ON THE INFERNO INTERTEXT: THE CHALLENGES AND RIGORS OF TRANSLATING AUGUSTO ANTONIO A. AGUILA'S SHORT FICTION "CARNIVAL OF HATE" (2016)

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ABSTRACT

This essay discusses the challenges and rigors of translating into Filipino Augusto Antonio A. Aguila's short fiction titled "Carnival of Hate" from the collection *Carnival of Hate* (2016), originally written in English. What makes the text a challenging piece to translate? This essay focuses on certain literary features of the source text; the language of the short story writer; and the way Aguila's story was rendered in Filipino. Dante Alighieri's *Inferno*, being the prominent intertext of the story, must lie at the schema of the translator. We problematize the features of Alighieri's *Inferno* in an attempt to imaginatively transport ourselves back to the milieu of Dante's text, in order to perform the function of Aguila's translator. Focus is only on certain elements of the source text present in Aguila's story as part of the limitation of translating a narrative poem into a short story, the translator must have an imaginative vision and revisioning of this stage of the text's afterlife, with reference to the way Alighieri was able to defamiliarize hell, generally seen as a place of damnation, fire, and brimstone. The translator must be able to consider also the communicative and linguistic aspects of Aguila's story, particularly the lucid and rousing handling of gallows humor

and casual speech style affecting the meaningfulness of the translation. The translator-critic must know how to discourse on the language of the text and the pragmatic, semantic, syntactical, and discourse concentrations of the text.

KEYWORDS: *Alighieri's Architectonic Harmony, Authorial Style, Black Comedy, Carnival of Hate*

Introduction

In reading for the first time the story "Carnival of Hate," we have to affirm what Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo mentioned in the introduction that she wrote for Aguila's second collection of short stories. She claimed that the stories are not meant for the faint of heart or for those who do not have a flair for humor—black humor, morbid humor, gallows humor, in short, a dark comedy. "Carnival of Hate" is indeed an ambitious story considering the fact that there is a distinct evocation of the canonical, architectonic harmony that Dante Alighieri created in his epic poem, typically read as his means of actualizing his theological-philosophical vision of the lowest level of the Christian afterlife. Aguila markedly capitalizes on this exhaustive vision of hell, as he amusingly and perversely chronicles the story of Dickson, a walking closeted colossal lump of fat, and the Vice President of Samuel & Sons. The translator must be aware of this conspicuous intertext and the peculiar medieval ideologies that are summoned in the foreground of the story—the contrapasso being experienced by the tormented souls, the detailed physical sketches and observations of the anguish and chastisement taking place in each circle, and the plodding intensification of wickedness as one descends deeper into the very core of hell.

Problematizing Dante Alighieri's Inferno as the Source Text

Inferno's imaginative and structural vision evidently makes the text of Dante Alighieri a mainstay in popular culture. In the *Inferno*, one can see the inventive mind of Alighieri at work. The text is clearly allegorical, echoing theological purviews when it comes to how sins are punished in the lowest level of the Christian afterlife. In terms of content, the journey of Dante and Virgil through the nine circles of hell has been viewed as an allegory of gradually increasing layers of evil. At the center of the earth is Satan held in captivity. Visiting every layer of souls trapped in hell, readers of Alighieri also witness the rule of the contrapasso—a literary device invented by Dante, in which the sinner's punishment bears a resemblance to, and goes against the sin committed by the individual. A close reading of Alighieri reveals that he drew the inspiration for this device from St. Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*, and from various text focused on medieval visions such as *Visio Tnugdali*, *Visio Alberici*, and *Visio Pauli* (*Encyclopedia Dantesca*, 2005). The headless French baron Bertran de Born declares in Canto 28: "Così s'osserva in me lo Contrapasso" (XXVIII,142). Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, a prominent translator of Alighieri, translates this into English as "thus is observed in me the counterpoise (Dante, 2011)." To cite a prominent example, we can see in the eighth circle of hell, particularly in the fourth bolgia, that the astrologers, false prophets, and fortune-tellers are punished with their heads turned back on their bodies, as a consequence of predicting what lies in the future, when they were still on earth, through twisted sorcery and dark magic. This concept of divine revenge is central to Alighieri's *Inferno*.

It is also essential to note that Alighieri's hell is noteworthy for its structure. Readers of Dante are thrown into an inverted cone or funnel-like structure, descending in nine contracting rings or circles toward the very

center of the earth. This is considered the center of the universe, invoking the geocentric view of Dante's time. If one were to consult the schematic diagrams of the representations of hell, like in *The Map of Hell* by Sandro Botticelli, for example, we would see that one of the indispensable aspects of Alighieri's work is his structuring of hell. Together with how the souls are punished, the structure of Alighieri's hell is also the reason why the work is very visual and image-driven. Dante draws inspiration for his hell from Aristotelian ethical ideas, but with certain Christian symbolisms, affecting the way we can understand his peripatetic ethics, and additional supplements from *De Officiis* treatise of Cicero. The guide, Virgil, reminds Dante the sojourner: "Those pages where the Ethics tell of three / Conditions contrary to Heaven's will and rule / Incontinence, vice and brute bestiality" (D. Sayers, 1975). It is Cicero who has proposed the division of the sins of fraud and violence. Conjoining the Ciceronian concept of violence with the Aristotelian view of bestiality, together with his discourse on vice, the poet Alighieri is able to generate the three broad classifications of sin allegorically represented by the three beasts in Canto I: Incontinence or Wantonness, Bestiality or Violence, and Malice or Fraud. These three clusters of sin are what make Alighieri's hell a visual enterprise. In the original Italian text, we see Alighieri making this enterprise an easy one, as he writes in a colloquial style, the same style that we can see in the story "Carnival of Hate." Below is an example from Canto 4 of the Inferno:

Lines 13-36 from Canto 4 (Original Text from Trustees of Darthmouth College)	Lines 13-36 from Canto 4 (English Translation by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 1867)
"Or d[1]iscendiam qua giù nel cieco mondo," cominciò il poeta tutto smorto. "Io sarò primo, e tu sarai secondo." E io, che del color mi fui accorto, dissi: "Come verrò, se tu paventi che suoli al mio dubbiare esser conforto?" Ed elli a me: "L'angoscia de le genti che son qua giù, nel viso mi dipigne quella pietà che tu per tema senti. Andiam, ché la via lunga ne sospigne." Così si mise e così mi fé intrare nel primo cerchio che l'abisso cigne. Quivi, secondo che per ascoltare, non avea pianto mai che di sospiri che l'aura etterna facevan tremare; ciò avvenia di duol sanza martìri, ch'avean le turbe, ch'eran molte e grandi, d'infanti e di femmine e di viri. Lo buon maestro a me: "Tu non dimandi che spiriti son questi che tu vedi? Or vo' che sappi, innanzi che più andi, ch'ei non peccaro; e s'elli hanno mercedi, non basta, perché non ebber battesmo, ch'è porta de la fede che tu credi;	"Let us descend now into the blind world," Began the Poet, pallid utterly; "I will be first, and thou shalt second be." And I, who of his colour was aware, Said: "How shall I come, if thou art afraid, Who'rt wont to be a comfort to my fears?" And he to me: "The anguish of the people Who are below here in my face depicts That pity which for terror thou hast taken. Let us go on, for the long way impels us." Thus he went in, and thus he made me enter The foremost circle that surrounds the abyss. There, as it seemed to me from listening, Were lamentations none, but only sighs, That tremble made the everlasting air. And this arose from sorrow without torment, Which the crowds had, that many were and great, Of infants and of women and of men. To me the Master good: "Thou dost not ask What spirits these, which thou beholdest, are? Now will I have thee know, ere thou go farther, That they sinned not; and if they merit had, 'Tis not enough, because they had not baptism Which is the portal of the Faith thou holdest;

The source text of Aguila is written in colloquial and descriptive style—that is, in a manner that is easy to understand, thus making the depiction of hell easy to digest and visualize. Dante Alighieri is also known for his use of dark humor as a means of mocking hell. For example, the Bugle Tail, also known as the Evil Tail, in Canto 21, comes to the realization that he cannot torment Virgil the guide. Dante declares, "he lets the hook fall clanking to his feet, / There will not be any stabbing now." The acts of "clanking" and "stabbing" are expected from a tormentor like the devil. So, it becomes darkly funny to see that a devil has missed an opportunity to do such things in his own domain. This can be seen as subtle acts from Alighieri to mock hell, while capturing the horror of occupying its infernal spaces. Alighieri clearly provides a detailed exposition of the 24 divisions of hell, making the source text of Aguila's story truly wide-ranging in approach and scope. The affect and prophetic disposition in the original text—in terms of psychological narrative, vision, and torment—are distinctly projected in Alighieri's work, even in the translation provided by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, as cited earlier.

It is challenging to render all these elements in one short story. This is the reason why the *Inferno* that readers see in "Carnival of Hate" is only a small fragment of Alighieri's work. In translating a long narrative poem into a short story, it becomes important to recognize the wide-ranging scope of the source text, the way Aguila has understood it in his rendition of Dickson's story. To quote William E. Carroll in *Lust, Literature, and Damnation: Reading Dante's Divine Comedy*:

> The Divine Comedy is a vast encyclopedia of medieval culture; it brings together themes from Greece and Rome, including mythological figures from the ancient world, with themes from both the Old and New Testaments. In many ways,

> the poem is an elaborate commentary on the relationship between classical antiquity and Christianity: between reason and faith (9).

The narrative poem of Dante, as a medieval form of visionary literature (Carroll, 2021), is able to achieve such feats. With short fiction focusing only on one event, being less complex than a narrative poem or a novel, and having certain restrictions in situations and characters, we immediately see certain losses in Aguila's "Carnival of Hate." It is clear that the only elements that have been retained are the rendering of hell as a place of torment, a site where one can suffer the equivalent of the sin committed, and the psychological narrative of the characters entering hell as a place of eternal damnation. What we see in "Carnival of Hate" is only a small rendering of the hell that Dante Alighieri has depicted in his narrative poem.

However, we have to affirm that the colloquial style of Alighieri is still present in the work of Aguila, making his story easy to comprehend, and loyal to the poetic affect of the original text. In engaging with and translating the specific elements taken from the original text, we explain below what makes the text particularly challenging, focusing on certain literary features of the source text, the language of the short story writer, and the way we have rendered in Filipino the story of Aguila.

Motivations and Observations: Translating "Carnival of Hate" into Filipino

In this section, we discuss our motivations, as well as our observations on why "Carnival of Hate" is an interesting and challenging piece to translate from English into Filipino. Dante Alighieri's *Inferno* must be at the center of the translator's schema, as well as the previous translations of Alighieri,

like those by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Charles S. Singleton, and Mark Musa, to name a few. The translator must have possessed an imaginative vision and revisioning of this particular stage of the afterlife, with reference to how Dante is able to powerfully defamiliarize the way we see hell generally as a place of eternal damnation, fire, and brimstone. As translators, we believe that this is a prerequisite in translating "Carnival of Hate." In order to paint a clear picture of the hell that Dickson is touring, together with a lusty, robust, and morphing Virgil, the translator must be able to likewise cast himself back into the medieval architectonic congruence of the torture chamber beneath the earth. This is an assertion of the fact that translators must deal with all sorts of content, scrupulously studied. This literary historical factor, as well as the authorial factor, must be emphasized in the translation. The translator must be able to consider the various communicative and linguistic aspects of the work, as well as extend his groundwork in the translation process, encompassing the historical, cultural, and social layers of the text, which can also affect and effect the meaningfulness of his translation. This is a major predicament that the translator has to face in rendering into Filipino Aguila's "Carnival of Hate."

In the story, Virgil introduces Dickson to the various sectors that comprise the architectonic harmony of hell. Readers can see in detail and in lucid sketches the activities taking place within it, and the punishment given to the souls that befit the crimes that they had committed on earth. For example, Virgil introduces Dickson to the first window of Hell displaying the Glutton Chamber (*Bulwagan ng mga Patay-gutom*). In translating the events transpiring in the first window, the translator first and foremost must have a deep knowledge about the inventive vision in the original text. In order to be able to stick to the ethos of the intertext, we have firmly capitalized on the tenets of textual equivalence, in our attempt to maintain the similarity in

the cohesion and information of the source text—specifically the cohesion of illustrating to the readers the clearly defined structure of a particular evil location in the story. As translators, this is our way of at least striking a balance between two orientations: source-language orientation, and target-language orientation. An example from our translation is the events that Dickson had seen in the Glutton Chamber:

Narating nila sa wakas ang ikalawang bintana. Inakala ni Dickson na higit labing-limang minuto ang paglalakad, ngunit parang higit pa pala sa tatlumpung minuto ito para sa kaniya.

"Ito ang Bulwagan ng mga Patay-gutom!"

Pinagmasdan ni Dickson ang nangyayari sa bulwagan, at natakot siya sa kanyang mga nakita. Daan-daan ang mga matatabang kaluluwa, karamihan sa kanila ay mas malaki pa sa kaniya, at sila ay nakagapos sa mga haliging bato. Ang kanilang mga bibig ay pilit binubuksan ng isang hindi pangkaraniwan na kasangkapan. Pilit na pinapakain sa kanila ang mga dumi, mga patay na insekto at daga, at isang mukhang suka, ng mga nilalang na mukhang tao mga anim na talampakan ang taas na mayroong mahahabang bisig na abot sa kanilang mga paa, ang mamula-mulang nilang malaahas na dila ay labas pasok sa kanilang mga bunganga. Ang nakaluwa nilang mga mata ay mukhang lalabas sa kanilang mga mata anumang oras. Sumisigaw dahil sa matinding paghihirap ang mga kaluluwa.

In translating detailed scenes like this, we refer to Mona Baker's equivalence in translation studies in her book *In Other Words*. With the looming presence of Alighieri's *Inferno* at the foreground, and potently conditioning us in the translation process, we recognize the significance of equivalence—equivalence as much as possible at word level, equivalence

above the world level if there are statements that have no clear and precise equivalent in the target language, grammatical equivalence, and textual equivalence that faithfully takes into consideration the word order, cohesion, and the richness of the information being divulged by Aguila. As translators, this becomes our means of reproducing the distinctive flavor of the original text as shaped by our knowledge of the tenor and atmosphere of Dante Alighieri's epic poem.

In translating the text, we always keep in mind the fact that we are also attempting to translate the cultural milieu of the original intertext. This is a basic tenet in the translation process—that there exists a source text and a target text. In our experience, there are three texts to consider in the translation process: the intertext (Dante Alighieri's Inferno), source text (Aguila's short fiction) and the target text (our translation). We recognize the process of translation as a special kind of link that maintains cultural, emotional, and imaginative connection between the milieus that lie at the foreground of the text—in the case of the short fiction, the medieval foregrounding of Alighieri's epic poem and the distinct realistic undercurrents of Aguila's mode of writing. The translator has to be careful in balancing this. He or she must be able to balance the inventive, energetic, compressive, incandescent, and vibrant naturalism of Alighieri with Aguila's spirited, stirring exchanges, and his delightful talent for exquisitely rendering in his short fiction the language that is demotic and idiomatic. We have to be strict about this notion of balancing. Aguila's short fiction succeeds in wonderfully and idiomatically presenting the story of Dickson and Virgil with *Inferno* as an intertext. One should not ignore the demotic and flowing style of the writer. In adhering to this in our translation, we intend our translation project to be an austere kind of literalism. This is our way of respecting the author's mode of writing, the sentence boundaries of the source text; and also our means of acknowledging the syntactical order of the original text, and

that of the intertext. In our translation, we meticulously follow Dante's and Aguila's excessive concern for detail, realism, and naturalness. It is with these assertions that we posit the fact that translating "Carnival of Hate" is a clear act of the imagination. An example that we can provide for this assertion is taken from the portion of the story where Virgil accompanied Dickson to the Hall of Pride (Bulwagan ng Kapalaluan). Here is an attempt to translate, yet not traduce, the text as much as possible:

Maraming nakita si Dickson sa loob ng Bulwagan ng Kapalaluan. Mayroong mga kaluluwa na nakabitin ng patiwarik sa isang maitim at nakapanghihilakbot na puno. Sa kanilang mga leeg ay may makikitang mabibigat na gintong ruweda na siyang dahilan kung bakit sila parang nasasakal. Nakatali sa kanilang pulsuhan ang mga pilak na kadena na mayroong malaki at maitim na mga bola na siyang nakadikit din sa kanila. Ang iba ay mas matindi ang kinakaharap na suliranin. Ang kanilang mga bisig at hita ay nakatali sa dalawang mahabang poste na gumagalaw sa magkasalungat na direksyon, at agad na babalik sa orihinal nilang posisyon pagkatapos ng ilang segundo. Ang mga kaluluwa na tila mukhang mawawarak ay labis ang pagsigaw sa sakit. Ang ibang kaluluwa ay pinapalo sa kanilang mga ulo gamit ang isang malaking martilyo. Kinaawaan sila ni Dickson dahil sila ang pinakatahimik, nangangatal sila, at kinakagat nila ang kanilang mga labi dahil sa labis na sakit.

"Hindi ko na kayang tumingin."

"Bakit hindi?"

"Umalis na nga tayo!"

"Luha ba iyang nakikita ko, Dickson? Hindi ko inasahan na labis kang maaapektuhan nito."

"Hindi ako umiiyak. Hindi ko lang talaga kaya ito!"

"Malapit lang din sa lupang pinanggalingan natin ano?"

"Hindi naman!"

"Sige sabi mo eh…Halika na."

Addressing the Translation Questions and Dilemmas

Informed by Dante's vivid and articulate naturalism in his poem and Aguila's rousing realistic mode of writing, we have been careful and respectful in translating the fastidious attention to details of the two writers. In the cited example above, we have made it a principle to stick to the balance being affirmed in this discourse; we have not merely translated the very substance of the material. We have also considered the language style, culture, and milieu of the audience of "Carnival of Hate." We need to be meticulous about the portions of the story where Virgil introduces to Dickson the various windows of hell and the attendant activities taking place in each one of them. Does it respect the sentence boundaries of Aguila? Does it move in accordance with the kind of immediacy that readers of Aguila can easily recognize? Does it capture the vivid realism and imagination of the source text and intertext? Does the translation reveal its origins and Aguila's mode of writing in general? Thus, we have realized that our translation has been driven by an ardent imaginative fascination for the little details—with emphasis and judicious attention given to the textures and shapes of Alighieri and Aguila poetry and prose, as well as the way they affect the notion of immediacy in the translation—a factor that has significantly aided us in the translation process.

This is one of the major dilemmas that the translator of this short story by Aguila could encounter. The translator needs to be sustained by his textual passions for both writers. He or she must ensure that the patina of Dante's *Inferno* must not absolutely fade from view. He or she must be able

to reveal this in the markedly realistic and demotic exchanges that Aguila has written. We can say that Dante and Aguila are not minimalist writers. In translating the story, the translator must be cognizant of the fact that there lies a surface narrative that could be easily rendered. In "Carnival of Hate," we see this surface narrative in the first part of the story. These include the details of the exposition section: Dickson's gluttonous disposition, food as the raison d'etre equated with his very existence, the struggles of becoming mobile, considering the fact that he is a walking humungous mass of fat having taken physical form, his mundane undertakings in Samuel and Sons as Vice President, and ultimately his death because of his incorrigible obesity. However, the translator must not easily jump to the conclusion that there is only a surface narrative that is easy, fun, and amusing to translate. There also lies a deep narrative that could compel the translator to a "special kind of micro-pedantry as much as the full yet controlled use of the linguistic imagination."[2] This story would surely make the translator wear and assume the writerly hats and minds of Dante and Aguila, with the former conditioning one in the translation of the aesthetic function of the text, and the latter for the expressive, informative, phatic, vocative functions of the translation.[3]

In attempting to render "Carnival of Hate," the translator would realize that these are just a small part of the comprehensive layer that form the text style and general arch of the story. The authorial style in its entirety is another force to contend with. We recognize the fact that the unceremonious and desultory exchanges of Dickson and Virgil also pose a challenge to the translator. The representative, commissive and directive speech acts of the two main characters, as well as the colleagues of Dickson, are also notably challenging to translate. Aguila knows how to undoubtedly enhance the aesthetic function of his prose with this. The jesting and trivial conversations

of Dickson and Virgil, suffused with the sexual, the perverse, and the sinister, are what makes the story an engaging and enjoyable. Despite the story's ambitious nature with its capitalizing on Alighieri's notion of hell, Aguila's story and its language are designed to please the senses and provide fun through their rousing handling of gallows humor and casual speech style.[4]

As the translators, we see these two as essential elements that enhance the vocative function of the fiction of Aguila—which make the story easy to read, imagine, digest, and internalize. These are the hallmarks of the text that the translator must successfully render in his target language. Since the story is animated by the relaxed and informal conversations of the characters, the translator has to be mindful of this in the translation. An example of this could be seen in the conversation taking place in the latter part of the story when Dickson is given the opportunity to witness his own wake and listen to the exchanges between his colleagues. To cite the source text and translated text as an example:

"Hindi ako iyong tipo ng tao na magsasabi ng masama sa patay, pero oo sa tingin ko ikinagalit niya yung katotohanan na nauna ako maging bise presidente sa kaniya…"

"Hinarangan niya ang promosyon mo, hindi ba?"

"Well…"

"Ngayon mas mahirap…"

"Ginawa niya iyon para masiguradong siya lang ang natatanging…"

"Iyan ang pinakabagong balita!"

"Iminungkahi niya iyon sa konseho."

"At alam natin kung bakit niya ginawa iyon."

"Ang dinig ko ay nakatago ang mga iyon sa isang kaha de yero?"

"Bakit naman niya itatago sa kaha de yero? Mayroon bang pinagiinteresan iyon?"

"Iyong iba hindi naman iyon sinusuot pero siya sinusuot niya."

"Ang maalamat na medalya at talang pardible!"

"Ang unang nakakuha ng mga iyon."

"Totoo ba na lagi niya iyong pinapakintab tuwing gabi?"

"Lagi niyang pinagmamasdan ang kaniyang mga plaka at gantimpala tuwing gabi…"

"Talaga?"

"Well, iyon ang chismis…"

"Wala namang katotohanan iyan!"

"Uyyy! Love niya si Sir Dickson!"

"Siyempre hindi no!"

"Ibig sabihin ba natin makakadalo na tayo sa mga seminars"

"Oo sigurado iyan."

"Sa wakas, puwede na tayo mapromote."

"Lahat pansarili lang niya…"

"Pero ang taas na nga ng posisyon niya eh!"

"Kasakiman ang tawag doon, Rina."

"Ateng sure kava?"

"Hintayin natin, sis…"

"Maglalakas-loob kaya siyang pumunta?"

"'Sila' at hindi 'siya'"

"Ay intrigera ang ateng!"

"Manyakis ang lola mo!"

"Ang taray!"

"Ako iyon…"

"Ay panginoon ko…"

In translating the story, it is important to know and internalize the style of "Carnival of Hate." The apparent challenge is to examine first Aguila's sentence patterns and choice of words. A clear and good grasp of the linguistic and designative meanings of the story can be achieved by examining the reader's reception, authorial style, and the story's meaning. The translator must also have the ability to recognize and probe the pragmatic aspect of the text which indicates the relationship between the author and reader, that provides him with the avenue to properly reproduce the authorial style of the original. The story is very engrossing because of the casual communicative style that Aguila utilizes in his story. It is important that the translator knows how to precisely render this, but also how to sustain it. The translator needs to assess and analyze linguistic choices, which are fundamentally connected with the meaning and effect of the text, on its readers.

In the case of "Carnival of Hate," the translator must be able to render the writer's distinct style. In the story, this is manifested in the relaxed and casual exchanges between and amongst the characters. In the aforementioned example, the translator must closely rely on his listening capacity and render an exact rendition of the kind of conversation that transpires during a wake. Aguila's language is commonplace, yet dynamic and stirring. In the conversations that Dickson hears at his own wake, for example, the translator has to obviously retain the colloquial language that we find in the original text. This certainly augments the realism of the text.

We have attempted to preserve the familiar and chatty exchanges among the people in the wake. For example, we have retained the word "well" in the conversation. As translators, we believe that the specific employment of this word in the conversation does not serve any grammatical usage. It is a typical interjection that people use to convey different emotions depending on how it is uttered. It can mean astonishment, impatience, or apprehension. "Well" can be regarded as part of our colloquial communication style in Filipino. For example, we hear this in familiar conversations in Filipino, "Well, iyon kasi ang chismis!", "Well, lahat naman kasi pansarili lang niya!", "Well, alam natin kung bakit niya ginawa iyon!" The translator must have an ear for the demotic and faithfully render it in the translation, as it is what makes the text riveting and amusing to read. The translator must have the patience to include this in the translation process.

Translating Queerly Carnal Conversations

The third and last portion of the story is markedly dominated by colloquial and queerly carnal conversations. We have to select simple words in translating this portion of the story. Our readers encounter words that could easily capture the meaning, tone, and demotic flow of the conversations as conveyed in the source language. Extra care and boldness should be exerted in selecting the words from the target language itself, so as to retain the fidelity and style of the text. Otherwise, it would, in turn, affect comprehension on the part of the readers. An example from the story are the sexual provocations uttered by Virgil:

Hinubad ni Virgil ang kaniyang tunika. Totoo na wala siyang suot na kahit anong pang-ilalim. Hindi pa nakakakita si Dickson ng katawan na kasingganda ng kay Virgil. Mas maganda siyang pagmasdan kapag

nakahubad. Sinubukan ni Dickson na huwag pagmasdan ang katawan ni Virgil dahil siya ay tinitigasan dito. Humarap sa kanya si Virgil at nakita ni Dickson ang pinakamalaking titi sa buong buhay niya. Sobra ang laki ng ari ni Virgil. Kahanga-hanga ang haba nito.

"Gusto mo ba ang nakikita mo, Dickson?"

"Ano ba ang sinasabi mo?" Sinusubukan ni Dickson na iwasan ang tingin ni Virgil.

"Oh, ano ka ba, Dickson, alam ko may nararamdaman ka sa loob mo."

"Wala, wala akong nararamdaman na kahit ano! Puwede na ba tayong pumunta sa huling bulwagan? Inuubos mo lang ang oras ko!"

"Sigurado ka bang wala kang nararamdaman na kahit ano? Siguro gusto mong hawakan ang…"

"Hindi, ayoko! Tumigil ka nga! Pupunta tayo sa huling bulwagan. Hindi ba…'yung para sa kalibugan?"

"Alam mo ba Dickson na kapag tinira kita, makakaramdam ka ng sarap na tatagal ng higit sa isang oras? At posible lang iyon mangyari rito…sa impyerno."

"Isang oras na Ligaya. Nagbibiro ka siguro!"

"Pangako, ito ang pinakamasarap na kantotan na mararanasan mo sa buong buhay mo, Dickson! Hindi mo ito pagsisisihan!"

"Hindi! Hindi! Hindi!"

"Minsan lamang sa buhay ang mga ganitong alok. Hindi na kita tatanungin uli. Hindi mo alam kung ano ang tinatanggihan mo."

Frankly, our familiarity with queer texts employing the gay lingua of goth and camp have conditioned us to translating carnal exchanges like this in the story. As translators, we know that we can handle the explicitness and bluntness of the language of the source text. In this story of Aguila, we can say that black comedy is truly a natural human instinct. Such playful and straightforward dialogues are mainstays in this fiction of Aguila. The translator must be able to subsume himself within a scenario like this one: confronted by the completely naked Virgil, and being enticed by his carnal offers, Dickson imagines the pleasure on offer–an orgasm lasting for one hour. In our translation, we have to really imagine Virgil and Dickson being engulfed by lust and sexual excitement, with the former being the sexual aggressor, and the latter the sexually repressed one, who has mastered the art of controlling his desire. With regard to its black comedic foreground, we have to say that it is really our intention to render vulgar scenes like this in the story, and match the provocative textual and authorial style of the source text. We really want it to become disconcertingly rude and provocative, by using words like "titi" and "kantuoan"—vulgar terms that can be quite shocking for the readers, but which we think is the very delineation of the authorial style of Aguila in this short fiction.

The translator must bear in mind what Hidalgo has said that this story is not for the faint of heart. In our translation, we have enhanced the crass and brazen disposition of Virgil, and the repressed sexual inclinations of Dickson. We have capitalized on the fact that the target language can unveil the bawdy and racy nature of Aguila's mode of writing in this story. This is because the core of translation is concerned with transforming messages and meanings from the source language to the target language. We hope that the reader can feel the amplified visionary and titillating tenor of "Carnival of Hate." In the translation process, we believe that the vocative and aesthetic functions of the text can be successfully, enjoyably, and dynamically carried out using Filipino, provided that the translator knows how to make sense of

the queerly lewd appeal of the story—the result of which can be a translation that has been adapted to the context, and thus, is accurate and natural. Allow us to illustrate this claim in this last section of our discourse as translators:

Walang ibang magawa si Dickson kung hindi ang lumuhod sa harap ng bintanang salamin. Hindi niya mapigilan ang sarili na tumingin sa puwit ni Virgil. Hindi pa siya nakakita ng puwit na maganda at matigas tulad ng kay Virgil.

"Tignan mo ito? Magugustuhan mo ito Dickson! Teka! Bakit mo tinitignan ang puwit ko?"

"Hindi ko tinitignan ang puwit mo!"

"Oh, nakita kita Dickson! Oh, sige na Dickson, aminin mo na, gusto mo itong puwit ko ano?"

"Manahimik ka!"

"Kung gusto mo, kailangan mo lang naman makiusap."

"Wala akong interes sa puwit mo! Ngayon ano ba ang makikita riyan, mga kaluluwang ibinibigti, binubugbog dahil sa kanilang kapalaluan at kahangalan?

"Iniiba mo ang usapan Dicky! Pinagmamasdan mo ang puwit ko. Gusto mo makita?"

"Tumigil ka!"

"Siguro hindi ka pa nakakita ng puwit na kasingganda ng sa akin, no?"

This illustrates how the respective languages employed are appropriate to each other, resulting in the conveyance of the same effect when

taking into consideration the readers of the original and translated texts. Taking note of this in the translation process can result in a rendering that is acceptable and comprehensible. In intellectualizing the quoted Filipino translation, we know for a fact that we are, not only transferring the meaning of the original text, but also accessing and tapping into the distinct domains of knowledge in the translation. These include, first and foremost, the target language that must accompany the daring and demotic nature of Aguila's short story (source text), hence the bawdiness in the story has been daringly rendered in Filipino, in a manner that is markedly colloquial, similar to the original text.

Conclusion

In translating "Carnival of Hate," the knowledge or meaning being conveyed by the story must be taken into consideration because we see this as part and parcel of the scholarly disposition of the translator. Practically speaking, we are the critics who must know how to discourse on the language of the text and intelligently prospect the pragmatic, semantic, syntactical, and discourse concentrations of the text. The first refers to the intention or general tenor and patina of the text. The second refers to the choice of words, in the case of the story, unflinching, unanticipated, and dark. The translator must wield control over the charging madness in attempting to provide the equivalence for such words. The third refers to the sentence patterns of the original—short and fluid, reflective of the colloquial exchanges occupying a remarkable portion of the story. The last is the synergy of all these: intertext, source text, and target text, and their accompanying intricacies.

In translating Aguila's "Carnival of Hate," we have also revisited our knowledge of language functions. In translating "Carnival of Hate," we have been able to engage the expressive, phatic, vocative, and informative functions of language because Aguila knows how to employ such functions of language.

This is the reason the translator also has to immerse himself in the text. It is from this vantage that one can see the losses in translating a narrative poem to a story. In the case of Aguila's short fiction, we only see these features from *Inferno* being an example of visionary literature: the rendering of hell as a place of torment, a site where one can suffer the equivalence of the sin committed, and the psychological narrative of the characters entering hell as a place of eternal damnation.

Be that as it may, these are also the features of Aguila's work that make his short story exciting and engrossing to read. In translating his work, it is important that we become familiar with the general patina that Aguila is conjuring in his text (expressive), how his language moves in accordance with the external-realistic situations (informative), how he delivers a story in a demonstrative, outgoing and demotic way (phatic), and his capacity to make his readers act, think, and react in the way intended by the text and by the writer's expressive function.

We have also positioned ourselves as scholar-translators, who imaginatively cast ourselves back to Dante's text in order to perform the real function of the translator. This is the function that is not limited to transferring meanings, but with rendering language style and the ethos animating the text.

Endnotes

1 We cite here some lines from Canto 4 of *Inferno* translated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Longfellow's complete translation is one of the prominent and widely available translations of Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*. It is also one of the most reprinted translations in the United Kingdom and United States.

2 This is from Julian Barnes's criticism of Lydia Davis' translation of Gustave Flaubert's Madame Bovary. We believe that what Barnes said in her disquisition is also applicable to our experience of translating the short fiction of Aguila. Translating Aguila's short fiction also entails micro-pedantry. The aforementioned intertext from Dante Alighieri's Divine Comedy is the first factor to contend with in the translation process. In attempting to render "Carnival of Hate," the translator will realize that these are just a small part of the comprehensive layer that form the text style and general arch of the story. Translating the story involves micro-pedantry in a way that one must be able to effectively render the aesthetic function of the text complemented by the expressive, informative, phatic, vocative functions of the original text—which also needs to be clearly carried out in the Filipino translation.

3 In coming up with discourses like these in the translation process, we are highly indebted to the study of Yongfang Hu titled *The Sociosemiotic Approach and Translation of Fiction*. In her paper, she discussed the applicability of the sociosemiotic approach to translation of fiction and how it can be examined on a two-way perspective: the conjoined concentration of theory and practice (Hu, 2000).

4 We mention this because the translator must also be familiar with gallows humor in translating Aguila's "Carnival of Hate." It can be appalling to read "Carnival of Hate" because of the expressive employment of black humor. The term juxtaposes morbid or ghastly elements with comical ones that underscore the senselessness or futility of life. Black humor often uses farce and low comedy to make clear that individuals are helpless victims of fate and character. In "Carnival of Hate," the reader-translator must be ready to also handle the lucid queer sexual instances transpiring between Dickson and Virgil, the morbid imaging of the different punishments

that the souls are experiencing in hell, and other hellish occurrences in the lowest tier of the Christian afterlife.

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