

Nota de la traductora: *The Confidant*

En su ensayo “The Task of the Translator,” Walter Benjamin insiste, “The task of the translator consists in finding that intended effect [*Intention*] upon the language into which he is translating which produces in it the echo of the original... [the translation] intends language as a whole, taking an individual work in an alien language as a point of departure”²⁶ (Benjamin 79-80). También sugiere que este eco ideal es “pure language,”²⁷ pero es inalcanzable en realidad (Benjamin 78). No obstante, es un objetivo que he intentado alcanzar en la traducción de *El confidente* y *¿Quo vadis, burguesía?* La meta de publicar las traducciones en la edición crítica de la Profesora Kietrys influyó la manera en que intenté alcanzar el lenguaje puro. La edición crítica tiene la intención a ser usada en clases universitarias de estudios hispánicos. Por eso, aspiro a producir dos obras que tengan sentido para lectores de mi edad y que compartan una experiencia igual a la del lector original de España. Espero que el lector actual sea transportado a 1932. Debido a esta intención, soy fiel a los textos originales lo más posible.

Sin embargo, Benjamin y yo tenemos definiciones contrarias de la fidelidad. Según Benjamin, “Fidelity in the translation of individual words can almost never fully reproduce the meaning they have in the original”²⁸ (Benjamin 80). Su concepto de fidelidad es rígido y mecánico. Para mí, la fidelidad es más complejo y flexible. Cuando digo que quiero que mis traducciones sean fieles, no implico que reflejan el original palabra por palabra. No traduzco como *Google Translate*. Eso sería, como afirma Benjamin, “to perform a transmitting function,”

²⁶ Las traducciones de Benjamin, Irigaray y Beauvoir son más. Mientras sigo revisando la tesis antes de entregar la versión final, voy a seguir buscando las traducciones publicadas en español.

“El papel del traductor consiste en encontrar ese efecto deseado [*Intención*] sobre la lengua en que él está traduciendo que produce en la lengua el eco del original... [la traducción] pretende lenguaje en su totalidad, usando una obra individual en una lengua extranjera como el punto de partido.”

²⁷ “Lenguaje puro”

²⁸ “La fidelidad en la traducción de palabras individuales casi nunca puede reproducir completamente el significado que tienen en el original.”

y esas traducciones “cannot transmit anything but information – hence, something inessential”²⁹ (75). Edith Grossman, uno de los traductores más importantes de la literatura latinoamericana, está de acuerdo con esta idea porque insiste, “attempting to duplicate the text in another language, following a pattern of word-for-word transcription” es sucumbir al “literalist fallacy”³⁰ (10). El resultado es “a mindless, literalist translation...[which] is not acceptable, readable, or faithful, as the letters of agreement demand, though it certainly may have its own perverse originality”³¹ (Grossman 10-11). Sin embargo, Grossman no indica que esta duplicación es ser fiel como diría Benjamin. La definición de fidelidad de Benjamin, es híper fidelidad y entonces infidelidad en mi opinión.

Mi definición de fidelidad tiene que ver más con la de Grossman, y sigo sus métodos para no ser una traductora mecánica:

Our [translators’] purpose is to re-create as far as possible, within the alien system of a second language, all the characteristics, vagaries, quirks, and stylistic peculiarities of the work we are translating. And we do this by analogy—that is, by finding comparable, not identical, characteristics, vagaries, quirks and stylistic peculiarities in the second language.³² (10)

Usando estas técnicas, mis traducciones intentan capturar la esencia y las sutilezas de los textos originales. También, tratan de crear lenguaje puro.

Un problema de fidelidad surgió con la decisión de incluir notas a pie de página a través de las dos traducciones. Las notas hacen que la traducción no tenga la misma apariencia que el

²⁹ “realizar una función de transmitir,” “no pueden transmitir nada más que información – por esto, algo no esencial”

³⁰ “tratando de duplicar el texto en otra idioma, siguiendo un patrón de transcripción palabra-por-palabra,” “falacia del sentido literal”

³¹ “una traducción mecánico, literal... [que] no es aceptable, ameno, ni fiel, como exigen las cartas de acuerdo, aunque por supuesto puede tener su propia originalidad perversa.”

³² “Nuestro propósito [lo del traductor] es de recrear hasta donde sea posible, dentro el sistema extranjero de la segunda lengua, todas las características, caprichos, rarezas y peculiaridades estilísticas en la segunda lengua.”

original. Sin embargo, hacen que el lector inglés pueda entender mejor el mensaje y la esencia del original. La comprensión me parece más importante que cambios pequeños a la estética. Por eso, incluí notas a pie de página en inglés para el estudiante que quizás no lee español. Expliqué conceptos que pensé que el lector no conocería. Algunas explican cambios del original que hice; principalmente, cambié comas a punto y comas o borré la coma. Estas notas solamente dicen O.V.;, para *Original Version*, y la palabra y puntuación siguen después. S.E. se refiere a *Segunda Edición*, la versión de la serie *La novela proletaria* publicada por Santonja. Otras notas explican referencias desconocidas. Por ejemplo, Hildegart, se refiere a Celestina, Marcelo Martínez Alcubilla y *Fuenteovejuna*. Guzmán se refiere a pesetas. Todas las notas son pertinentes para la experiencia positiva del lector.

Otra decisión general de las traducciones de Guzmán e Hildegart fue si iba a usar contracciones o no. Decidí usarlas solamente en diálogo. Sin las contracciones, el diálogo pareció pedante y demasiado formal, pero dentro del cuerpo del texto las contracciones parecían demasiado coloquiales. Esta decisión refleja mi concepto de fidelidad porque cambié la gramática—existen contracciones donde no existen en los originales—para que crea un efecto que parece más al efecto del original. Para Benjamin, sería “fidelidad” si la traductora no incorporó contracciones, pero para ejemplifica la definición.

A pesar de las contracciones, la gramática y el formato de la traducción reflejan el original. Por ejemplo, Guzmán proclama, “¡Y ahora, en cambio!...” (25). No posiciona el signo de exclamación después de la elipsis. La elipsis tampoco tiene el espaciado típico. He mantenido estas peculiaridades en la traducción porque son parte de la esencia de Guzmán y su escritura.

También he mantenido la dicción extraña. Aunque el estilo de Guzmán es más directo que la de Hildegart, hay unos instantes cuando Guzmán se contradice. En la página 9 escribe de

Juan con la pistola en la mano, “Apuntó sereno, con rabia...” Describe un estado paradójico, pero mi traducción refleja la contradicción para ser fiel. Traduje, *He aimed calmly, with rage...* (Capítulo 1B). Es posible que Benjamin critica esta traducción como demasiado literal, pero la contradicción de la frase me parecía una decisión artística muy intencional de Guzmán. Por eso no quería cambiarla o modernizarla.

La palabra *portales* también exigía adaptación por mi parte. Guzmán describe, “Los policías, acobardados, disparaban también, asomando las manos fuera de los portales que les servían de escondite” (12). Quería usar la palabra *arcade* para la traducción de *portales*. El *Oxford English Dictionary* define *arcade* como, “A vaulted place, open at one or both sides; an arched opening or recess in a wall”³³ (*arcade*, n.). La palabra es perfecta porque crea la imagen de la arquitectura clásica que rodea las plazas en España. Al contrario, *arcade* tiene otras implicaciones para un lector joven e inglés como el salón de juegos. Para no confundir innecesariamente al lector, decidí usar la palabra *arches*. Además, “sticking their hands out of from behind the arches” fluye mejor que esa frase con la palabra *arcade* (Capítulo 1B). Entonces, usé mi licencia creativa para mantener la fidelidad de la traducción. La palabra *arches* no es precisa, pero la imagen que crea tiene más que ver con portales que *arcade*. Esta decisión ejemplifica una teoría de Grossman:

Translation asserts the possibility of a coherent, unified experience of literature in the world’s multiplicity of languages. At the same time, translation celebrates the differences among languages and the many varieties of human experience and perception they can express.³⁴ (17)

³³ “Un lugar abovedado, abierto por uno o dos lados; una abertura o hueco arqueado en una pared”

³⁴ “La traducción afirma la posibilidad de una experiencia coherente, unificada de la literatura en la multiplicidad de lenguas del mundo. Al mismo tiempo, la traducción celebra las diferencias entre idiomas y las múltiples experiencias humanas variadas y la percepción que pueden expresar.”

Creo que he creado una experiencia coherente por reconocer la diferencias entre el español y el inglés con las connotaciones de *portales*, *arcade* y *arches*.

El uso de *militarote* también causó dificultades. La frase entera dice, “Primero las horas de miseria allá en la emigración, lejos de la patria querida, aplastada por el pie de hierro de un militarote borracho” (Guzmán 17). Aunque el Real Academia Española no tiene una entrada para *militarote*—solamente para *militante*, *militar* y *militarizar*—spanishdict.com y wordreference.com dicen que *militarote* significa *rough soldier*. Porque no existe en inglés una sola palabra que describe un soldado bruto, tuve que traducirla en dos. También tuve que cambiar la sintaxis porque añadí más palabras. Elegí decir *drunk, boorish soldier*.

La sintaxis me planteó otro problema cuando el general Murcia proclama sobre los cuatro anarquistas, “Hay que terminar con esos bandidos, que viven del atraco, que a veces se injertan en las organizaciones obreras para corromperlas y que utilizan el carnet como ganzúa” (Guzmán 24). No pude traducir esta frase perfectamente debido a las dos cláusulas de “que...” Quería mantener el posicionamiento de estas frases una tras otra, pero sonó extraño decir, “Those criminals have got to be stopped, who live off thievery, who sometimes throw themselves...” Quería que las cláusulas subordinadas estuvieran directamente después de “Those criminals,” pero para tenerlas uno tras otra tendría que haber puesto “have got to be stopped” al final de una frase muy larga. Eso no me gustó tampoco. Entonces, dividí las frases en dos partes: “Those criminals have got to be stopped. They live off thievery; sometimes they throw themselves into the unions just to corrupt them and they use their ID as a picklock” (Capítulo 1B). Aunque la traducción perdió la estructura de la frase original, fluye de la misma manera. Las cláusulas siguen en el mismo orden.

Estos ejemplos demuestran que a pesar de algunas excepciones, esta traducción permanece bastante fiel al original. Sin embargo, los pocos cambios también indican como he influido el producto final como la traductora. Espero que el resultado sea más el eco del original que dos novelas escritas en mi propia voz. Sin embargo, sí concibo de yo misma como escritora. Grossman describe elocuentemente como una persona es traductora y escritora. Ella sostiene:

The most fundamental description of what translators do is that we write—or perhaps rewrite—in language B a work of literature originally composed in language A, hoping that readers of the second language—I mean, of course, readers of the translation—will perceive the text emotionally and artistically, in a manner that parallels and corresponds to the esthetic experience of its first readers.³⁵ (Grossman 7)

Intento ser este tipo de escritor, y todas las decisiones que he tomado durante el proceso de traducir están basadas en esta meta.

³⁵ La descripción más fundamental de lo que traductores hacen es que escribimos—o quizás reescribir—en lengua B una obra de literatura escrita originalmente en lengua A, esperando que los lectores de la segunda lengua—quiero decir, por supuesto, los lectores de la traducción—percibirán el texto emocionalmente y artísticamente, en una manera que paralela y corresponde a la experiencia estética de los primeros lectores.”

The Confidant

Literary Portrait of Guzmán

Young in body and spirit, within Eduardo de Guzmán is one of the most wholesome, pure, and determined fighters of the new Spain.

For this reason, in spite of his youthfulness, Guzmán is one of the most popular revolutionary writers, sincerely revolutionary, among the proletariat. As a reward for his books, he wears the badges of innumerable trials on his chest, all bestowed upon him in the fight for liberty and for justice. But he continues on his path, head held high, a smile on his face, and with a secular tone—Guzmán is a stubborn, secular man—: “Blessed³⁶ are those who suffer persecutions for Justice.”

This boy, who put all the greatness and all the strength of his athletic determination into the struggle for a better social regime, is one of those people who never trembles or hesitates.

His prose, polished, flexible, sharp, has qualities of the Toledan blade. See a thought flow through it, moreover, reddened by the embers of the ideals, and always remind yourself that that piercing point has a manly heart at the other end.

For this reason, Eduardo de Guzmán, so young, so new to the literary fight, stands out in the leftist revolutionary circle for his robust personality. He is not an Italian fencer—all flourishes and grimaces—but³⁷ rather the brave knight who, with a smile on his lips, silently attacks the mob of enemies, without counting their numbers or defending his body against the blows of those things they call laws, and with which the Old World protects itself against the zeal of the law-abiding New World.

³⁶ Original Version (O.V.): “irreducible—: — Bienaventurados”

³⁷ O.V.: “jeribeques—, sino”

In *The Confidant*—more reality than novel—the³⁸ now illustrious prose writer fully expresses his hatred against the survival of the past, one of whom, and not among the least detestable, is the eternal Judas-type, the traitor who always slips in among the fighters to hand them over to their enemies and put a stop to the advances of the revolutionary imagination underway.

Read this prose, natural, reddened by anger and contempt,³⁹ and in every facet of the poignant story you will all see the thinker's purity, the fighter's nobility, who hates the traitors concealed in the shadow more than the merciless enemies. Read *The Confidant*—one drama of the thousands on human Redemption—and⁴⁰ surely all of you, even those of you who do not know this young man with the tremendous soul, will say with joyous enthusiasm, “Here we have one of our own!”

The Confidant

I

Nervous, a bit pale, Juan rose. With a slow step he drew closer to the bar. He checked the time. The suspicion that had been pounding in his brain for a while sprung from his mouth:⁴¹

“It’s already 4:30 and the man hasn’t come! Could he have betrayed us?”

From the corner table, the three comrades stared at him in silence. The terrible suspicion had crossed their minds as well. But, deep down, they tried to convince themselves that their fears were groundless. Antonio, just to say something, declared:

“He’ll come. Even if he’s really late. Anything could have happened to him.”

Juan, propped against the counter, shook his head doubtfully.

³⁸ O.V.: “novella—, el”

³⁹ O.V.: “desprecio,”

⁴⁰ O.V.: “humano—, y”

⁴¹ I have used colons to mark dialogue throughout the translation to match the original text.

The bar was deserted. The local tabernacle, with modernist pretenses, frequented by workers, only looked busy in the early morning and during the night. Even the bartender, who knew the guests, had left quietly to run an errand.

The four men had the builds of workers, wide foreheads of thinkers, exited eyes of idealists, ready for all the brave deeds and all the sacrifices.⁴² Jaws clamped shut that spoke of an uncommon energy. And callused hands of those who earn their daily bread through physical labor.

A few minutes passed. Juan, supporting himself on the counter, seemed lost in thought. His comrades smoked in silence, deeply focused.

Suddenly, the glass door crashed open. Four threatening guns, pointing in all directions. And behind them, bloodshot eyes, pale faces marked by both the terror and the desire to end it soon.

Juan turned around quickly. At the front of the group that entered was a tall, athletic man. At lightening speed, the memory of a gloomy dungeon, of handcuffs grinding mercilessly into his wrists, flashed through the anarchist's mind. And of that same man hitting him cowardly, despicably, while the most offensive words sprung from his lips.

But the guns of the police who came in were faster than his imagination. Juan heard—he had not even finished turning toward the door—the bangs of various gunshots. And he knew he was wounded. In the stomach; in the chest.

He rolled on the floor. But his comrades were already standing, guns in hand, going after the attackers. Various shots boomed. The police, forgetting the fallen man, answered each other. Juan, on the floor, found the strength to take out his gun. He aimed calmly, with rage; he shot accurately, against the despised mad, against the black shadow he always thrust in his path.

⁴² O.V.: “trabajadores;”, “pensadores;”

The cop—that González, a sad memory for the workers—was shot full in the chest. His legs wobbled at first; then he fell heavily, without emitting a cry.

Upon seeing him fall, his comrades beat a retreat. Without stopping shooting, they pulled back to the street; then they broke into a run. A trail of blood left in the escape proved that the anarchist's bullets had reached their targets.

The scene—speedy—hardly lasted a minute. Two of the comrades quickly drew close to Juan. The other, from the doorway, shot back at the police and guards fired from outside. They got up;⁴³ they asked about his condition. With effort the wounded spoke:

“López has betrayed us. It's just what I feared!”

Antonio answered:

“We'll settle the score with him later. Now we have to figure out how to save ourselves.”

He moved closer to the door. Through the broken windows across the street, they saw, half-hidden in the front hallway, the police officers and guards, guns in hand. The escape looked tough; but he was not the type of man to get scared easily. He returned to the wounded man's side:

“Between Pedro and me, we can lift you. Felipe will cover us as we retreat. We'll leave firing, and⁴⁴ clear the way.”

Juan, with a smile on his face, interrupted:

“No; they'd kill us all. And we need to survive in order to avenge anyone who might be killed. I'm already dealing with enough. I'd die anyway. You guys leave without me; I'd be a burden. You can clear the way by shooting; break into a run; maybe there's a car over there you can steal. I'll carry on here, firing as long as my strength lasts...”

⁴³ O.V.: “Levantaron,”

⁴⁴ O.V.: “disparando y”

Antonio tried to protest. Quickly, energetically, Juan ordered:

“Get out of here and leave me!”

Pedro wanted to object to something; steadfast, the wounded added:

“Run now!” If you don’t, they will kill us all!”

He was right. They had to prepare quickly. Together, Pedro and Antonio overturned the bar and piled the tables one on top of the other, building a barricade in front of their wounded comrade. They left two guns and various magazines. Then, they examined their guns. They were ready to open fire. They said goodbye to Juan. Quickly. A firm handshake, with tears in their eyes, speechless. On his own, Antonio said:

“We will avenge you. As long as one of us gets out of here alive, rest assured that López will soon be dead.

Then they drew closer to the door. The last look to their comrade. The brief last words:

“Goodbye forever.”

The beloved cheer sprung from Juan’s lips, perhaps for the last time:

“Long live anarchy!”

Ready now, Antonio shouted:

“Now!”

The three flung themselves onto the street. Their guns drew a ring of fire. The police, scared, fired too, sticking their hands out from behind the arches that served as their hideout. But without daring to face the ones who fled.

One of them, more audacious, stuck his head out. Pedro knocked him off with a sure shot.

The fugitives ran down the street. Every once in a while, without stopping, they turned around to shoot. There were a few moments of anxious flight. Felipe stopped suddenly; he was hurt. He felt his legs weaken, his vision blur. Antonio held him up.

“Come on!” he yelled at him.

With all of his might, Felipe recovered. He stood up straight. He fired his gun at the police who chased after them, and carried on with the escape:

“It’s nothing,” he said to Antonio. “Run.”

They kept running. On turning a corner; a stopped car. A young boy behind the wheel. He had heard the gunshots and, alarmed, looked in all directions. He didn’t have time to think. Three guns aimed at his head, and a commanding voice ordered:

“Step on it or I’ll kill you!”

He obeyed. He pressed the gas down all the way. The car jerked and shot off at full speed toward the center of the city. The pursuers fired the last shots. Antonio, from the backseat, shot too.

Soon the police were left behind. The car went through the city at full speed. No one suspected anything. Pedro examined Felipe. He had a bullet in his right leg. He covered the wound with handkerchiefs, containing the hemorrhage.

They arrived at the outskirts of the city. In the open country, Antonio ordered:

“Stop!”

They got out. The open highway unfolded before the car. A few meters behind them began one of the city’s slums. They ordered the car owner:

“Hurry, step on it. And don’t even think about coming back here in less than an hour. If you do, we might still be here and you could get hurt.

The car took off at the demanded speed. The three anarchists, the hand in the sports coat pocket, where the gun was ready to fire, advanced into the neighborhood. They knew the land perfectly.

Crossing through the poor neighborhood's intricate alleys, they walked for a while. Later, they knocked on a friend's door. They tended to Felipe. An hour later, separated, they headed toward a safe refuge.

The first newspapers came out at eight o'clock. They gave a detailed account of what happened. One of them had a huge headline on the front page, which read:

"Several armed assailants, gathered at a bar to prepare for an attack, shot at the police upon being caught and they killed two officers and wounded various others. One perpetrator dead. Three continue to flee."

They read the official story. It called them professional thieves. It accused them of committing innumerable attacks; it called them by the worst names. And it asked the government to take firm measures in order to put an end to these crooks, the disgrace of the great city.

From the official story, the three anarchists were finding out what happened after their departure. Juan had resisted heroically. He combatted the police and guards' attacks for two hours. To bring him under control, a veritable army directed by the senior police chiefs had assembled in front of the bar. They even carried a machine gun! But they did not have to use it. After two hours of resisting, when he had already taken down various people who, wounded or dead, tried to enter, and spread terror among the rest, Juan, bleeding, could not continue shooting. At that time, the police entered. They found him dead, with his gun in his hand. There was not a trace of hatred in his eyes. And about his lips, half-open in agony, seemed to spread that kind smile that lit up his face when the impassioned crowds applauded him, after finishing

one of his speeches against the plutocracy, against the bourgeoisie, against all of the politicians who exploit the proletariat...

II

That night their friend, a doctor, operated on Felipe. Fortunately, the wound was not very serious. The bullet had pierced his right leg, lodging itself in the bone. It had not affected any tendons. The tibia was intact. He extracted the bullet and washed the wound. Then he bandaged it.

“It’s nothing serious,” he said. “A few days of rest and you’ll be as good as new.”

The wounded, during the night, had a slight fever. He could hardly sleep. His comrades didn’t sleep much either. The memory of their dead comrade flashed through their minds incessantly. And also—like a loathsome figure who instinctively clenched his fists—that tragic López who had sold them for a handful of *pesetas*⁴⁵.

More than anything that happened, more than the death of his comrade, Antonio felt the failure of their coup. He tried to eliminate an undesirable, a cruel politician who had filled the city streets with mourning, covering them with the workers’ blood.

He remembered recent incidents. First, the hours of misery in exile, far away from their beloved homeland, squashed by the iron foot of a drunk, boorish soldier. The sad years of starvation and pain, hiding from the foreign police who, spurred on by the national police, pursued the revolutionaries as if they were vermin. The agonizing phase of persecutions and torture, where each piece of news from their distant homeland was a new pain because it brought the knowledge of the assassination of some fine comrade, of the incarceration of others in gloomy prisons.

⁴⁵ The Spanish currency before the euro.

Then he remembered the fall of the first dictator, the secret retreat to his homeland in order to fight for the revolution. The fiery speeches by the politicians that promised the people that freedom would help, that many a thief and assassin would be mercilessly punished, and that the longed-for freedom would be achieved.

The pleasant period of hard fights against a dynasty that struggled in its death throes,⁴⁶ bloody battles where quite a few workers lost their lives. But days enlivened by the expectation of an imminent victory, of a forthcoming triumph over that State that tottered because of the organized workers' virile impetus.

And the victory day! That spring afternoon when the revolution, triumphant on every account, forced the tyrants to relinquish their power. Successful moments in which the revolutionaries, who fought along side the workers promising to free them from their chains, rose to power. When the nation—drunk off happiness and hope—paraded its merriment from one end of the country to the other in the midst of cheers and applause.

And later, day after day, the slow and continuous shattering of hope; the sadness, first, from seeing how those who had distinguished themselves most in the persecution of the workers crossed the borders unharmed; the pain, later on, of attending the regime's march, betraying, one after another, all of the revolutionary promises; how the politicians at the height of power forgot their sermons in order to take on the same brutal tone as their predecessors; the slow but sure transformation into irreconcilable enemies of those who at one time had called themselves comrades; and the despair, later, of seeing how after winning the revolution, the workers were killed with the same impunity as months before.

And immediately after the fall of the first workers, things continued to spiral downward. The governors more rightwing every day; the politicians worse enemies with the revolutionary

⁴⁶ O.V.: "agonía,"

proletariat. And among those who had fought together, among those who had fully or partially put their hope in that movement, which overthrew the monarchy corrupted by every vice, an incomprehensible and bloody abyss began to open. Every day the workers felt further distanced from the ones they had called comrades long ago. And they soon found themselves, face to face with the same situation that the monarchic rulers were faced with before the collapse of the fallen regime.

Even worse; because when a worker fell victim to government terrorism before, all of the politicians now in a position of power, raised their voices energetically in protest. And although this did not help much, it did prevent some assassinations, which made the cops more cautious, and on more than one occasion they did not dare to pull the fatal trigger out of fear that pandemonium might spring from their actions.

Now, on the other hand, defenders of one regime or another unite to persecute the proletariat. Worthy representatives of the upper class shook hands despite their ideological differences in order to protect the material interests against the interests of the working class. And the fight had begun again. More terrible, more oppressive, more severe. Without compassion, without mercy. And more terrible because now they had no hope except for a transforming revolution that completely eradicated the State's corruption, that made class differences sink into nothingness. And this revolution—with the enemy prepared, holding the reigns of power in their hands—was difficult and trying.

Above everything in the great industrial city, in the population spread out between the sea and the mountain where revolutionary unrest easily takes hold, where men are moved and excited by the most noble, ideal brothers' impetus, the repression had reached a tragic state. The

old terrorist proceedings—the shame of civilized people—had once again become fully effective.⁴⁷ The workers were persecuted cruelly, with a longing to exterminate them.

The local plutocracy—the most incomprehensible and brutal of the nation—spurred the police on continuously. The newspapers—submissive tools for those who paid them—urged the authorities toward a policy that in one fell swoop would finish off the workers’ unions that upset the smooth digestion of the great manufacturers.

Additionally, the bourgeoisie had found the man they needed. They were searching for him for several months. And they finally found him. Sinister man with a twisted soul, always ready to find legal motives for every violent action against the workers; ruined in body and soul, a faithful servant to the plutocracy that paid him well for his services and flattered him constantly.

Under the authority of this man, of this blind instrument controlled by the plutocracy, the repression became so painful that on more than one occasion the people, tormented, shuddered in anguish when faced with one of the many stories about the atrocities.

By remembering this, by refreshing his memory on the names of fallen comrades, assassinated workers, Antonio felt a hatred throb in his heart that made his blood boil, that almost suffocated him. The same hatred that burned in their young breasts when in their minds sprouted the idea of the attack, of the gunshots that could eliminate a disturbing life whose dream was to put a stop to the organized workers.

And by this point, Antonio’s memories took on a bitter tinge. Such were the first interviews, the meetings of the five conspirators, the ones that that traitor López attended. The memory of the name, of the traitor’s repulsive figure, of the confidant, made Antonio’s hands clench with the desire to seize him between his hands and strangle him.

⁴⁷ O.V.: “terroristas, vergüenza de un pueblo civilizado,”

López had proven resolute. He was the one who spoke with the most enthusiasm about the attack, who seemed the most indignant toward that ruler's savage repression. More indignant, even, than himself; than Juan himself, full of the urge to retaliate. Now, when everything had already happened, he did notice certain details that did not mean anything to him in the slightest when they occurred; certain inconsistencies, some fears, the shock—some nights upon returning home—that the police were following their every step, like a warning of what they were plotting. And, above all, the abundance of money he had at his disposal.

Now he saw clearly; now he began to realize everything. But it was too late. The betrayal had been committed. The attack ruined. And Juan—poor Juan, full of revolutionary enthusiasm—dead in a cold room in the morgue.

Finally Antonio was able to fall asleep. It started to get light just as he got to sleep.

III

Antonio woke up; it was already late morning. A golden winter sun came in through the window, reaching the center of the room. He got dressed quickly.

Pedro was in the next room. Seated at a table, he read the morning newspapers. Antonio approached him. Without moving, his comrade handed him a paper, the revolutionary organ in recent days. Antonio read it. It talked at length about what happened the previous afternoon. It commented, with bitterness, with hatred, on the attitude of the anarchists, or attackers as they called them. And it demanded, required, that the police search diligently for the ones who escaped in order to hand them over to the executioner.

But this was not the interesting part. The evening papers said the same thing. The other morning papers demanded the same. The interesting part for Pedro, for Antonio, for all of them, was the comment by General Murcia, the old officer, who was once a vivacious symbol of his

people's revolutionary unrest, of his race's desire for freedom. He was an interesting man. One day, eager to serve his country, he abandoned the military to devote himself to the people; the next he revolted against the tyrants who were smothering his homeland. He had to flee; he lived abroad, preparing the revolutionary movement, in contact with prominent individuals. A noble, glorious figure, the town idol in moments of exaltation, by the time he succeeded in overthrowing the odious monarchic dictatorship forever. But now, however, the general, defending the position he reached, said referring to Juan, to the four anarchists:

“Those criminals have got to be stopped. They live off thievery; sometimes they throw themselves into the unions just to corrupt them and they use their ID as a picklock.”

Then he announced that he would attend and preside over the demonstration that would arise at the burial of the murdered police officers.

Antonio, after reading that, felt rage, disgust, pain. He had lived next to the old general in exile; he had suffered persecution and anguish along side him. Even starvation.

Distressing days when the dictatorship seemed invincible and they had nothing to eat in exile; when every door was slammed in the emigrants' faces. And when they had nothing to eat off but the *pesetas* sent by friends from their faraway homeland.

How the memories of that period came to life in Antonio's memory! And the days when the old general did not die of starvation thanks to the money that Juan sent him from home. And now he dared to call him a criminal! Maybe he was right; maybe Juan had committed some crimes. But it was not to personally profit off the money. Yes, he mugged a public official, an insignificant person in the fallen dictatorship, stealing some money from him—which had been stolen from the people before—and sending it to the emigrants so they could eat. The exiled general had subsisted off that money for some time. And now in return!...

But the anger did not last long. There were lots of things to do. He could not stand idly by. He went in to see Felipe. He was better. The doctor had come first thing in the morning to change the dressing. He had a low fever during the night. But the wound looked very good.

He asked a fine comrade about López. He had not fled. He somewhat logically explained his late arrival to the bar. He had gotten in a fight; the cops detained him for several hours. As a test of his innocence—apart from many oaths and tears—he⁴⁸ showed them his black eye. The comrades had believed him; but, because of a trace of distrust, they had not told him where Pedro, Antonio, and Felipe were hiding.

Antonio thought for a few moments. He had to seek revenge. Lure him into the woods and kill him in cold blood, cruelly, just what that traitor deserves. His hatred for the rulers had transformed into a terrible desire to destroy that vile person who had betrayed them.

The rulers, plutocrats, did their class duty of pursuing them, assassinating them in the street. But that López, a victim of capitalist exploitation like they were, brother of struggles and toil who was capable of selling himself for a handful of *pesetas*,⁴⁹ that traitor who handed his brothers over in exchange for a slice of bread, did not deserve compassion. He had to be stomped on like a filthy toad, whose slime poisoned whoever came in contact with him.

But it had to be soon. The police were tracing their steps. They were itching to take revenge, to find the fugitives, to hand them over to the executioner, as all the plutocratic press demanded. It was necessary to flee, distance themselves from the turbulent city, put themselves out of reach of the reactionary fangs.

⁴⁸ O.V.: “lágrimas—, presentaba”

⁴⁹ O.V.: “pesetas,”

Antonio meditated for many hours. He made an agreement with Pedro. They finalized the details. Later, at dusk, they went out into the street. The owner of the house, a good friend, had already told them where they could find López.

IV

Port district, dirty and smelly, where the crooks easily find shelter. Twisted, wet alleys, through which the country folk—who had read too many bad thrillers—ventured with fear in their eyes, expecting the fatal stab around every corner.

On the border of the slum, alongside the main thoroughfare, whose streetlamps seem to draw the dividing line between the industrial city that fights and toils and the damned *ghetto* full of crooks and prostitutes:⁵⁰ a bar. Hidden, half empty.

That is where Antonio went to search for López. He knew that the traitor, pretending to be pursued, avoided the frequented places. And that he would find him there. For one moment, before going, he feared a trap. But no. López had to get rid of his fears; he very well knew that if he publically confirmed that he was the confidant, although they would kill Antonio, although they would arrest Pedro, he would die in the hands of some comrade. The anarchists pardoned everything, except betrayal, except the son of a bitch who, for a few *pesetas*, was capable of selling his brothers in arms who were fighting for the rights of their class.

Antonio entered the bar. In a corner, alone and pensive, López. Antonio felt a pang of rage. The desire to kill flashed in his eyes. With fury, he tightened his grip on the gun, already cocked in his pocket. But he restrained himself. Killing him there, would be turning himself in to the police. And, besides, he had to convince himself of the betrayal.

⁵⁰ O.V.: “prostitutas, un bar.”

He approached. On seeing him, López stood up, pale and nervous. Antonio greeted him in a friendly way, as if he suspected nothing. They began to talk. Cleverly, he began asking questions and reaching conclusions. Soon he did not have the slightest doubt. And any that could have remained disappeared when López made a brusque movement, and he could see, although it was covered by his jacket, a magnificent tie-pin.

Pedro arrived. They spoke for a long while. Of what happened, of Felipe's wound, of the possibilities of escape. Meanwhile, it had been getting dark. Over the city a soft and chilly rain now fell.

They left. López wanted to see Felipe. Antonio had assumed so. Beforehand a taxi—with a driver who was their good friend—was conveniently positioned. Upon seeing it rain, Pedro said:

“It's raining. Lets take a taxi.”

“It's that far from here?” asked a surprised López.

“Yes, a bit far.”

The car shot off. It quickly traversed the whole city. From the sea to the mountains. It began to climb the foothills of the mountain range. During the trip they did not exchange a single word. As they observed the place in which they found themselves, López, a little frightened, asked:

“But where are we going?”

“To look for Felipe,” replied Antonio.

They continued on their way. Suddenly, the car stopped. They were in the heart of the mountains, in the middle of a pine forest. Pedro said:

“Here it is.”

López, suspicious, got out looking around him astonished:

“Where?”

He drew back, scared. In Antonio’s hand gleamed a gun:

“What does this mean?” he stammered.

“It means,” Antonio replied, “that we know you betrayed us, and that you are going to pay for it right now.”

He tried to protest. For a while, with shouts, with laments, with tears, he tried to convince them of his innocence. Later, when he saw the three men before him, cold and unshakeable, with the gun in hand, he tried to bribe them:

“If you leave me, if you don’t kill me, I’ll give you anything you want...”

Antonio interrupted him:

“Enough already! We don’t want anything! Except to kill you, although you can’t pay for what you’ve done even with your life!”

López made one last effort, a stab at the bravery of his ex-comrades:

“But you’re going to kill me like this, cowardly? Among the three of you, and me standing here unarmed? In an ambush and in the back?”

Antonio stopped him:

“Yes, at night and in the back, like a dog, just how you deserve...”

Through López’s crazed mind crossed the idea to escape. He jumped and began to run, heading for the nearby pine grove. But he did not have time to get there. Three shots fired. And López, wounded in the back, fell flat, writhing in the mud.

Antonio approached the wounded man. He examined him for a few seconds. Then:

“He’s good and dead. Lets go.”

* * *

The next day, the Press broke the news of the discovery of a man riddled with bullets in the heart of the mountains. The police did not know—or they did not want to say they knew—who it was. But throughout the great city, by means of the workers, the good news travelled fast about the exemplary justice.

Meanwhile, the three anarchists crossed the border. Exile once again. To continue fighting from abroad for the liberating revolution.

Eduardo de Guzmán