sex with Borges") of his dissertation (1996), Christopher Larkosh discusses the themes of translation, migration, and sexuality in the work of Borges. Larkosh draws heavily on Borges stories that focus on translation, such as *1001 Nights*, outlined above. But he adds discussions of migration; Hanna, the translating migrant who adds to Galland's first French edition, becomes a more central character in Larkosh's discussion. He goes one step further, opening up questions of sexuality and its relation to translation. As Shahrazad reveals

sexual secrets, temporarily seducing the king to avoid punishment, so too is translation seen as a form of revealing secrets of another culture in an attempt to seduce the reader and to broker internal cultural differences.

In “Writing, Interpreting, and the Power Struggle for the Control over Meaning: Scenes from Kafka, Borges, and Kosztolányi” (2002), Rosemary Arrojo explores themes of control and authorship versus escape and labyrinths in Borges’s story “Death and the Compass.” In this detective story, the detective Erik Lönnrot pursues the criminal Red Scharlach (“red” refers to “net” in Spanish; “Scharlach” recalls “Shahrazad” or “Scheherazade”), whose maze ends up overwhelming not just the detective but Scharlach himself. The labyrinth, in a typical Borgesian fashion, becomes both a form of protection and a trap. Arrojo explores the architecture metaphors—the symmetries, repetitions, the devices, and ornaments, including a two-faced Hermes (the Greek word refers to “interpreter”)—relating them to the authors’ and most translators’ attempts to reconstruct forms and control meanings, but more often than not weaving a textual maze subject to the inevitabilities and excesses of interpretation.

The theme of the sexuality of translation and the trauma induced by its impossibility reaches its culmination in Borges’s story “Emma Zunz,” also from Borges’s collection *The Aleph* (1989f [1949]). Emma, daughter of a German immigrant named Manuel Maier (formerly Emmanuel Zunz), seeks to avenge the wrongful accusation of embezzlement made against her father, which in turn led to his exile and death. To do so, she constructs an elaborate plan of allowing herself to be raped, going to the accuser’s home, shooting him, and then telling the police that he had molested her and that she had had to kill him in self-defense. While the plot is a fairly straightforward detective story, the complexity revolves around translating *memory*, Emma’s thinking and acting logically while suffering tremendous rage, grief, fear, and fatigue. So too does the narrator/author figure find it difficult to narrate such horrible events, telling a story that involves experiences that have such an air of unreality about them. In “Z/Z: On *Midrash* and *écriture féminine* in Jorge Luis Borges’ ‘Emma Zunz’” (1997), Bernard McGuirk uses a complex methodology blending translation, psychoanalysis, and feminist theory to discuss Borges’s story and its themes of translation, representation, re-representation, memory, trauma, and action. Because of the impossibility of “translation” or explication of such a story, and because so much of the story is mental rather than descriptive, McGuirk derives an interpretive strategy aimed at reading what cannot be said because of the limits of language and narration. The implicit meaning in the story, according to McGuirk, gives voice to the marginalized, immigrant, Jewish women’s culture of Buenos Aires during the 1920s and 1930s. For example, in Emma’s last name, “Zunz,” McGuirk translates Hebrew connotations, deleting the vowel, and arrives at “znh” as in “to play the harlot”; “znh” as “to reject as abominable”; “znv” as “to attack from the rear”; “zvz” as “a silver coin, a fourth part of a shekel”; and “znm”

as “a people from east of the Jordan,” echoes that are always present for the Jewish reader but lost for most Western readers. So too are the textual echoes, the full range of meanings, covered up in translation. The full “meaning” of the original is thus only accessible by the bilingual/bicultural translator/reader, recalling Samia Mehrez’s argument in “Translation and the Postcolonial Experience: The Francophone North African Text” (1992). For the stories of oppressed peoples, people living in exile at the margins of culture, such as Jewish exiles, it is not the literary meaning but precisely that excess of meaning, the haunting memories, that carries the most significance for their lives.

In a similar vein, Susana Romano-Sued focuses on issues of trauma and translation in Borges’s story “Averroës’ Search” (1998f), also from the 1949 collection *The Aleph*. In “Duelo y melancolía en la traducción o la travesía imposible hacia la equivalencia” [“Grief and Melancholy in Translation or the Impossible Voyage toward Equivalence”], Romano-Sued (1999) sympathizes with Averroës, a Muslim scholar from Córdoba during the height of Moorish Spain, who was translating/interpreting Aristotle’s *Poetics* into Spanish, the “vulgar” dialect of the Muslim masses of the region. The problem was that he knew no Syrian or Greek, and therefore he was working from a translation of a translation. He also struggled over words such as “comedy” or “tragedy” because no Moor—since theater was prohibited in Islamic culture—had any idea as to their meaning. Borges imagines Averroës *imagining* theatre without ever having seen a play. For Romano-Sued, the story well illustrates the impossibility of ever achieving equivalence, the impenetrability of different systems of thought, and the painful, sad struggles of translators, peoples, caught between different sign systems. Yet Romano-Sued suggests that Averroës, in his search for the radical other—in this case a form of representation prohibited within Muslim culture—creates something new, thereby creating a space or condition for an Other to appear. She suggests that Borges’s story, in its act of thinking about translating the Other, illustrates the difficulties not just of the translation process but the writing process in general, the act of “autopoiesis” (ibid.: 84). For Romano-Sued, as for the Quebec women discussed in Chapter 3, the act of translating is an act of writing and one of the tools for Latin Americans, especially Latin American women, in light of the cultural oppression and *los desaparecidos* [the disappeared ones], to write themselves into history.

García Márquez: *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

While Borges wrote about translation in his essays and short fictions, translation assumes a major position in the novel with Gabriel García Márquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1998). In Borges’s work, translation is considered from a literary-historical, psychological, and philosophical framework; in García Márquez’s work, translation, or the lack

of awareness of the implications thereof, becomes a major sociohistorical and material factor in the development of Latin America. Márquez scholarship has been dominated by magic realism readings and sociohistorical readings. The topic of translation remains remarkably effaced, especially when one considers that the *main* structure of *One Hundred Years* is that the story of the Buendía family is (fore)told in Sanskrit in manuscripts written by Melquíades, and that the work itself is a *translation* of those manuscripts by Aureliano Buendía/Babilonia, the last of the Buendías.

In many ways, Márquez's great work echoes Borges: the Babylonian multilingual nature of the world; the impossibility of knowing things with certitude; the futility of the language and social constructions erected to control culture and/or nature; the desperation and uncertainties people find themselves in, especially when living in exile; and, perhaps most importantly, the mirrors (mirages) people construct that actually further distance themselves from their own roots, their own identities. The condemnation of the Buendía family to "one hundred years of solitude," despite the "greatness" of the patriarch José Arcadio Buendía, and the "heroism" of Colonel Aureliano Buendía, is largely due to the idea of the family's own lack of connection to their past, not just with their mythological roots but also with their multilingual heritage in all its myriad details. Aureliano only comes to understand the history of the family, his own origin, his own identity, when he finally deciphers Melquíades's Sanskrit encoded manuscript. Only at the end of the novel does he come to understand his true last name and his own identity: Babilonia. Only in the end of the novel does the reader begin to grasp the novel's nature as a translation.

The novel begins in an engrossing, narrative fashion. José Arcadio Buendía marches his band into the jungles of the New World to found the new city of Macondo; Colonel Aureliano Buendía leads the Liberals in multiple civil wars against the conservatives; Úrsula Iguarán, the matriarch of the family, holds the clan together despite historical and natural disasters. The reader is immersed in frontier stories, politics, wars, and natural disasters. In addition to the powerful narrative, García Márquez interlaces "magic" throughout the conquest story: a large Spanish galleon appears while José Arcadio is hiking through the jungle; the children of Macondo fly on magic carpets; water boils on a table without any fire; and Remedios the Beauty rises angelically, sheets flapping, from earth. The narrator, generally assumed to be García Márquez, is clearly omnipotent, creating a world out of the elements, and not restricted to the tools that humans (authors) normally use in the construction of a town (novel). Yet the narrator is not García Márquez; it is his fictional construct Melquíades who writes the tale of the House of Buendía in his native language, which is then deciphered and translated into Spanish by Aureliano. Much as García Márquez has said that the entire novel came to him in an instant of time while driving on the highway from Acapulco to Mexico City (where he was working as a translator and as a subtitler of films at the time), so too does the entire history appear

in Spanish to Aureliano, the final key unlocking the story being Melquíades's epigraph: "The first of the line is tied to a tree and the last is being eaten by the ants" (1998: 446). Might one claim that the "author" of the story is Melquíades and the "translator" is García Márquez—that is, that the story came to García Márquez from some distant, ur-Latin American source and he is merely translating it into Spanish? At the least, one can claim that, similarly to Borges, García Márquez questions notions of traditional authorship and forms of the traditional novel.

The translational nature of the story is only revealed at the end of the novel, thereby redrawing the entire novel and forcing the reader to rethink earlier identifications and conclusions. García Márquez gives hints of the translational dimension throughout, however. José Arcadio Buendía spends hours, days, even months shut up a small room at the back of the house with his studies and experiments, most of them inspired by the knowledge brought from overseas by his friend and world traveler Melquíades. Yet his experiments—translating the fantastic inventions revealed by the gypsies to practical uses by the colonists—are carried on offstage. José Arcadio, who founded the village and named the streets, is shut up in his room and called "crazy," and readers forget about the patriarch. So too with José Arcadio Segundo, José Arcadio's grandson, who spends most of his time locked up in Melquíades's study poring over the as yet indecipherable parchments. Most of José Arcadio's work is also carried on behind the scenes: it is he who classifies the letters and, by comparing them to a table in an English-language encyclopedia, discovers that the language is Sanskrit. But José Arcadio Segundo's life is not the exciting and dramatic stuff of Colonel Aureliano Buendía's or that of the other powerful men of the story, even though it is he who realizes the lucidity of his grandfather and the insight of the gypsies. He also teaches little Aureliano how to read and write, thereby enabling the story of the history of the family to be told.

Melquíades, however, is the truly ur-multilingual, international figure; he has survived plagues and catastrophes seemingly from everywhere: pellagra in Persia, scurvy in Malaysia, leprosy in Egypt, beriberi in Japan, bubonic plague in Madagascar, and earthquakes in Sicily. He survives the droughts and wars in Latin America as well. He looks ur-Asian in appearance, and his "native" language is Sanskrit. For most of the "rational" members of the Macondo settlers, including Úrsula, he comes to represent the devil, and one cannot help but compare his relation to José Arcadio Buendía to Mephisto's relation to Faust (see the section on Haroldo de Campos in Chapter 4). The mentor for José Arcadio Buendía, and later José Arcadio Segundo, is the gypsy Melquíades, who has extraordinary wisdom and longevity. The most amazing magical event in the book is his return from the dead—the living on in a Derridian sense—of the Buendía story in translation. Some of the inventions the gypsies bring—ice, electric light, magnets—are so startling and magical that when Melquíades returns from the dead, the conditioned reader accepts the resurrection as credible. Most critics suggest

that the magic is used to distort lines between the rational and the irrational, fact and fantasy, or myth and reality. In addition, I would suggest that lines between original and translation, between source and target texts, are also being called into question. Is it the Buendías who are living this life and a narrator who is recording it, or is Melquíades telling just another story in his travels and a Buendía is translating it?

Other hints of the translation subcomponent are scattered throughout. There are actually two groups of gypsies in the novel. The first wave is the truly multilingual and international group, full of exciting and original ideas; the second group, whose members come to Macondo later and do not speak Spanish, thus cannot translate their findings to Macondo's New World settlers, thereby frustrating José Arcadio Buendía, who wants to hear tales of their travels and inventions. The children of the Buendía house, Amaranta (daughter of José Arcadio Buendía and Úrsula Iguarán) and Arcadio (son of José Arcadio and Pilar Ternera), are raised not by their parents but by a Guajiro Indian woman named, ironically, Visitación. The children grow up speaking Guajiro, not Spanish. Thus, as with many children of the New World, their entire lives are spent in translation, and pure notions of mother tongue and native language are highly complicated. The children also learn indigenous practices such as drinking lizard broth and eating spider eggs before they learn "proper" culinary habits. José Arcadio, noted for his sexual prowess, also sleeps with a gypsy girl and in the heat of passion releases a string of obscenities, which we are told entered the girl through her ears and "came out of her mouth translated into her language" (García Márquez 1998: 34). This act of translation, corporeal as well as linguistic, results in another disappearance, that of José Arcadio, who runs off with the group of gypsies and is nearly forgotten (deferred) in the narrative of Macondo.

When he reappears some one hundred pages later, José Arcadio has traveled around the world sixty-five times with a crew of sailors "without a country" (1998: 99), and his Spanish is infused with multiple languages and dialects. His tales include being shipwrecked in the Sea of Japan, cannibalizing a fellow sailor who died of sunstroke, and killing a sea dragon in the Gulf of Bengal in whose body was found the remains of a Crusader. His body bears the marks of those international experiences: he is tattooed from head to foot, translation inscribed upon his body. Significantly, he does not sleep in that closed, incestuous Buendía house, but lives in the red light district, making his living by selling his sex. When he incestuously marries his adopted sister Rebeca, the two are banned from the house, and he again is forced to the margin of the narrative. It is his younger brother Aureliano who becomes Colonel Aureliano Buendía, not only the family patriarch but also defender of Macondo in his father's absence. The focus of the narrative shifts to civil wars between Liberals and Conservatives, and the heroic, nearly mythic efforts of the colonel and the resistance, as well as his numerous loves and sons.

Although it is relegated to the margins of the narrative, once one recognizes the translation theme, it is everywhere to be seen. The plague of loss of memory means that everyone in Macondo loses and has to regain their own language; the old man José Arcadio Buendía is thought to be crazy, ranting mindlessly in what is perceived to be an unknown language, which turns out to be Latin, but which no one in the town except the priest can understand. Pietro Crespi, the Italian furniture salesman, translates Petrarchan sonnets for Amaranta. And translation continues in Melquíades's study as the ghost reads to the future generations such as Aureliano, who at this point in the narrative does not understand, but who sets up a counterline of descendants who will in fact be the ones to carry on the Buendía line after the physical line wears itself out. Thus, the book has a double narrative. The primary one is about heroic conquest and consolidation, of nation formation and patriotism that is written in the history books and memorials; the secondary one, generally pushed out of the household and found only at the margins of the story, contains multiple international interconnections, and concerns the preservation of lost lines and languages found only in cryptic writings and translation. Significantly, at the end of the novel, García Márquez *reverses* the order of the narratives, and the subnarrative of translation becomes the primary leading to the survival of the story and the Buendía line.

García Márquez's story is thus in many ways similar to Borges's. Borges picks ancient narratives such as the tales of Homer, Shahrazad, or Cervantes, written in ur-languages of Greek, Arabic, and Spanish. García Márquez picks a gypsy who writes in Sanscrit, a kind of ur-European, ur-Spanish language. Melquíades becomes a kind of Homeric bard or Shahrazad, weaving a tale with multiple openings and multiple interpretations, one rich enough and all-inclusive enough that it never really ends. The translational nature of the story—its being derivative and original at the same time—is the problem facing not just translators in the Americas but creative writers as well. The narration of lived experiences in the New World is invariably characterized by the use of old, imported European languages that somehow do not fit. Thus, American writers must use translation to smuggle in concepts and characters to refer to all those old Spanish, Italian, Aragonese, British, French, and Portuguese sailors and immigrants who populate their lives, and must use translation to refer to the images of travel and migration, upheaval and revolution, that are more characteristic of culture than anything stable or more permanent like settlements such as Macondo. García Márquez, in his writing Melquíades story, seems to be saying that translation, for all its impurities and shortcomings, is one of the keys to understanding not just Latin America but the whole hemisphere.

Mario Vargas Llosa: *The Storyteller*

In addition to García Márquez, other Latin American writers, such as Mario Vargas Llosa and Julio Cortázar, deal with the topic of translation in major works. In *El hablador* (1987) [*The Storyteller*, 1990], Vargas Llosa focuses on the problems of translation of indigenous tales in Peru, of faithful as against false representation, and the split identity of the Peruvian intellectuals. The novel comprises two stories presented in alternating chapters. The first story involves the search by the narrator (a thinly veiled autobiographical character) for Mascarita (the little masked face), the Machiguenga *hablador* (storyteller) who travels from village to village in the jungles of the Peru telling the stories, histories, and myths of the Machiguenga tribe, a nomadic Amazonian tribe relatively untouched by Western civilization. This search is interspersed with the translated oral tales, comprising everything from creation myths to transformation stories. The *hablador* in the end turns out to be an old friend of the narrator's from college, a man named Saúl Zuratas, who, surprisingly, is not an indigenous native but the son of a Russian/Polish father and a Creole/Jewish mother. Thus, the suffering of the Jewish tribes as they wandered without a homeland is juxtaposed with the wandering Machiguenga tribes. Nevertheless, the stories that the *hablador* tells are presented as authentic translations of oral Machiguenga tales passed on by the *viejos/as* and *abuelos/as*, the wise older men and women of the tribe. The text is focused on questions of translation and appropriation, of how anyone can ever get to know the Other, especially a culture with no connection to the colonizing Spanish or other Western cultures, without altering the very culture one wishes to translate.

The Storyteller opens with the fictional Peruvian narrator (Vargas Llosa) in Florence, Italy, ostensibly to study Dante, Machiavelli, and Renaissance paintings, a translation of the self into old European culture typical of the intelligentsia of Latin America during the period. Vargas Llosa himself left Peru after he completed his degree and lived in Europe for nearly sixteen years. Nevertheless, he felt conflicted about his Latin American identity and remained haunted by his Peruvian roots. In Florence, he comes across an exhibition titled "Natives of the Amazon Forest," in which an Italian photographer had taken a two-week trip to the Amazon region in Peru and describes "without demagoguery or aestheticism" (1990: 4) the daily life of a tribe of Amazonian natives (see the section on Gómez-Peña and Coco Fusco in Chapter 6). Thus, two clichés of translation are introduced from the beginning: first, the European artist/ethnographer traveling to the New World for a very short period of time, "translating" Latin American culture and bringing it to Europe; and second, the equation of photography to translation and its so-called objective nonideological or nonaesthetic representation of the facts. Indeed, the narrator notices that the name of the tribe, the Machiguengas, in a typical appropriative move, was Hispanicized. The exhibition in Italy calls up all sorts of questions for the conflicted

narrator, including issues of memory, or, more precisely, false memory, and a complex anxiety caused by his being both a native of the country being represented and a participant in the appropriative process by viewing the photos in a gallery in Europe. When the narrator sees a photograph of his friend the storyteller with the Machiguenga tribe circling around him listening, he wonders how the photograph was possible, given that the tribe keeps such rituals private, not allowing outsiders access, let alone photographing/translating such incidents.

The storyteller Saúl Zuratas is introduced in the second chapter of the novel, although the reader does not yet know Zuratas's "true" identity. At this point in the story, Saúl Zuratas is shown as a talented but frustrated law student in Lima, Peru, where he befriends the narrator. Zuratas is the son of Don Salomón, an immigrant from Central Europe and a successful businessman who has converted from Catholicism to Judaism. Saúl Zuratas's mother is a Creole Indian from Talara, a small town outside of Lima, where the people had little education and could barely read. Thus, the main character is not indigenous at all; rather, he is a hybrid of Polish, Russian, Native American, Spanish, Peruvian, Catholic, and Jewish cultures, symbolic of the hybrid nature of all translation in a postcolonial world. Vargas Llosa erases distinctions between the Old and New Worlds, blending languages and cultures so that "originals" become infused with the past and informed by the future. Yet what is most distinguishing about Saúl Zuratas's identity is not his religious or ethnic background; it is a mark on his body: a large birthmark that covers the entire right half of his face—a wine-colored, feature-distorting mark that covers his lips, nose, ears, and even his hair—which has lent him his nickname Mascarita [Masked Face]. Without going into all the interpretations one might imagine associated with such an image, the connection to the two-faced nature of translation, to the marks of European culture on the body of the Latin American, to both intellectual and physical hybridity as a condition of culture in the postmodern world, and, especially, to the mask as a trope not only for translation but for Latin American identity in general, comes immediately to mind.

The story revolves around the separation of these two friends over the years. One, the narrator/author, successfully completes his literary studies in Lima, goes to Europe, learns European languages, studies Italian Renaissance literature, becomes a successful writer, and eventually returns to Peru as a television producer, producing a show ironically titled "Tower of Babel" (Vargas Llosa 1990: 146). The other, Saúl Zuratas, successfully completes his ethnography degree in Lima, is offered a scholarship to France, but turns it down—the first student ever at the school to turn down a scholarship to Europe—and disappears into the jungle, where he befriends the people of the Machiguenga tribe, a nomadic Peruvian indigenous grouping that has miraculously avoided contact with the Western world. Zuratas not only learns the language and studies their history but also adopts

the customs and beliefs of the Machiguengas and begins sharing their existence—in short, identifying his own life with their ways and traditions, going over to the “other” side. The story thus juxtaposes two options for tracing one’s identity in Latin American culture: the one path, the road most frequently chosen, involves tracing one’s Spanish/European roots, Renaissance art, rational thought, Christian monotheism, urbanization, and all the trappings of Western civilization. Florence, with its dazzling paintings, buildings, fashions, new ideas, and intrigues, embodies this European track. The other path involves studying and learning indigenous cultures and languages, moving to the forest, wearing natural clothing, giving up private property, adopting polytheism, and giving oneself over to the history, mythology, images, and ancestral connections not contaminated by contact with the Europeans. While the narrator (Llosa) has chosen the former path, he is haunted by the latter in the form of the image of the face of Mascarita and the effort made to keep alive the stories, the feelings of community and fraternity, of memory and identity, that many Latin Americans so easily abandon.

Twice in his life the narrator has been to the jungle and has had contact with the Machiguengas: the first when he was just 22 years old, and later when he returned as a television producer. Of course his dealings with the indigenous people must be in translation. Ironically, his interactions are mediated by the only group whose members have managed to learn the Machiguenga language: the Summer Institute for Linguistics, a Protestant Biblical organization, which, under the guise of doing linguistic research, also attempts to convert the indigenous tribes to Christianity. On his first trip, the narrator goes as a guest of a Mexican anthropologist, visiting several different tribes. In the Amazon region, he meets the Schneils, a husband and wife missionary couple and linguists who first tell him about the *hablador*, which they translate for the narrator as a “talker” or “speaker,” one who not only brings current news to the nomadic members of the wandering tribe but also speaks of the past, serving as a kind of memory for the diasporic community. While the narrator does not meet any Machiguengas during his first trip, he does hear the stories of the Schneils’ first contact with the tribe and receives a transcription/translation of one of their songs, giving him an idea of the sound of the language and the way the words embody a different thought process.

The second trip comes much later in his life when he returns to the region to make a television show for a program called “Tower of Babel.” At this point, nearly half of the some 5,000 surviving Machiguengas now live in villages with names such as New Light and New World, showing the “success” of the missionaries’ linguistic project. Most tribe members now speak Spanish and attend Bible schools. Thus, the narrator can speak with selected village chiefs and schoolteachers, record dances and songs, and, via translation, inform himself “directly” about Machiguenga life. But certain topics are off limits. He is unable, for example, to get them to

talk about the *habladores*, which is a taboo in the Machiguenga culture. Again it is the Schneils who tell him stories about their contact with the *habladores*, and it is here that the narrator learns that one of the storytellers the Schneils have met has a huge birthmark covering the entire side of his face and red hair, none other than the narrator's long-lost friend.

Translation is further problematized in *The Storyteller*: not just any translation will do. As the Schneils and the narrator illustrate, there is no easy access to, nor any unmediated interpretation of, indigenous Peruvian culture. In fact, many of the translations do irreparable harm to the cultures being translated. Two examples serve. The first is the problem that Saúl Zuratas has with his chosen field of study: ethnology. One of the reasons that he refuses the scholarship to France has to do with his doubts regarding the ethics and morals of the profession. Ethnologists, with their tape recorders and interviews, pry into the customs and belief systems of the tribes, introducing foreign ideas and material goods that serve to corrupt and destroy the very beliefs that they are trying to preserve. Zuratas claims that the ethnologists' research is in the same class of activities as those of the rubber tappers, timber cutters, and army recruiters, one that does violence to the local culture by appropriating material and culture, translating in into their own terms and uses, and not giving anything back. Ironically, many of the case studies by the anthropologists and ethnographers are written in Spanish or other European languages and published in North America or Europe. Seldom are they written in any indigenous language, nor are they translated into the native languages so they can be read by the people being studied. Thus, the people being represented have no idea of *how* they are being represented, unless of course they learn the language of the academic investigators, another kind of covert translation imperialism to which many ethnographers seem oblivious.

The second example of problematic translation is that of the missionary/linguistic translators. Here the imperialism is overt: the missionaries attempt to convert the indigenous tribes, have them give up their religious beliefs, their nomadic way of life, and their communal support system in order to adopt the Christian religion, move to villages, and join the capitalist economy. One of the narrator's teachers tells him, "Be careful. Those gringos [of the Institute of Linguistics] will try to buy you" (Vargas Llosa, 1990: 71). The linguists also enjoyed strong ties with the government, including the Ministry of Education and the military. While translating the Bible into Machiguenga, the linguists also work to translate the traditional belief systems out of the indigenous cultures, eradicating one way of life and substituting for it their own.

In a conversation with his friend, Mascarita delivers a fierce diatribe against the Summer Institute of Linguistic "researchers." Zuratas claims:

Those apostolic linguists of yours are the worst of all. They work their way into the tribes to destroy them from within, just like chiggers. Into

their spirit, their beliefs, their subconscious. . . . The others steal their vital space and exploit them. . . . Your linguists are more refined. They want to kill them in another way.

(Vargas Llosa 1990: 95–96)

When the narrator suggests that they are no different than Dominicans or Spanish missionaries in previous generations, Zuratas claims that while the jungle swallowed up the earlier missionaries, allowing the Machiguengas to slip away and coexist in the Amazon, the linguists, with the economic power and backing of national and international organizations, under the guise of learning aboriginal languages, have been much more successful in implanting their religions, values, and culture. He continues, “What for? To make the Amazonian Indians into good Westerners, good modern men, good capitalists, good Christians. . . . Not even that. Just to wipe their culture, their gods, their institutions off the map and corrupt even their dreams” (ibid. 97).

In my earlier work in *Contemporary Translation Theories* (Gentzler 1993), I talked about the vested interests of both Bible translation and the so-called linguistically based science of translation (2001: 44–76), raising questions regarding certain fundamental assumptions at the heart of the respective theories. I found Bible translation theories such as those of Eugene Nida clouded by religious presuppositions and missionary goals, and the more scientific, functional approaches based on vague assumptions about supposed innate structures that were more often a reflection of European or North American linguistic theory. In his critique of both ethnography and of Bible translation theories in *The Storyteller* (1990), Vargas Llosa precedes my research by several years, showing how the translation theories of the fictional turn in South America anticipate translation studies research in the decade to follow.

As opposed to the form of translation practiced by the scientists in the form of ethnography, or of the linguists in the form of missionary work, Vargas Llosa posits an alternative form of translation, one that might be called cultural immersion, embodied by Saúl Zuratas giving up his scholarship, going into the jungle, living with and learning the stories of the Machiguengas from the perspective and language of the tribe. This is presented not so much in terms of the story involving the narrator’s search for his friend, but instead by the indigenous stories interspersed throughout the novel. While these stories are presented as authentic translations, stories learned by Saúl Zuratas in the jungle from first-hand sources, they are actually fictitious translations, or, in translation studies terms, “pseudo-translations” (Popovič 1976: 20; Toury 1984). While the first several stories about the Machiguengas’ wanderings, wars, gods, and sorcerers appear to be authentic, later stories involving stories from Ovid or Jesus Christ reveal their fabricated nature. Nevertheless, the stories take an uncanny form, abandoning Western forms of narration, leaving many

cultural terms, names, and places untranslated. The technique retains a degree of authenticity, certainly one of allowing different ideas and perspectives to surface.

Translation scholars such as Lawrence Venuti (1995) would call the techniques used by the storyteller “foreignizing” translation; Antoine Berman (1992) would refer to them as “nonethnocentric” translation. The names of the various gods are left in the original: *Tasurinchi* is a creator, breathing out the animals and the people; *Kientibakori* is the lord of the demons, a crazy god. Place names are left in the original: *Gran Pongo* is a kind of river of heaven where life begins and ends, *Kambaríra* is the river of the dead; various indigenous tribes appear: the *Mashcos*, an enemy tribe of the Machiguengas, the *Ashaninkas*, *Piros*, *Amahuacas*, and the *Yaminahuas*. *Viracochas* are clearly white Europeans who track the Machiguenga men down and carry them off to “bleed” trees. Tribal elders have become endowed with spiritual qualities: *seripigari* are good spirits; bad sorcerers include the *machikanari*; *kamagarini* are little devils; a *sopai* is a she-devil. The list of estranging terms goes on, including animals, plants, foods, place names, clothes, and celestial bodies. To follow the stories, the reader must give him- or herself over to a different world with different surroundings, histories, and points of reference.

The style of the narrative of the stories is also different from stories’ structures in the West. For one thing, time is conceived differently. First, and most importantly, people are always walking, moving, changing, and adapting, making it difficult to say exactly who or what anyone is. People in Europe are generally identified by their place name (Von Dams, de la Cruz, van der Berg) or by their profession (Smith, Butler, Taylor, Hunter); in Latin America, in cultures that are mobile, with people coming and going with few possessions, one’s sense of identity is totally different. Names are temporary, not permanent; what might be a village or a settlement one year might be the jungle the next. A person who is a hunter one year might be a fisherman the next. Proper nouns do not exist in the same way as in Western languages. One might be called “the one just born” one year, “the one who arrives by canoe” at a later time, and “the one whose mother just died” the next year. The calendar is different as well. Time is continually referred to as “that was before” or “that was after.” There is no Christ, thus no BCE or AD or Western calendar. Events repeat themselves and go in cycles. Europeans come and go—there are the conquistadores, missionaries, rubber tappers, coffee growers, and Latin American government officials. The Machiguengas move on, slipping away, measuring their nomadic life not by events on earth but rather by movement of the stars and philosophical concepts. Number systems are different as well; while numbers exist for small amounts, such as one, two, or three, larger amounts (five and above) are invariably referred to as “many,” giving an ethereal quality to the stories. Most importantly, religion is different; the stories abound with the myths and embellished histories of the exploits of gods and men

important to their existence, their periods of happiness and abundance, their periods of war and strife. The Machiguengas' notion of goodness, peace, and prosperity is generally associated with harmony with nature—periods when fish and game are plentiful and the forest is undisturbed—not with the construction of a beautiful building or accumulation of gold and silver.

Thus, the translation strategy involves letting go of certain Western beliefs, terms, and structures and going over to the other side, allowing as many of the sounds, rhythms, and, especially, cultural associations to surface in the translation as possible. Rather than translating a word or term into some Western semiequivalent term that assimilates and explicates, Vargas Llosa, in his fictitious translation, presents a translation model that develops a cultural context within the story to allow fields of association to arise that may allow for understanding or access without assimilation. While one is uncertain how “true” the stories are, the reader suspects that Vargas Llosa has done a quite a lot of research and that many aspects of the stories as well as narrative style are semifictional rather than fictional, just as the fictional narrator's life is presented in a semiautobiographical fashion. I suggest that translation studies scholars have much to learn by reading the fiction of many of the Latin American writers to see how skeptical many people of South America are about translation models as developed in the North, as well as to gain insight into new possible translation strategies that are less exploitative. How does one translate without a certain degree of fictionalization (how does one write an autobiography without fictionalization)? How does one access the Other without giving up one's own language and worldview? If those belonging to a particular culture resist contact with the Western world and refuse to speak about certain aspects of their culture, how then does a Western scholar represent that taboo subject?

Derrida and Benjamin

As Vargas Llosa questions traditional translation theory as a means for accessing and understanding indigenous Amazonian culture, so too has translation theory witnessed a generation of deconstructive scholarship that also questions traditional translation theory and its appropriateness for translation of indigenous and oral cultures. Most of the “theory” underlying such questioning derives from Walter Benjamin's “The Task of the Translator” (1969a) and Jacques Derrida's reading of Benjamin's essay, presented orally in a series of workshops in the 1980s and in written form primarily in “Des tours de Babel” (1985b) and “The Roundtable on Translation” (1985c). Before turning to those essays, I would first like to discuss another Benjamin essay, called “The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov” (1969b), which immediately follows “The Task of the Translator” in his collection *Illuminations*. In this essay, Benjamin bridges the gap between “The Task of the Translator,” in which he discusses the creative potential for translation when it draws upon the plurality of

languages rather than some single independent language, and “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” (1969c), in which he discusses the difference between a work of art before the era of mass reproduction, when art connected with social actions such as ritual, and the work of art after the invention of lithography, phonography, and photography, in which the aura of earlier art is lost. Reproduction offered by the news media, radio, and television changes the way a culture thinks about and perceives art. While Benjamin finds this liberation emancipating and empowering, he also clearly laments the loss of aura, ritual, magic—in short, the intimacy—of the earlier forms of artistic communication, so clearly lacking in the modern world.

In “The Storyteller,” Benjamin discusses the decline of the role of the storyteller in the age of the novel, made possible by the invention of printing. Storytellers’ tales derive from their own lived experiences or the experiences told to them by others. In turn, the storyteller makes those experiences part of the lives of the people hearing the stories. Like a translator, the storyteller has traveled afar, has listened to other stories, brings something back across time and distance, and retells the story in the idiom and nuances of the new audience. There is an intimacy, a ritual, a communal experience for those listening. Novelists, on the other hand, work alone, in isolation, then send their texts to the publishers, who print and sell the books to the readers, who never meet the author. Novelists may or may not exchange ideas with other writers, and seldom exchange ideas and experiences with the readers. The exchange is a one-way flow of ideas, for a price, generally from a fairly lonely and isolated figure to an often equally lonely and estranged group of readers.

With the decline of the art of storytelling, Benjamin laments the loss of another form of meaning. Not the unified and decipherable “meaning” of a particular novel, but the access to that pool of oral histories—memories, loves, struggles, traditions, rituals, and fairy tales—passed on from generation to generation that storytellers have at their disposal. The goal of the storyteller is to share those memories and experiences with the audience. Yet each telling changes the story as the storyteller draws upon a variety of psychological ploys to connect with the audience. The precise meaning of any one individual tale is less important than the shared, communal experience (and one can see Benjamin’s Marxism creeping in), drawing the audience into that web of experience that networks all of the stories together. One story connects to the next, forming a chain of interwoven tales overlapping and interconnecting. One thinks of Schahrazad, who draws on that pool of stories and histories to derive a new and related story every time any individual story finishes, so that the story never ends. The stories of the storyteller thus have no origin and no end. One also cannot help but think of Borges, whose work predates Benjamin’s by over ten years.

As Benjamin in “The Storyteller” allows his readers a glimpse of the web of communal identity, so too does he in “The Task of the Translator” (1969a)

discuss translation less in terms of deciphering and reencoding the specific “meaning” of any one individual text than in terms of allowing the reader access to that communal pool of languages that is always evolving from one generation to the next. Benjamin suggests that this constant state of flux or words and sentences (which involves Benjamin’s notion of “pure language”), which Benjamin argues is fundamental to the nature of language, invariably remains hidden in individual languages. However, in some forms of translation, aspects of this hidden nature of language—its inherent plurality, the foreignness embedded within any given language—become visible.

Benjamin’s essay “The Task of the Translator” (1969a) has been written about by many poststructural and translation scholars (Jacobs 1975; De Man 1986; A. Benjamin 1989; Bannet 1993; Davis 2001; Gentzler 2001). To be brief, the arguments generally are similar. These scholars point frequently to the title of the essay, which in German is “Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers.” *Aufgabe* translates idiomatically to “task,” “job,” or “duty.” It derives, however, from the verb *aufgeben*, which means to “give up” or to “give over.” Thus, the “Aufgabe” of the translator involves, according to the poststructural readers of Benjamin, a process of giving up the notion of rendering a recoverable, coherent meaning of the text, and instead giving oneself over to this pool of languages and ideas, what Benjamin often refers to as the “kinship of languages” (1969a: 72)—the interrelatedness of languages to each other. Translation thus has an additional aim apart from the mere representation of any one individual text; it also serves the purpose of expressing “the central reciprocal relationship between languages” (*ibid.*: 72).

Once one rethinks the task of translation less as the reproduction of a text from one language to another and more as an opening to the entire network of evolving and creatively growing pool of languages, one can better see the fascination of Latin American writers for the theme of translation as a reflection of their own cultural evolution. We have seen how Borges calls into question the existence of any original text, instead referring to ambiguous, oral Homeric tales or the never-ending tales of the Arabian Nights as an ephemeral source text; how García Márquez’s story invokes a kind of ur-Sanskrit that precedes any individual European or Latin American language in which to tell his story of the Buendía family, who in their patriarchal fashion try to shape and control culture; and how Vargas Llosa’s turn to European languages and cultures is haunted by oral tales and histories from his “native” Peru. All of these authors sense the Benjaminian notion of the kinship of languages and call into question notions of ownership, origin, and singular meaning. By foregrounding the theme of translation in the Benjaminian sense, these authors give themselves up to a different notion of authorship and offer alternative notions more connected to translation and storytelling.

The other term in Benjamin’s title that poststructural critics play with is *Übersetzen*, which idiomatically is translated as “translation,” but which in

German literally implies a process of “carrying over.” Critics connect this term to other related terms scattered through Benjamin’s essay, including *überleben*, “living on” or in French *survie*, “survival,” and *fortleben*, “carrying on” or “carrying forth.” Thus, the prefix “trans,” in addition to referring to “across,” is invoked in a paradigm of associations, including “beyond” and “further” and, significantly, “change” and “renewal.” Thus, translation for Benjamin is connected with images of expansion, development, and change. Here the connection to the Spanish explorers deployed in Latin America becomes clear. American identity is caught up in images of exploration, development, expansion, and renewal. In addition, Benjamin’s thinking about “trans” in such an exploratory fashion calls to mind images of “wandering,” “erring,” and “exile.” Translation for Benjamin opens into that labyrinth of all languages, their historical interrelatedness, and their development into individual and different languages. From the labyrinths of libraries constructed by Borges, to the complex histories of one displaced family trying to establish a foothold in Macando by García Márquez, to the wandering tribes of the Machinguengas connected only by oral histories of Vargas Llosa, one can see the connection between Latin American translation as a theme of fiction and the translation theory of Benjamin.

Benjamin goes so far as to argue that no translation would be possible if the goal were only “likeness to the original” (1969a: 73). Rather, he suggests that in its afterlife (*fortleben*), which implies a transformation and a renewal of something living, “the original undergoes a change” (*ibid.*: 73). Not only is a translation not the same as the original but in the process of translation, the translation *changes* the original. The source text in Benjamin’s translation theory is not some unified, inviolable original that can be captured and carried across to another culture. Rather, the original also derives from and contributes to this labyrinth of languages and ideas a kind of first draft of an idea that reaches its fulfillment in translation. Translation thus completes the original as a kind of afterlife. Benjamin uses organic metaphors here, talking about the “maturing process” of an original via translation. Translation joins together with the original to form a new organism in a kind of birthing process. The original is conceived of as the seeds or the roots of the organism; the translation as its growth and flowering. Rather than being a sterile equation between two dead languages, translation allows the reader to see the evolutionary process of the original language and the “birth pangs” of the target language (*ibid.*: 73). The attractiveness of such a concept of birth pangs for Latin American scholars should be clear: in Latin America, not only do the original European languages develop and grow, but also they make apparent the struggles of creating new texts in the target language and forming an independent identity.

The idea that the translation changes the original is sacrilegious to not only traditional (and many contemporary) translation studies scholars but also, more importantly, those European critics and cultural institutions who

defend the sanctity of the existing canon—the great books—and the authors who write them. For the fiction writers in the Americas who are struggling with their own identity, trying to incorporate the best of European ideas and writing but nevertheless striving to find their own voice and language to express their own experiences, the idea of adapting rather than adopting the canon has its appeal. Coterminous with the interest by Latin American authors in the theme of translation (see the section on cannibal translation in Chapter 4) was Derrida's seizing upon the ideas of Walter Benjamin and using them to illustrate his deconstructive mode of writing, also meant to challenge the canon and destabilize notions of unified and coherent original texts and theories of art and philosophy (including translation) based on metaphysical ideas.

In "Des tours de Babel" (1985b) and "The Roundtable on Translation" (1985c), Derrida discusses Benjamin's text, giving not what he calls a theoretical reading but a "translation of another text on translation" (1985b: 175). In fact, many of Derrida's texts can be better approached from the perspective of translation rather than critical theory. He picks up on both the expanded field of association generated by the prefix "trans-" and the organic metaphors of Benjamin's text, suggesting that the *Überleben* which the translator endows upon the original is not just a survival, but a "surplus of life" [*un plus de vie*]. The original not only "lives on" in translation but is improved; it lives "more and better, *beyond* the means of its author" (ibid.: 179; italics mine). To express his idea, Derrida invokes the marriage metaphor: just as in marriage two people who are different are joined in an alliance and complete each other, forming a new entity that changes them both as individuals, so too in translation do two languages join together to complete each other, forming a greater language that changes them both (ibid.: 224).

Thus, for Derrida, translation is a creative act, one that transfigures and transforms. Because no translation ever is the same as the original, Derrida actually suggests that we substitute the notion of "transformation" for translation (1981: 20). It is also the vehicle in which difference can be included, and indeed is instrumental to the creative process. Thus, translation is seen as a mode or a form of its own, in many ways similar to creative writing, to fiction. Or, better put, original writing is seen as similar to translation, an idea underscored by the Latin American fiction writers. The fiction of Borges, of García Márquez, of Vargas Llosa, of Cortázar is both translation of the fiction of Europe and North America and at the same time creating something new. Latin American fiction both develops from seeds planted in European forms and languages and extends and enlarges those very forms and languages by adding or adjoining.

The title of the essay "Des tours de Babel" (Derrida 1985b) best illustrates the play of translation that can extend and enlarge language. As Joseph Graham mentions in a "translator's note" to the essay, "*des*" can mean "some," "of the," "from the," or "about the." *Tours* can mean "towers,"

“tricks,” “twists,” “turns,” or “tropes.” Together, the two sound like *détour*, “detour.” The title also is very self-referential, calling up fields of associations that Derrida has put into play in other essays, namely his notions of differing and deferring, for which he has coined the neologism *différance*, elaborated in the essay “Différance” from *Margins of Philosophy* (1982a; see Gentzler 2001: 157–167). Thus, the title “Des tours” is polyvalent, drawing upon multiple fields of associations, even referring to forms that have disappeared from contemporary usage. Derrida’s point is that any single interpretation (translation) covers up and hides potential meanings that also might inform the text. Derrida’s translation strategy (and philosophical project) is not to set (*setzen*) on any one fixed translation or interpretation, but to defer or delay this fixation in order to get beyond one set meaning (*übersetzen*).

In “Des tours de Babel,” Derrida refers to the *récit* (the story, the well-known oral history passed down from generation to generation) of the Shem tribe (*shem* means “name”), who wanted not just to construct a tower to reach the heavens but to make a name for themselves, imposing their name and their tongue upon the other tribes of Israel. Derrida reads the story as the Shems trying to force their language upon the world by violence. God destroys this attempt to impose a universal language (which would eliminate the need for translation) by destroying the tower, scattering the tribes, and disallowing the imposition of one language upon the others. While some critics imply that God is condemning humankind to a permanent state of confusion (*Babel* means both “the father” and “confusion”), Derrida instead sees the deconstruction of the tower as a condemnation of hegemonic violence and a liberation of language, a positive affirmation of polyvalence and the free play of different languages mutually interacting. Indeed, in the “Roundtable on Translation,” Derrida goes so far as to call God a “deconstructor” (1985c: 102; in the Derridean affirmative sense). He suggests that the interruption of the construction of the Tower of Babel gives a good idea of what deconstruction is: “an unfinished edifice whose half-completed structures are visible, letting one guess at the scaffolding behind them” (*ibid.*: 102). Deconstruction is thus analogous to dissemination, which Derrida plays with by calling it “dischemination,” which calls to mind de-Shemitizing, or detouring or rerouting (the word *chemin* also means “path”), and indirectly connecting with his ideas of differing and deferring.

I suggest that Derrida’s “scaffolding” is similar to what the Latin American fiction writers are attempting to expose by their foregrounding the theme of translation. The image of the wandering tribe portrayed by Vargas Llosa, the Machiguenga tribe that haunts the narrator/author of the story, continues to exist behind all the modern constructions of buildings, roads, schools, government palaces in urban areas of Latin America. Saúl Zuratas, who exemplifies not only the native Peruvian American but also the wandering Jew, and even some ur-Celtic, pre-European native, by turning his back on Europe and collecting stories of the wandering natives,

attempts to get beyond those reified notions of fiction by going back to his roots. The translations of his stories presented by Vargas Llosa are not meant to capture or fix any one given story as truth, hence their fictional nature; rather, they attempt to open a path to that world of different names, places, times, religions, gods, histories, plants, animals, and wars that have not been recorded, canonized, fixed, or fixated by Western languages and cultures. García Márquez not only portrays the Buendía family as they wander about in the New World looking for a place to settle but, more importantly, lays his novel out as a translation from the Sanskrit, another ur-language predating the hegemony of European languages. The history of the family—about life in the Americas in its polyvalent fashion with its blend of Native American languages, gypsy languages, Spanish, Catalan, Portuguese, English, French, Italian, and Latin as well as the Sanskrit—can only be understood in translation. Borges's short stories also tap into that labyrinth of languages, especially those oral Homeric and Arabian stories that predate the powerful European languages, which often are viewed as colonizing rather than canonical in Latin America. Indeed, Borges's parodying of European fictional and academic forms of writing, of the parceling of knowledge, exposes the hypocrisy and the illusionary quality of the attempts to package and control ideas, and points to *chemins* and paths historically closed off by such forms. In sum, the development of translation as a theme in Latin American fiction is parallel to and mutually interacts with the deconstructive form of writing referred often to by Derrida not as theory, but as translation itself.

The fictional turn and criticism

In the essay "(In)visibilidades na tradução: troca de olhares teóricos e ficcionais" [(In)visibilities in Translation: Exchanging Theoretical and Fictional Perspectives] (1995–1996a) and in the related article "El ser en 'visible': 'el espejo' en Guimarães Rosa" [Being in "Visible": The Mirror in Guimarães Rosa] (1995–1996b), Brazilian critic Else Vieira discusses how the discourse of fiction has been used as a source for theories about translation, calling this stage the "fictional turn" in translation studies (1995–1996a: 50). She locates her theory in the context of work done by translation scholars Susan Bassnett (1993), Lawrence Venuti (1992a, 1995), and André Lefevere (1992), poststructural theorists such as Foucault (1977), Benjamin (1969a), and Derrida (1985b, c), and Brazilian critics such as Nelson Ascher (1989) and Eneida Maria de Souza (1995). While the theory of the fictional turn is presented only in a sketchy fashion, it turns on an analysis of the trope of mimesis in the work of Brazilian fiction by authors such as Guimarães Rosa. She argues, for example, that the fiction writers anticipate poststructural thought by making subjective thought—difference—visible, even in realistic descriptions. Even in the words of scientific discourse, one can see the convergence of multiple languages.

Fiction narrates experience; fiction represents reality; subjective points of view are invariably expressed. Vieira plays with the image of the “mirror” and the camera lens, both in the fiction and in the criticism, and how they are used as metaphors for realism in fiction and for faithfulness in translation. She asks, how are images reflected? How are different photos of the same thing different? What are the limits such terms impose on literary critics when discussing either fiction or translation? How is the unseen shown in translation? Mirrors and photographs often offer misguided efforts to represent reality. Referring to the work of Borges in fiction and Haroldo de Campos in poetry, Vieira suggests that translation (*tra-duzir*) is better understood as trans-position (*trans-posição*) (1995–1996a: 64). This transposition works in two directions: just as Latin American writers are influenced by and transpose the work of European writers, so too are European writers influenced by and changed by the “translations” by the Latin Americans. The reflections are bidirectional, forming a simultaneous two-way flow of ideas and forms. The exchange of ideas and the cross-fertilization process via translation is necessary for the evolution of ideas and the innovation of new forms of fiction. She too refers to Benjamin and Derrida at the end of “(In)visibilidades na tradução” (1995–1996a), focusing on the organizing metaphors of birth and renewal, of survival and supplementation. Vieira’s final image is of a river, similar to the rivers in Guimarães Rosa’s fiction, that flow across borders, fertilizing the land for the future growth but also giving new life to the past. So too, she argues, does translation change both the past and the future, revealing and concealing as it participates in the evolution and flow of cultural systems.

Else Vieira’s work is indicative of a new wave of Latin American scholars investigating the fictional turn in translation. In the anthology *Translation and Power*, Maria Tymoczko and I have attempted to collect representative essays by Rosemary Arrojo, Adriana Pagano, and Christopher Larkosh to illustrate this movement. In “Writing, Interpreting, and the Power Struggle for the Control of Meaning” (Tymoczko and Gentzler 2002), Brazilian translation studies scholar Rosemary Arrojo looks at metaphors having to do with construction and architecture in stories by Franz Kafka, Jorge Luis Borges, and Dezső Kosztolányi. She sees the authors/narrators as builders structuring their texts in an attempt to control the meaning and reception. Yet interpretation and translation inevitably contradict perfect completion, unity, or closure. In “Translation as Testimony: On Official Histories and Subversive Pedagogies in Cortázar” (2002), the Argentine-born Brazilian scholar Adriana Pagano connects the topic of translation to the activity of nation building in Latin America. She analyzes the theme of translation, especially the tension between aesthetic versus ideological choices, in texts by Julio Cortázar, including “Blow-Up” (1967a), *Hopscotch* (1967b), *62: A Model-Kit* (1972), and *A Manual for Manuel* (1978). In “Translating Women: Victoria Ocampo and the Empires of Foreign Fascination,” the United States-based Latin Americanist Christopher

Larkosh (2002) looks at the entire corpus of work of Argentine writer, translator, and publisher Victoria Ocampo, including both how her autobiographies, *testimonios*, and translations came to represent the international literary world, and how her publications came to represent Argentine writing as a whole, connecting to translation to the development of Argentine national identity to the world.

Arrojo begins her argument with an analysis of the story “The Burrow” by Franz Kafka (1971). The narrator of the story lives underground and has completed the construction of a burrow, but the passages and openings need to be continually checked; weaknesses are exposed, making the narrator always vulnerable to enemies on the outside. The narrator is thus shown to be less than a master of his own construction, just as no author can ever protect against different interpretations. The Borges story “Death and the Compass” from *Ficciones* (1989b [1944]), analyzed by Arrojo, continues this theme of the attempt to control meaning. As was mentioned earlier, the author figure in this case is the criminal Red Scharlach, who coldly attempts to construct a deadly labyrinth around a detective named Erik Lönnrot, who as the reader/translator figure must not only unravel the clues but also anticipate his adversary’s moves. In a typical Borgesian reversal, the criminal becomes the hunter and the detective the hunted, putting the author/interpreter in a dialectical spin. Thus, the criminal Red Scharlach weaves a web to catch the detective. Borges’s point, and Arrojo’s as well, is that the author/translator as constructor/deconstructor is always caught in a complex interplay, infinitely repeating itself in a vain attempt to construct and control meaning.

Arrojo culminates this argument in the Kosztlányi story “The Kleptomaniac Translator” (Kosztlányi 1996). The main character is named Gallus, who is a talented writer and translator but has a compulsion to steal. He ends up doing more translation work because he cannot get work in his own name, often the translations of trashy texts that editors cannot get more respectable writers to touch. One of these translations is rejected by an editor, and a friend of Gallus decides to find out why. He discovers that the translation, while fluent, artistic, and often better than the original, is missing certain items, such as the jewelry of one female character or certain rugs, safes, watches, suitcases, cash, and silverware. The translator thus has been unable to control his compulsion, criminally tampering with the original, thereby threatening authorial rights and property. What Kosztlányi seems to be arguing, rather like Kafka and Borges, and Derrida, is that this desire to construct an inviolable tower, burrow, or text is fraught with problems; protection from invaders from the outside, from different readings and interpretations, is impossible. Translators, who are often the closest readers of texts, have their own subjective desires (and pathological problems) that directly or indirectly creep into their translations. Fiction writers seem to know this only too well; it is time that translation theory deconstructs some of its own postulates and catches up to the fiction.

Adriana Pagano's work also explores the relationship between fiction, translation, and history, often looking at translation as the site of tension and even of violence—violence through the imposition of words to translate “reality.” Thus, according to Pagano, translation cannot be divorced from ideology and powerful cultural institutions involved in the production of culture. Cortázar's “Blow-Up” (1967a), for example, concerns the investigations of Roberto Michel, a French-Chilean living in Paris, who is a full-time translator and part-time amateur photographer. While in the middle of translating a scholarly thesis for a professor from the University of Santiago, he goes to a park, intending to take photos of a conservatory. He happens upon a couple—an older woman and a young boy—who capture his attention. Upon developing and blowing up the photos of the couple, he discovers new items in the scene, including a man in a hat, a newspaper, and a birdlike image, indicating that probably some sort of child abuse was happening or about to happen. Themes blend in Cortázar's fiction; photography is used as a metaphor for translation. Yet, similarly to the limits of the ability of the mirror or the camera lens to record reality pointed out by Vieira above, the role of the translator/photographer is active rather than passive in the participation of events; the boy, for example, runs away when the woman discovers her picture being taken. How the photo/translation is developed, the difficulties of exactly reproducing the original, the displacement of meaning in the process of translation/reproduction, the role of the photographer/translator in the final version of the text, and the violence revealed underlying the idyllic romantic scene are all explored by Cortázar.

In *62: A Model Kit* (Cortázar 1972), the main character is an Argentine translator named Juan, who works for UNICEF in Paris. He makes a mistake when translating a customer's order in a Parisian restaurant. The phrase “Je voudrais un château saignant” (“I'd like a rare steak”) becomes “Quisiera un castillo sangriento” (“I'd like a bloody castle”). For those scholars who have taken the fictional turn in translation theory, those “mistakes” are pregnant with ideological and subjective meanings, allowing the unseen to be seen, if no more than the subjective interpretation of the invisible translator to peek through. For Cortázar, the Latin American translator's mind transposes the rare steak into a bloody castle, a king drenched in blood, a European colonizer stained with the blood of the Latin American natives. “Château,” an abbreviation for a kind of steak called “Chateaubriand,” further calls to mind the French author François-René de Chateaubriand (1768–1848), whose poems were to become the “foundational fictions” for many generations of Latin American intellectuals (Pagano 2002: 84).

Pagano's main focus, however, is on the novel *A Manual for Manuel* (Cortázar 1978), which tells the story of a group of Latin Americans who, while living in Paris, plan to kidnap a Latin American officer linked to repressive paramilitary activities against oppositional groups. During these planning stages, two of the main characters, Patricio and Susan, make a

scrapbook for their son Manuel, translating, from French to Spanish, newspaper articles that reflect the tension and violence of the 1970s, including events such as the kidnapping of a West German ambassador in Brazil, the escape of ERP guerrillas from prison in Argentina, and the tension between Argentina and Britain over the Malvinas/Falkland Islands. The ensuing kidnapping is not successful; the police find the kidnappers and imprison them.

Using the translations for the boy, Cortázar questions history, versions, perspectives, facts, and “the truth.” The activists, aware that they may be captured or die, want to leave Manuel an alternative to the official history recorded by the journalists and the government. In their translations from French to Spanish, they expand, adding comments on the way the news was reported, letting the boy know how the linguistic choices of the original story also attempt to conceal and censor. In their translations, they decode certain conventions, often presented as facts by the journalists, reading between the lines the political and ideological messages conveyed. In addition to leaving an alternative record, they want to teach their son how to read critically, against the grain. Cortázar seems to be suggesting that translation can be used to rethink national histories and to allow space for alternative versions to coexist within a culture. Translation is likened to a clandestine activity that can be liberating. The violence to culture is done by the original writing that manipulates facts and only partially represents reality. Translation provides a broader perspective and allows openings for repressed and silenced meanings and events to surface. In the case of Latin America, where official versions of events are often used to cover up historical events, such as the massacre of the workers of Macondo by the banana company in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, translation as difference, as supplementation, as completion, takes on a new meaning, one that does not distort, but allows a more complete picture.

As Pagano connects translation as a mode to critically engage with the established history of a given country, so too does Christopher Larkosh connect translation to the kind of education in foreign languages received by Argentine intellectuals during the nation’s late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century history. In “Translating Woman: Victoria Ocampo and the Empires of Foreign Fascination,” Larkosh (2002) looks at the life of Victoria Ocampo, whose family life was representative of that of many Argentine intellectuals of the period. They had strong economic and cultural ties with Europe. The nannies and tutors who raised Ocampo taught her French and English; she spent considerable time in Europe, so much so that European cultural life created prejudices for her against her own country. The education, the languages learned, and the translations read ensured perpetuation of European values and ideas. Education was a form of oppression. For Cortázar, the manual for Manuel is offered not only as an alternative history but, according to Pagano, as an alternative form of education for the future. Larkosh shows how Ocampo felt constrained by

the languages and cultures of Argentina and Europe, and turned to translation as a means of social and cultural liberation. She was fascinated by those texts beyond the Argentine/European sphere and turned to writers such as the Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore for inspiration and ideas. Just as women are constrained by the social and political norms of the period, so too are Argentines constrained by European ideas and cultures. Translation for Ocampo becomes another form of cultural intervention, allowing her increased freedom of choice. Thus, translation not only is shown to be a central tool in the construction of Argentine identity in the past, but also becomes an important means by which to critically assess that constructed identity and to offer alternatives. Translation blends together with fiction and theory to offer a new perspective on history, memory, and identity formation. In Argentina's case, Larkosh concludes, the nation is not so much a unified, coherent nation with a fixed Spanish language, rather a Babelian nation with no official language or fixed boundary. The alternative history, the one manifest in translation, is better indicative of the complex intertextual network of languages, texts, and traditions translated and retranslated that transgress boundaries of unified imagery and symbolism (2002: 118)—in sum, the labyrinths suggested by the fictions of Borges.

Just as Borges's fictions inform the theory underlying Larkosh's and Pagano's assessment of the work of Ocampo and Cortázar, so too does Anibal González, who teaches at the University of Texas, Austin, turn to Borges in "Translation and the Novel: *One Hundred Years of Solitude*" (1989). González suggests that Borges is "without a doubt the most important source for García Márquez's literary ideology" (ibid.: 275). Connecting Borges's ideas from "The Homer Versions" (1989c [1932]) and "Pierre Menard" (1989a [1944]) to the ideas of Walter Benjamin and Jacques Derrida, González suggests that translation not only entails a search for and fidelity to origins and originality but also, in the process, reveals its silent accompaniment, the dispersion of meaning and potential confusion. Borges and García Márquez are both suspicious of notions of the sanctity of any one individual text, and instead their fictions are about raising questions about how texts become sacred. Aureliano Babilonia Buendía's task of translating Melquíades's manuscripts about the history of the family/town/nation serves less to reveal its "meaning" than to inscribe the story into the language of kinship, including the kinship taboos and importance of "proper" names (González 1989: 277). The novel is not united in any sense, but actually collapses in translation. Ironically, it can actually never end, for the translator/Spanish narrator Aureliano Buendía is inscribed in the story, imprisoned in a city of "mirrors and mirages" that would be extinguished at the moment Aureliano finished deciphering the manuscript (García Márquez 1998: 458). The translation itself involves a double translation, transcribing the Sanskrit into Spanish and then breaking Melquíades' private code. What is the relationship of a national language to any one individual? Aureliano Babilonia needs to draw on all his resources

of languages, encyclopedias, genealogies, linguistics, writing, and translation to decipher the manuscripts. Anibal González not only connects the obvious themes of translation in the novel—Melquíades’ manuscripts in Spanish; José Arcadio Buendía’s reverting to Latin when tied to the tree; Arcadia and Amaranta speaking Guajiro when young; and José Arcadio’s returning from his overseas adventures with his body, including his penis, covered with multilingual tatoos (a phallic Tower of Babel)—but also extends the theme to include translation as migration—the colonel’s seventeen sons who are conceived while he is on the march; the gypsies seen as translators wandering across the swamp; José Arcadio and Ursula forced to migrate when José kills Prudencio Aguilar; and, most significantly, translation as dissemination when Aureliano Babilonia and Amaranta Ursula violate the incest taboo. As incest serves to limit and thus define a single kinship system, argues González, so too does translation, in a Benjaminian sense, breach barriers between languages, revealing their interconnectedness often hidden within individual languages. Latin American fiction thus reminds readers of all texts’ connections to their own foreign originals and their own translational nature. Those scholars such as Vieira, Arrojo, Pagano, Larkosh, and González, who have taken the fictional turn, see the theme of translation in nearly every text. Translation, in theory, in practice, and in the fiction that narrates Latin American history, inheres in the very constitution of Latin American identity. Reading Latin American fiction from the perspective of translation, I suggest, informs our understanding not only of the nature of translation in the Americas, but also of how our identities have been formed and will continue to be reshaped in the future.