

# Damaged in Transit? Valle-Inclán's *Tirano Banderas* between Two World-Literatures

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**Abstract** In current debates on world literature the low degree of attention paid to the issue of translation is in sharp contrast to the advocacy of its centrality by scholars in translation studies. David Damrosch is one of the few scholars who has resorted to translation for one of his definitions of world literature. The aim of this paper is to test his definition of world literature as “writing that gains in translation.” Whereas it is clear that one of the ways in which works circulate is interlingually, one should not overlook the fact that the power of languages is unevenly distributed. For a work to reach the wider world, two conditions need to concur: a) a large number of speakers and b) a widespread distribution of the language community. In the Western world, two languages meet these conditions as a result of imperial expansionism—Spanish and English. Both of them are the media for two world-literatures. In this landscape, I will approach a very specific case study, the 1929 English translation of Ramón del Valle-Inclán’s novel *Tirano Banderas*, originally published in Spanish in 1926. One lesson that this case study provides to world literature from a translation perspective is that going global is not simply a matter of interlingual switch.

**Key words** circulation; dictator novel; Ramón del Valle-Inclán; translation; world-language; world-literature; world literature

*In memory of don Benito Varela Jácome*

In current debates on world literature the low degree of attention paid to the issue of translation is in sharp contrast to the advocacy of its centrality by scholars in translation studies. This centrality may be summarized with Lawrence Venuti’s words: “World literature cannot be conceptualized apart from translation” (180). In Franco

Moretti's evolutionary model of worldwide genre diffusionism, translation is only mentioned in relation to specific rewriting patterns of Western novels during late-nineteenth century Japan, as if translation were a non-functional item of the whole world literary system (63n24). Interestingly, neither does Moretti mention translation with regards to the problem posed by scholars' "canonical fractions"—i.e. the small number of works one single scholar might be able to study in their original languages. This could be due to, on the one hand, the traditional skepticism about working with translations in comparative literature, and on the other, a result of the main tenet of his approach to world literature: "[W]orld literature is not an object, it's a *problem*, and a problem that asks for a new critical method" (55). In Pascale Casanova's model of *world republic*, translation does play a more important role, although restricted to "minor" literatures as a way of acquiring an "international existence" (256), which implies both thinking of translation as one-way process ("major" literatures as the target of "minor" literatures) and neglecting what Dionýz Ďurišin has called "interliterary communities," wherein the multifarious nature of translations is conspicuous. Furthermore, David Damrosch has resorted to translation for one of his definitions of world literature: "World literature is writing that gains in translation" (281). What the gains are is a matter for speculation, not to mention the fact that such a conception seems to be merely an inversion of an outdated paradigm, namely, translation as a second-degree, subservient version of the "original text," provided that the translated text succeeds this time in being "better" than the former.

In his recent book on world literature, Theo D'haen has somehow changed this vision of translation by pinpointing, on the one hand, the pedagogical dimension of world literature in the US—wherein "translation is inevitable, even if perhaps regrettable" (118)—and on the other hand, the systemic and relational constitution of world literature, for "one and the same 'world literature author' may fulfill completely different functions in different literary systems" (126). Yet neither argument entirely supports Venuti's above-mentioned statement, with which I agree, by precisely applying the perspective Damrosch advocates: "To understand the workings of world literature, we need more a phenomenology than an ontology of the work of art" (6).

In fact, world literature represents a phenomenology of reading and it is therefore much closer to what I have elsewhere called "literary life," whereas other categories, such as national literature, are ontologically reified. In systemic terms, a national literature is a secondary code subsystem, which aims at exhaustively describing the field of literary production in a specific language. An unmistakable sign of the failure of such an exhaustive system is that works in translation typically do not find their place in the description. An average reader does not read *nationally*, meaning s/he does not choose a work because it belongs to a certain national literature—whatever

“belong” might mean. The prerequisites for a reader to choose a work are twofold: a) a certain degree of knowledge of the language in which the work is written, and b) a thematic interest, for, as George Steiner (299) puts it, “[l]iterature is by essence thematic. It can only operate in an echo chamber of motifs.” In contrast to Damrosch’s view of world literature as a “mode of reading,” meaning a “detached engagement with a world beyond our own” (297), which results in an ontologized phenomenology, it is my contention that world literature is the experience of the “common reader,” to use Virginia Woolf’s felicitous phrase.<sup>1</sup> To the “creation of wholes” listed by Woolf, I would dare to add “world literature,” for readings are the reader’s literary world. A good example of both the relevance of thematics and the impossibility of a “*detached engagement*” may be found in the Colombian community, who stole a copy of the *Iliad* (in translation!) from the biblio-donkey for, in their words, Homer *retells their* (hi)story (Menéndez Salmon). As phenomenology, world literature scans a poly-genetic horizon wherein relationships go beyond the borders of language, culture, space and time.

A common reader reads literary works written in the language s/he feels more comfortable with. Typically, such a language would be her/his native language, or second languages in certain circumstances, for instance, the “outer circle” in Braj B. Kachru’s model. This is another clear example of the restrictive character of national literatures, for a reader’s native language may be used by several national literatures, not to mention the key issue of translation. According to the data provided by the Index Translationum, the top ten writers in Spanish who have been most extensively translated are Gabriel García Márquez, Isabel Allende, Mario Vargas Llosa, Cervantes, Jorge Luis Borges, José María Parramón Vilasaló, Federico García Lorca, Pablo Neruda, Julio Cortázar, and Carlos Fuentes. Linguistic and translation canons are therefore rather different from national literary canons. And as far as translation canons are concerned, one has to assume that the works by the foremost writer in Spanish (García Márquez) are enjoyed by many common readers in several languages.

Discussing linguistic canons and translation canons simultaneously is not unwarranted, for both canons are intertwined. One of the ways in which works circulate is interlingually; and the power of languages is unevenly distributed. For a work to reach the wider world, two conditions need to concur: a) a large number of speakers and b) a widespread distribution of the language community. In the Western world, two languages meet these conditions as a result of imperial expansionism: Spanish and English. That is why I use the concept “world-literature”—not “world literature”—in my title. Although semantically related to the French concept of *littérature-monde* within discussions around *Francophonie*, my use of the concept world-literature is indeed indebted to French academia, but to a different genealogy,

namely, the School of the Annals and Fernand Braudel's concept of world-economy (*économie-monde*). "The world economy is an expression applied to the whole world," says Braudel, whereas "[a] world-economy [...] only concerns a fragment of the world, an economically autonomous section of the planet able to provide for most of its own needs, a section to which its internal links and exchanges give a certain organic unity" (21 & 22). To my knowledge, Alexander Beecroft is the scholar who has best translated Braudel's terminology into a typology of literary systems, although he rejects the term *world-literature* proper in favor of "global literature." For my part, I will stick to world-literature, for its economic overtones are useful when contemplating translation issues.

As the two most important global languages of the Western world, English and Spanish are the media for two world-literatures. In this landscape, I will approach a very specific case study, the 1929 English translation of Ramón del Valle-Inclán's novel *Tirano Banderas*, originally published in Spanish in 1926. I have chosen this text for three key reasons. Firstly, Valle-Inclán's novel embodies at its best the idea of a "world-language," for *Tirano Banderas* is written in what the writer himself called *sermo hispanoamericano* (i.e. a Latin American Spanish koiné) within the framework of Transatlantic flows. Secondly, Valle-Inclán's novel has been read as a foundational text for a Latin American genre—the dictator novel—which is not unrelated to a style which has gone global—magical realism. Thirdly, *Tirano Banderas* was published as a "single" book in 1926—precisely the year for which we have an experimental world history, namely, Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht's *In 1926. Living at the Edge of Time*.<sup>3</sup>

### **I Don't Approve of the Translator That Was Offered**

In the presentation of a 2004 special issue devoted to Valle-Inclán, the editor (Juan Antonio Hormigón) introduces the Spanish translation of an article published by Helen Bullitt Lowry in *The New York Times* on January 1, 1922, in the following terms: "It is a picturesque article plenty of completely absurd appreciations. All kinds of nonsense about Valle-Inclán—both usual and outrageous—are here presented as facts" (Anon. [Hormigón] 54; my translation).<sup>4</sup> Though Hormigón may be absolutely right from a historical and biographical perspective, he is missing an important point. The information provided by Lowry was read by many of the American common readers targeted by *The New York Times* and therefore deserves closer attention. Furthermore, the article was published a couple of weeks after Valle-Inclán's visit to New York and was instrumental in presenting an image of the writer to many readers.

For Lowry, Valle-Inclán is one of the writers who "represent Spain's literary renaissance"—the Generation of 1898—and yet "he is not known to the English-speaking public—for the very good reason that his books have never been translated

into English—, and the English speaking peoples do not go in for languages." In contrast to the above-mentioned view of Hormigón, I do not consider Lowry's data at all irrelevant. She speaks of a readership who lives in a self-sufficient world-literature—the English one—inasmuch as books in foreign languages are not read unless they are translated. And as for translations into English of Valle-Inclán's works, Lowry is also right, despite the fact that she was not a literary journalist (she was called "the exponent of the cocktailized young lady of today."), but a contributor to *The New York Times* on topics as diverse as jazz, fashion and Houdini. At the time of writing her article, only one of Valle-Inclán's works—the children's play *La cabeza del dragón*—had been translated into English, which might very well have passed unnoticed to Lowry, for it was included in the 1918 issue of the literary magazine *Poet Lore* (Valle-Inclán, *Dragon*).

Established in 1889, *Poet Lore* found a growing audience interested in European writers. The translator of *La cabeza* was May Heywood Broun, who translated together with Thomas Walsh Valle-Inclán's *Sonatas* in 1924 for the publishing house Harcourt, Brace & Company within the series "European Library," and under the direction of one of the co-founders of the firm, Joel Spingarn. Interestingly, Federico de Onís, in a letter dated November 20, 1919, informed Valle-Inclán about this new series of the publishing house and how he himself had advised the inclusion of the Spanish writer (Cardona, "Texto 1" 145). Onís also informed Valle-Inclán about his intention of translating *La cabeza* (therefore the fact that Lowry, like Onís, did not know about the 1918 translation is not exceptional) and recommended he cede his translation copyright to the firm. In his reply, dated March 18, 1920, Valle-Inclán (Cardona, "Texto 3") conceded the translation permission to Harriet V. Wishnieff, Onís's fiancée. During his stay in New York, Valle-Inclán sent another letter to Onís, revealing how excited he was about the prospect of an "ideal translation" of the *Sonatas* by Miss Wishnieff, whom he invited to stay in La Merced, the writer's country house in A Pobra do Caramiñal, so that she could be pervaded by the words and the landscape; besides which Valle-Inclán's wife might help her with the translation, for she spoke English (Cardona, "Texto 3").

Around two years later Onís informed Valle-Inclán in a letter dated June 14, 1922, that Harcourt, Brace & Company refused a translation made by Wishnieff because they preferred to use their own translators. Despite Wishnieff's willingness to make the translation, Onís suggested Valle-Inclán accept the firm's conditions, for the contract he was to be offered was as good as Jakob Wasserman's (Cardona, "Texto 5"). In a letter dated June 8, 1923, Onís insisted that Valle-Inclán accept the firm's conditions, for, on the one hand, this entry into the English-speaking world via the translation of the *Sonatas* may have for him similar results to those experienced

by Miguel de Unamuno—a “translation package” after the 1912 translation of *Del sentimiento trágico de la vida*—and, on the other hand, Harcourt, Brace & Company had started to become dubious about Valle-Inclán’s success as compared to that of Vicente Blasco Ibáñez (Cardona, “Texto 8”).

The apprehension of the firm about the benefits a translation of Valle-Inclán may provide shows once again that Lowry's presentation of the Spanish writer to the American audience was not on the wrong track. For Lowry, Blasco Ibáñez was the obvious Spanish writer to whom Valle-Inclán should be compared, albeit negatively. (The Valencian writer had also visited New York in 1921.) In contrast to Blasco Ibáñez's "modern style," Valle-Inclán's was "mystic." Whereas the former "dresses and talks and thinks like a modern, one who naturally should have his books 'filmed'," the latter is a "Spaniard of the old order." And if Blasco Ibáñez had "such a practical faculty for collecting the international dollars," what about Valle-Inclán? It is natural that Harcourt, Brace & Company wondered whether they would succeed as E.P. Dutton & Company had succeeded with the 1919 translation by Charlotte Brewster Jordan of Blasco Ibáñez's *Los cuatro jinetes del Apocalipsis*. One should not forget that the suggestion to translate Valle-Inclán’s *Sonatas* was not due to a “common reader,” but due to Onís, a professor of Spanish literature at Columbia University.

Before seeing whether Onís's suggestion was profitable for Harcourt, Brace & Company, it may prove useful to survey some data related to translations of Valle-Inclán's works during the period 1918-1935. 1918 is the year of Valle-Inclán's first translation into English (*The Dragon's Head*) and in 1935 the English translation of *Tirano Banderas* was reprinted. For the target-languages and number of works translated, I draw on the data provided by Robert Lima, Robert S. Rudder, Juan Antonio Hormigón, and Javier Serrano Alonso and Amparo de Juan Bolufer.

Target Language	Number of Works Translated 1918-1935
English	9
French	9
Romanian	3
Galician	3
Portuguese	2
Russian	2
Italian	2
Dutch	1
Lithuanian	1
Czech	1
Hungarian	1
Polish	1
Swedish	1

One may consider that these figures are in direct contradiction to my statement in the introduction regarding the two major world-languages in the Western world during the 1920s, for the number of translations into French and English are identical. But French, though distributed in several countries, did not have a number of speakers comparable to English and Spanish, or even Portuguese. Why, then, is the number of translations into French and English identical? The reason is that French was a language with high cultural capital, a "cultural language" in the sense that it played a key intermediary role (both in the number of translations and translation models) for translation flows between Eastern and Western Europe and Northern and Southern Europe, including the Transatlantic rim. What needs to be stressed in my opinion, is the relevance of English as target-language. Consequently, it is only natural that Valle-Inclán was grateful to Onís, to whom he gave formal authorization for his publications and translations in the US, a market which at that time was interested in Spanish literature thanks to Blasco Ibáñez's success.

According to Lowry, the reason that Valle-Inclán's works had not been translated into English lay in the writer himself.

Twice has Don Ramón been approached by publishers—but true to the tradition that is rather good form for a Spanish intellectual to be rather poverty-stricken, Don Ramón replied that he didn't approve of the translator that was offered.

Though I have not been able to trace any offer by an American publisher prior to Onís's intervention, Lowry may very well be right if one takes into consideration that five years later, in 1927, Valle-Inclán wrote to Heath and Company (Cardona, "Texto 10") to ask them not to publish a translation of *La cabeza del dragón*. One may think that this is due to the fact that Valle-Inclán had granted all his rights to Onís in 1921. However, Onís himself informed Valle-Inclán in 1919 that he planned to translate for the "best publishing house" in the school market—Heath and Company—*La cabeza del dragón* (Cardona, "Texto 2"). In any case, this play had already been translated in 1918 by May Heywood Broun for *Poet Lore*, and research on how the latter translation was carried out and whether or not it was authorized—or even known about—by Valle-Inclán, is still pending.

*The Pleasant Memoirs of the Marquis de Bradomin: Four-Sonatas* was published by Harcourt, Brace & Company in 1924, and one year later by Constable for the British market. In contrast to the case of Blasco Ibáñez, the English translation of the *Sonatas* was neither a commercial success for the company, nor an opportunity for a massive translation. The only works by Valle-Inclán translated after the *Sonatas* were his tale "A medianoche" (Valle-Inclán, "At Midnight") and the first scene of *Divinas*

*palabras*. No further translations were made until the late 1950s and 1960s.

### **A Difficult Reading for the Academically Trained Foreigner**

Where should we place the translation of *Tirano Banderas* within this picture of Valle-Inclán's entry into English world-literature? Except for Dru Dougherty's recollection of some reviews of this translation (*Iconos*), this is not an issue in which scholars have shown much interest. Dougherty has gathered three reviews (*New York Herald Tribune Books*, *Boston Evening Transcript*, *The New York Times Book Review*) whose tone is rather similar to Lowry's article. Ángel Flores—the reviewer of the *New York Herald Tribune Books*—mentions the translation of the *Sonatas* by Broun (and Walsh), which represents Valle-Inclán's "debut" in English world-literature. But none of the reviewers provide any information about the translator, Margarita Pavitt, whose translation of *Tirano Banderas* had been published in 1929 by Henry Holt and Company.

According to the data provided by Cardona, letters between Onís and Valle-Inclán date between June 24, 1918, and February 23, 1928. In the final letter, Onís informed Valle-Inclán again about the translation of *La cabeza del dragón*, but nothing is said in relation to *Tirano Banderas*. One might conclude that after the *Sonatas*' commercial failure (at least in comparison to translations of Blasco Ibáñez), Harcourt, Brace & Company had decided not to publish further translations of Valle-Inclán. Henry Holt and Company was a rival firm in the market of translations from Spanish, especially in the case of texts targeted for learners of the language and scholars in Hispanic culture. During the 1920s, some examples of these publications are Elijah Clarence Hills' *Spanish Tales for Beginners*, Lawrence A. Wilkins' *Second Spanish Book*, E.C. Hills and S. Griswold Morley's *Modern Spanish Lyrics*, to name but a few. Whether Onís had his say on the translation of *Tirano*, or it was a recommendation by another university professor linked to the firm is not known. In 1928, Henry Herschel Brickell, literary critic and student of Spanish, became manager of the publishing house and translating Valle-Inclán could also have been his own initiative. (Brickell was responsible for bringing Federico García Lorca's genius to American attention.) Another possibility is that publishing a translation of Valle-Inclán was the translator's initiative.

In contrast to other translators: May Heywood Broun (*The Dragon's Head*, 1918; *Four-Sonatas*, 1924), Harriet V. Wishnieff ("My Sister Antonia," 1922), Princess Alexandre Gagarine ("The Captain's Honor," 1923), A. Irwin Shone ("At Midnight," 1929), Samuel Putnam (the first scene of *Divine Words*, 1931), and Warre B. Wells ("The Golden Rose," 1932), Margarita Pavitt was neither a "professional" translator, nor a literary critic. Except for *Tirano Banderas*, no other translation by

her is registered. As for her profession, nothing is known, although one scholar has claimed she was an anthropologist (Madrid). The only piece of evidence regarding her involvement with Spanish issues that I have been able to trace is two articles Pavitt published in the anarchist magazine *Revista nueva*, which was first issued on March 29, 1924 in Barcelona, five months after Miguel Primo de Rivera's coup. One may conclude that Pavitt became interested in *Tirano Banderas* because the novel's critique was in line with her arguments in her August 16, 1924 and July 25, 1925 articles. Whether Pavitt first read the novel in the issues of *El estudiante* or in the book-format is not known. Her translation in any case is based upon the 1927 second edition.

In 1928 Henry Holt and Company published a new English translation of Valle-Inclán—*Tirano Banderas*. It was advertised as an “[a]uthorized translation from the Spanish.” And yet no contact between the firm, the translator and the writer has been registered so far. When approaching the English version of *Tirano Banderas*, the fact that Pavitt was neither a professional translator, nor a literary critic should be kept in mind, inasmuch as American reviewers who read the novel in Spanish stressed the difficulty of one if its key elements—the Latin American Spanish koiné. “In *Tirano Banderas*,” said Arthur L. Owen, “americanisms abound to an extent which makes the novel difficult reading for the academically trained foreigner” (134). But what about a common reader?

### A “Common Reader” as Translator

Should we have a translation of *Tirano Banderas* by a professional translator and connoisseur of Valle-Inclán's writings, it would be most interesting to analyze how the problem of the Latin American Spanish koiné were to be faced. Wishnieff—Valle-Inclán's translator *in pectore* in the US—seemed to have been well aware of this issue when she underlined in her review of the Spanish original that the writer had made of this novel “a mosaic of the language [...] of Spanish America” (139). The linguistic code was as difficult for a Latin American reader as for a Peninsular reader, even if academically trained. A few weeks after its publication in 1926, Pío Baroja, for instance, commented that the novel should have included a lexicon (Dougherty, *Guía* 65). The terms Wishnieff used to characterize the linguistic texture of the novel—synthesis, mosaic—are indeed very close to the way in which Valle-Inclán theorized on the *sermo hispanoamericano*. “It is necessary,” argued Valle-Inclán in an article published on June 30, 1925, “to create a Latin American *sermo* by incorporating, without limits and hesitations, American terms [...] Latin America has very beautiful, expressive words. [...] In a novel I am going to publish now—*Tirano Banderas*—I use more than one hundred americanisms” (qtd. in Dougherty, *Un Valle-Inclán*

157n192; my translation).

The relevance of this pan-Hispanic code goes well beyond the limits of a stylistic experiment *per se*, for at least three connected reasons. Firstly, this hybrid, linguistic commonality is a reflection on a political situation shared by many Latin American republics, which Valle-Inclán merged into the imaginary Santa Fe de Tierra Firme. Secondly, it implies a critique of the paternalist attitude of the collapsing empire towards its former colonies as embodied by the discourse of *Hispanism*, which Peninsular intellectuals had built as a mixture of solidarity and “family” ties. Thirdly, the novel may be read as a metaliterary discussion on literary norms, namely, the linguistic code of Spanish world-literature. The latter traditionally having been equated with Peninsular Spanish, Valle-Inclán’s novel advocated a linguistic switch from Peninsular Spanish to a pan-Hispanic Spanish, wherein the larger number of speakers from Latin America had, on the one hand, the dominant share and on the other hand, a tool for adequately representing the reality of the former colonies.

A reading of *Tirano Banderas* as a metaliterary code for Spanish world-literature is in line with contemporary discussions. On April 15, 1927, Guillermo de Torre published in *La Gaceta literaria* an article titled “Madrid, meridiano intelectual de Hispanoamérica” (Madrid—the intellectual meridian of Latin America), in which he argued against Paris as the literary capital city of Latin America and defended the links with Spain. The hostile reaction this article provoked in Latin America is well known, as voiced by magazines such as *Martín Fierro* in Argentina. (Borges’s reply will resort to the Italian linguistic heritage as contained in Lunfardo.) Less well known is that on the Peninsular side of the Atlantic there was also a hostile reaction, as proven by the Madrilenian magazine *Post-Guerra* (see Santonja), whose directors Rafael Giménez Siles and José Antonio Balbontín had been in charge of *El estudiante* during the period in which *Tirano Banderas* was published in installments. Could cultural hybridization in Valle-Inclán’s *Tirano Banderas* be the literary equivalent of Max Henríquez Ureña’s theoretical reflection in his 1930 *El retorno de los galeones*, a key text in the history of the Boom?

Despite the linguistic difficulties of *Tirano Banderas*’s “sermo hispanoamericano,” Pavitt only included three footnotes corresponding to three terms rendered in their Spanish form: *gachupines* (Valle-Inclán, *The Tyrant* 5), *maestrante* (27) and *cepo* (278). One may think that further footnotes were unnecessary, for the translator dealt with the “sermo hispanoamericano” by replacing it with an equivalent Anglophone *sermo*, a linguistic code for English world-literature. However, this is not the case. In fact, of the three reviewers, two stressed the failure of the translation in this regard. For the anonymous contributor to *The New York Times Book Review* (December 22, 1929), “[i]t is symptomatic of the loss of power which so frequently

characterizes a translation that the subtitle of *The Tyrant* should be rendered *A Novel of Warm Lands*” (Anon. 152). And for an authorized literary critic, professor and translator (between Spanish and English) such as Ángel Flores, who could compare Pavitt’s version to the original, the “philological exuberance, so exciting to the contemporaries of James Joyce, fades (through no fault of the translator) in Miss Pavitt’s version” (150). Both the mention of Joyce (most probably his *Ulysses*) and the contention that it was not the translator’s fault deserve further attention.

### **In 1926**

As mentioned in the introduction, we have an experimental world history for 1926, of fifty-one entries divided into three sections, “Arrays,” “Codes” and “Codes Collapsed.” “The book’s main intention,” argues Gumbrecht, “is best captured in the phrase that was its original subtitle: ‘an essay on historical simultaneity’” (xiv). The key entry wherein *Tirano Banderas* is registered within this history of 1926 belongs to a collapsed code, namely, “Action = Impotence (Tragedy).”

Tragedy generally involves conflicts between intrinsically stable normative systems. In situations of generalized uncertainty, however, when all norms have disappeared and when people cannot be held responsible for the consequences of their Actions, the one gesture that counts is to place Action, as a form that resists chaos, in opposition to the threat of disorder. (Gumbrecht 352)

The melodramatic gesture of the dictator’s supreme sacrifice for the sake of order is best encapsulated in Santos Banderas’s discourse when visited by the high ranking representatives of the Spanish community at the beginning of the novel. Pavitt’s translation provides a non-simultaneous simultaneity for the “uncommon” reader.

—Me congratula ver cómo los hermanos de raza aquí radicados, afirmando su fe inquebrantable en los ideales de orden y progreso, responden a la tradición de la Madre Patria. Me congratula mucho este apoyo moral de la Colonia Hispana. Santos Banderas les garantiza que el día más feliz de su vida será cuando pueda retirarse y sumirse en la oscuridad a labrar su predio, como Cincinato. Crean, amigos, que para un viejo son fardel muy pesado las obligaciones de la Presidencia. El *gobernante*, muchas veces precisa ahogar los sentimientos de su corazón, porque el cumplimiento de la ley es la garantía de los ciudadanos trabajadores y honrados. El *gobernante*, llegado al trance de firmar una sentencia de pena capital, puede tener lágrimas en los ojos, pero a su mano no le está permitido temblar. Esta *tragedia del gobernante*, como les platicaba recién, es

superior a las fuerzas de un viejo. (Valle-Inclán, *Tirano* 55-56; emphasis added)

—It is with satisfaction that I observe how my brothers of race established in this country, reaffirming their unshakable faith in the ideals of order and progress, respond to the traditions of the Mother Country. This moral support of the Spanish Colony is a source of great satisfaction to me. Santos Banderas has none of that thirst of power which his adversaries criticize in him. Santos Banderas assures you that it will be the happiest day of his life when he can retire from public life and sink into obscurity to work his strip of land, like Cincinnatus. Believe me, my friends, the duties of the Presidency are a very heavy burden for an old man. An *executive* frequently has to disregard the dictates of his heart, for in the enforcement of the law lies the safeguard of honest and industrious citizens. Faced with the necessity of signing a death-warrant, an *executive* may feel his eyes will tears, but his hand must not tremble. This *tragedy of the executive* is, as I have just been saying, too heavy a burden for an old man. (Valle-Inclán, *The Tyrant* 16-17; emphasis added)

For an uncommon reader such as Gumbrecht “tragedia del gobernante” translates as “politician’s tragedy” (356). His (ironical) rendering may very well be due to the influence of one of his simultaneous readings—Jules Romains’ *Le Dictateur*, in which one finds “the establishment and the maintenance of the ideal *vie unanime* closely associated with the principles of strong leadership, even of dictatorship” (Norrish 130). This is obviously in sharp contrast to Valle-Inclán’s aims for *Tirano Banderas*, a novel which mirrors the Latin American “republics” in Santa Fe de Tierra Firme by refracting them into Primo de Rivera’s dictatorship and vice versa. In contrast to Gumbrecht’s “politician’s tragedy,” for Pavitt “tragedia del gobernante” is “tragedy of the executive,” a phrasing which tellingly resonates with Primo de Rivera’s dissolution of the executive within the military Directory and Martin Decoud—Joseph Conrad’s problem figure in *Nostramo*: “I—I—executive member” (135).

In a telegram dated March 30, 1923 and addressed to Don Roberto—as R.B. Cunninghame Graham was affectionately known, Conrad informed him about two letters, one from Vicente Blasco Ibáñez and other from Ibáñez's publishing house. In fact, Blasco Ibáñez had first approached Cunninghame Graham with the plan of publishing a Spanish edition of Conrad's novels. In a letter dated March 10, 1923, Blasco Ibáñez presented himself to Conrad as "the Spanish novelist," some of whose works had been translated into English and "been well received, especially in the United States," such as *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* and *The Enemies of*

*Women*. Blasco Ibáñez's project was translating Conrad's works into Spanish and publishing them within one of the series of his publishing house Prometeo—"La novela literaria" (The Literary Novel). "I am attempting," said Blasco Ibáñez to Conrad, "to make known to the Spanish public all the great contemporary novelists, and I write a twenty to thirty page preface to each volume, treating the writer's life and work. [...] I also oversee the translations to ensure their accuracy and the faithful rendering of the writer's ideas."

Translation of Conrad's novels into French was how Blasco Ibáñez had access to them for "alas, I read English badly" (Stape & Knowles 205). And André Gide was responsible for Conrad's entry into French world-literature once he took over the position of director of *Les Œuvres Complètes de Joseph Conrad*, a Gallimard project (West). For Conrad, it was natural that, after French world-literature, Spanish world-literature would be regarded as a milestone for his world career. "I am very glad to know of your interest in my work," replied Conrad to Blasco Ibáñez on March 21, 1923. "I wish ardently to be presented to the Spanish public under your auspices. This is an unexpected honour. I assure you that I appreciate it deeply" (Davies & Moore 54). One has to conclude that J.B. Pinker—Conrad's agent—did not reach an agreement with Blasco Ibáñez, for none of Conrad's novels was included in the ninety titles of "La novela literaria."

In 1926, the same year of *Tirano Banderas*, *Nostramo* was published in Barcelona by the firm Montaner y Simón under the translation of Juan Mateos de Diego. This is an important simultaneity (to be added to Gumbrecht's list), for Conrad's novel also confronted the Spanish audience with an imaginary South American republic—Costaguana—under a dictatorship. As with Valle-Inclán's novel, Conrad's was poorly received. And as Jacques Berthoud put it for *Nostramo*, the same applies to *Tirano Banderas*: both earned "notoriety as [...] novel[s] that one cannot read unless one has read [them] before" (97). Both novels have an European narrator who has to understand an "exotic reality," and both novels have been included among the front-rank of modernist literature. In world literature, Valle-Inclán and Conrad met at the crossroads of translation between Spanish and English world-literatures to depict a postcolonial society engaged with global capitalism. Both novels were unconventional and remained unpopular with mass audiences. *Tirano Banderas* remained slightly more unpopular, for Pavitt's translation was reprinted just once and a new translation was not needed until 2012, whereas Mateos de Diego's translation of *Nostramo* was reprinted several times and three new translations have been published between 2003 and 2008.

However, one lesson that translation studies provides to world literature is that going global is not simply a matter of the number of reprints and the degree of fidelity

of translators. Let us remember now Flores's above quoted words: the "philological exuberance" of *Tirano Banderas* "fades (through no fault of the translator) in Miss Pavitt's version." The entry of a work into a literary system by way of translation cannot be understood as an exclusively linguistic switch, but as a multi-level inter-systemic switch. When *Tirano Banderas* was translated into English in 1929 for the US market, the translation concurred with the way in which other Spanish writers were being translated (especially, Blasco Ibáñez) and how Latin American novels were being translated. In the 1920s and 1930s this was a market niche for commercial publishers and small presses (Levine 298), which provided their audience with a realist mode proper of the *novela de la tierra* (novel of the earth). The erasure of the "philological exuberance" by Pavitt placed *Tirano Banderas* in this genre, but Valle-Inclán's novel was still a much more complex work than Mariano Azuela's *Los de abajo*, which was also translated in 1929 by Enrique Manguía (*The Underdogs*). Pavitt's translation model was also the one Harriet V. Wishnieff/de Onís applied later to Latin American novels, for she normalized regionalisms and experimental language. No distinction, therefore, can be made between Pavitt and Wishnieff in this regard. As for Conrad's entry into Spanish world-literature, in contrast to Valle-Inclán's case, the translation of *Nostromo* was not sporadic and haphazard, but the result of a "translation packet" conceived as the equivalent of the Gallimard project (Coll-Vinent 218) by Joan Estelrich while he was in charge of Montaner y Simón.

For both English and Spanish world-literatures, *Tirano Banderas* and *Nostromo* resulted in excessive models in the original and in translation. If, as Fredric Jameson puts it, modernism originated in "an aestheticizing reaction against the sordid realities of a business civilization" (68), *Tirano Banderas* and *Nostromo* are modernist novels *avant la lettre*. The reaction in these novels was, in Borges's words, "writing a fantastic story,"—even if realistically—for "the world itself is fantastic and unfathomable and mysterious" (qtd. in Robles 17). This is of course a matrix for the Boom and the genre of the "dictator novel." As for language, whereas the foremost writer of Spanish world-literature—Gabriel García Márquez—said he prefers Gregory Rabassa's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* to his original, Borges developed an alternative version of Valle-Inclán's *sermo latinoamericano* by bringing English into Spanish. But all this already goes well beyond the scope of this paper.

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## Notes

1. “The common reader [...] differs from the critic and the scholar. [...] He reads for his own pleasure rather than to impart knowledge or correct the opinion of others. Above all, he is guided by an instinct to create for himself, out of whatever odds and ends he can come by, some kind of whole—a portrait of a man, a sketch of an age, a theory of the art of writing” (Woolf 1).
2. In contrast to Steiner’s elitist view of the threads of thematics, I agree with Woolf in that the common reader may be “worse educated” (1) and yet no less *engaged*. The Colombian community most probably did not know that “Homer’s Odysseus comes after Joyce’s Ulysses” (Steiner 299) and nonetheless did know how to read the *Iliad*.
3. The first edition of *Tirano Banderas* was printed on December 15, 1926, by Rivadeneyra and copies were sold directly by Valle-Inclán (Dougherty, *Guía* 40). The second edition was printed on December 10, 1927. Before the book-format, the novel was published in installments in the magazine *El estudiante* (in both series, Salamanca and Madrid), whereas one section was published as an independent story—*Zacarias el Cruzado o Agüero nigromante* (Nº 225 of La novela de hoy, September 3, 1926). See Speratti Piñero.
4. I arrive at the conclusion that the anonymous editor of the 2004 special issue of *ADE* is Hormigón for some passages of the introduction are identical to what Hormigón says on Lowry’s article in his book (191).
5. By “translation package” I refer to the market strategy of some publishing houses whereby, after the success of a specific work, an award or the death of the writer, the house translates her/his “complete works.”
6. Between April 1934 and February 1935, the Mexican magazine in English *Mexican Life* published *Tirano Banderas* in installments, more precisely, Pavitt’s translation, though the identity of the translator is not provided. *Mexican Life* was founded by Howard S. Phillips in 1924. This is an interesting piece of information regarding an English afterlife of *Tirano Banderas* in Mexico, where Malcolm Lowry arrived on November 2, 1936. His novel *Under the Volcano* presents some striking similarities to *Tirano Banderas*, which I will analyze in a future paper.
7. There are some inconsistencies in the information provided by these scholars. The most accurate data are those provided by Serrano Alonso & Juan Bolufer and Serrano Alonso. In contrast to Serrano Alonso, whose data on translation cover Valle-Inclán’s lifetime, my data are restricted to the period 1918-35. If one takes into consideration the period previous to 1918, the number of translations into French is higher than into English. It is my contention that this is due to the cultural capital of the French language. In the number of translations I list, I count neither reprints (for instance, the 1934-35 reprint of *The Tyrant*), nor translations of the *Sonatas* as independent works.
8. Juan Bolufer (229) argues that Valle-Inclán’s visit to New York, after his travel to La Habana (Santos Zas, “Valle-Inclán y la prensa”) was related to his wish to explore the possibilities for his works be translated into English.

9. Publishing British editions of the same US translations within one a year or two was common practice. When it comes to translations of Latin American novels, an issue I will tackle later, the British market was much more reluctant than the US market to engage in language experiments in English, at least until the 1980s (Levine 297).
10. As stated by Serrano Alonso, “we are very far from saying that we do know the corpus of translations during the writer’s lifetime,” for further research on journals and magazines is necessary (15; my translation). To my knowledge, Serrano Alonso’s research is the most important contribution.
11. I use the term “debut” as defined by Lundén, Ekelund, and Bolkéus Blom: “A ‘prose-fiction debut’ is understood here as a book-length publication, that is, a short story collection or a novel, written for adults and included as such in one of the various publishing records” (303).
12. “The question anybody who longs for a radical transformation of the society we live in should ask is not the naive one whether it is possible to overthrow a regime based upon a hypothetical violence, but whether it is possible to save the people even against their will” (“Psicopatología”).
13. According to Hormigón, there is one further translation, by Paul Patrick Rogers of *Jardín umbrío* (Henry Holt, 1928): “*Jardín umbrío*, edition and translation by Paul Patrick Rogers” (1006; my translation). However, this was an edition aimed at learners of Spanish, which did not include a translation into English, but notes and vocabulary.
14. “The language, which admits and searches for idioms and terms from all Latin America, greatly contributes to a sense of indecisiveness” (Díez-Canedo 163; my translation).
15. Santos Zas (“Valle-Inclán y Cuba”) has shown how Valle-Inclán formulated a previous experiment on American linguistic syncretism in his 1897 tale “La Feria de Sancti Spiritus.” This tale was not translated into English during the period which concerns us here.
16. Interestingly, a recent defense of Paris as the “literary Greenwich” is due to Casanova in her discussion on world literature.
17. “With his wordy discourse, excessive and assertive, he [Primo de Rivera] reminded me of many improvised generals I met in Mexico and some South American republics” (Blasco Ibáñez 30; my translation).
18. Wishnieff translated for the firm Alfred A. Knopf many Latin American writers; for the translations into English published by this latter firm of Pío Baroja, see González Ariza.

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