

The Cuban Translations of Thomas Moore

The study of the elements that contributed to the shaping of the Cuban nationality is one of the main research lines currently held by cultural institutions all over Cuba. Until very recently no study had ever been conducted on an element that in many ways added to the formation of the Cuban society, the Irish. The field of literary translation is no exception to that relationship. Four great Cuban poets, José María Heredia (1803-1839), Rafael María de Mendive (1821-1886), Mercedes Matamoros (1851- 1906) and José Martí (1853-1895), share the fate of having converted into Spanish works by Thomas Moore while representing a century of reception of the Irish poet in Cuba.

Despite his short life, Heredia had several occupations: lawyer, soldier, traveller, professor of languages, typographer, journalist, deputy, tribune, magistrate, diplomat, historian, and even conspirator, but above all, he was the most outstanding figure of Cuban romanticism. Characterized by his passionate nature and considered the most lyrical of his time, Heredia also distinguished as a translator, being one of his main contributions a translation into Spanish of Moore's The Epicurean.

Cultivated in literature and languages since his early youth, Mendive was an accomplished journalist and one of the best Cuban poets of his time. Though graduated in law and philosophy, he is best regarded as José Martí's teacher and mentor. Mendive also founded several important magazines in Cuba and collaborated with many other in Europe and the United States. His legends and tales in verse were very much appreciated. Some of his pieces were translated into French by Moreau and into English by Longfellow. Mendive himself translated works by Hugo, Lamartine and Byron, but won best reputation as the translator of Moore's Irish Melodies.

Mercedes Matamoros y del Valle was a motherless child. Nevertheless, her father was a patient mentor and introduced her to the study of foreign languages and literatures. Her first publications were articles on local customs that appeared in periodic publications. In 1868 she began to publish her verses. She participated in the conspiratorial events of the Villanueva theatre and was in favour of the Cuban struggle starting in October that very year, which feeling she showed with the refusal to publish her works together with those of authors favouring the metropolis. In 1878, when the Ten Years War was over, she published her translations of Goethe, Schiller, Chenier and Byron in *El Triunfo*. By that time, her works enjoyed well-deserved fame. Martí himself read some of her poems at the Liceo de Guanabacoa. Concerning her translation legacy, she is to be acknowledged for the version into Spanish of more than thirty pieces from Moore's Sacred Songs and Legendary Ballads.

José Martí is Cuba's National Hero. He was barely nine when he swore, before the sight of a hung slave, to wash the crime with his own blood. Mendive, his teacher and mentor cultivated in him deep feelings of nationalism and independence. Because of his political ideas, at 16 Martí was put to jail, transferred to the Isle of Pines and later banished to Spain, where he wrote articles on the wrongs of the Spanish rule in Cuba and graduated first with a bachelor of arts, later took a degree in civil and canon law and finally another degree in philosophy and arts. After spending some time in several Latin American countries, he moved to New York City, where he founded the Cuban Revolutionary Party and organized the 1895 War. Martí was also a teacher, a diplomat and a journalist. He was the greatest Cuban writer of his century. Although his works include novels, short stories, and plays, he is considered the most important poet of the 19th century and the precursor of modernism in Latin America. Some of the stanzas from his collection Simple Verses became the lyrics to the worldwide-renowned "Guantanamera". Martí was also a brilliant translator from numerous languages, including Greek, from which he translated, just as Moore did, Anacreon's Odes. Short before his death in battle, Martí wrote his literary will, a letter to his assistant containing indications about the destiny of his written works. Among the pieces mentioned, there was a manuscript the translator left on his desk, a Spanish version of Moore's Lalla Rookh.

Problem:

None of the aforementioned translations of Moore are widely known nowadays. Heredia's was only published in 1881, in the December issue of *El Repertorio*, an ephemeral Havana magazine, of which there is a copy at the National Library of Cuba. Mendive's was published for the first time in New York in 1863 and had several well-accepted editions, not only as separate volumes, but included in a poetry compilation, Poestas, which was also edited several times, however, no edition is known after the 19th century and the pieces translated were never put to music as the original compositions were. Mercedes' were supposedly published in *El Triunfo*, another Havana magazine, issued between 1878 and 1885. So far, they have not been traced and it is not clear whether they were included in the 1892 edition of the compiled works with which she was honoured; besides, no further edition is known. Martí's, although bearing the merit of saving the oriental romance and its author from oblivion, was never published, and the loss of the manuscript is one of the greatest mysteries related to the works of the most universal Cuban writer of his century. Nevertheless, until recent date no search had ever been carried out on the compiled works of the translator to verify whether the Spanish version is utterly lost. The translations that both Moore and Martí did of Anacreon's Odes has never been approached on a comparative basis, which might provide additional information to the relationship between the two poets.

None of the translations available have been the object of any study, so in many ways the present project constitutes a starting point. Consequently, the validity of the source texts, their versions, and the interlingual rendition processes involved, has not been scientifically proven. Even though Moore's translators are great figures in the history of Cuban literature and represent different literary expressions along the 19th century, that is to say, the First Romanticism, the Second Romanticism, the Feminine Group and the incipient Modernism, no documented explanation has ever been released for the extensive reception the Irish poet was given in Cuba and the editorial inactivity to which he was subjected after. No attempt has been done so far to compile the Cuban translations of Thomas Moore in an annotated edition.

HYPOTHESIS

If a multidisciplinary study is conducted on the Cuban translations of Thomas Moore, it will be possible to corroborate the high linguostylistic value of both the original works and their respective versions, ascertain the validity of the translation processes in each case, explain the reasons why Moore's works had such an extensive reception through the 19th century followed by no editorial activity to date and provide grounds for a compilation of the Cuban translations of Thomas Moore in a critical edition.

OBJECTIVES

General

- . Contribute new elements to the studies on the life and works of Thomas Moore and his Cuban translators of the 19th century.
- . Contribute new elements to the studies on the foreign elements that intervened in the shaping of the Cuban nation.

Specific

- . Characterize the original works and their respective Spanish versions
- . Determine the validity of the translation processes and the elements that were best and most converted.
- . Seek the rationale behind a century of reception followed by a period recording no further versions or editions.
- . Find information for a critical edition of the Cuban translations of Thomas Moore.

METHODOLOGY

- . The main research methods to be used are the analytical, the descriptive, the comparative, the quantitative and the qualitative.

PROJECT FEASIBILITY

The necessary bibliography is available to devise the methodology required to characterize the source texts and their versions and carry out the analysis of the translation process in each case. There is enough material, both active and passive, regarding the life and works of the Cuban translators. Ireland, the homeland of Thomas Moore, constitutes a major primary source of information on the poet. Places like the Moore Institute or the Centre for Irish Studies at NUI, Galway, may contribute information to this project.

RESEARCH TASKS

- Devise a methodology for translation analysis mainly based on a linguostylistical approach involving both the relevant texts and the translation process
- Analyze the source language texts and the target language resultant.
- Analyze the interlingual rendition process.
- Examine the information gathered from the analyses and the bibliography available.
- Write a research report and fit the information gathered into book format.
- Design an annotated edition of the Cuban translations of Thomas Moore.

RESULTS*

- A methodology for translation analysis mainly based on a linguostylistical approach involving both the relevant texts and the translation process, besides being applicable to the translations of a text into different languages.
- Compilation and digitalization of all the translations.
- Critical edition of the originals and their respective versions.
- A book with the following preliminary table of contents:

The Cuban translations of Thomas Moore

I. - Introduction

- Notes on the history and development of translation in Cuba
- The Cuban reception of Thomas Moore in the 19th century
- Thomas Moore's life and works: historic context
- The Cuban Translations of Thomas Moore: Methodological Criteria for a linguostylistical analysis
- Some methodological considerations (antecedents, current state of research, problem, objectives, hypothesis, methodological procedures)

II. - The Epicurean: A Translation by José María Heredia

- José María Heredia's life and works
- The Epicurean: functional style and literary context
- The Epicurean: a linguostylistical analysis
- Heredia's version of The Epicurean - The Epicurean: analysis of the rendition process

III. - Irish Melodies: A Translation by Rafael María de Mendive

- Mendive's life and works
- Irish Melodies: functional style and literary context
- Irish Melodies: a linguostylistical analysis
- Mendive's version of Irish Melodies
- Irish Melodies: analysis of the rendition process
- Irish Melodies: Musical and literary composition
- Proposal to put the Spanish version to the original music

IV. - Sacred Songs and Legendary Ballads: Translations by Mercedes Matamoros

- Mercedes Matamoros' life and works
- Sacred Songs and Legendary Ballads: functional style and literary context
- Sacred Songs and Legendary Ballads: Mercedes Matamoros's versions
- Sacred Songs and Legendary Ballads: analysis of the rendition process

V. - Lalla Rookh: José Martí's Lost Translation

- Martí's life and works
- Martí's approach to Heredia, Mendive and Matamoros
- Anacreon's Odes: a parallel between two translators
- Lalla Rookh: functional style and literary context
- Thomas Moore's Lalla Rookh
- José Martí's lost translation
- All is not lost
- Carlos Ripoll's lost Lalla Rookh

VI. - Closing notes

The Cuban renditions of Thomas Moore: a century of reception and literary translation

* Most of the information gathered through the research process might add to the *Thomas Moore Hypermedia Archive*, a Moore Institute project meant to collect, among others, the poetical, musical and prose works of the Irish writer, which materials could be eventually used in the production of printed scholarly editions.