

**SPANISH MANNERS AND GYPSY HYMNS**

Review of *Bob Dylan, 'Del Huracán a las Tierras Altas: Escritos y canciones 1975-1997'* ('From Hurricane to the Highlands: Writings and Songs 1975-1997'), **lyrics translated into Spanish** by Antonio J. Iriarte and Francisco J. García Cubero, ISBN 84-95196-07-7, Valencia (Spain): Masked Tortilla Productions, 1999

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**PRELIMINARY NOTES:**

*1. It is hoped that this review will be of interest both to Dylan fans from the Spanish-speaking world **and** to other readers who may not know Spanish but are interested in the subject of Dylan in translation. I have therefore for the most part avoided quoting in Spanish, except for direct quotations from the translations in the volume under review, and in a small number of other cases.*

*2. It is particularly to be stressed that the volume of translations reviewed in this article has been **OFFICIALLY AND EXPRESSLY AUTHORISED** by Bob Dylan's copyright administrators, Special Rider Music. The English originals translated into Spanish in this volume and quoted in the present review are all © Special Rider Music, except for those from 'Desire' and related texts, which are © Ram's Horn Music. The Spanish translations are all © Antonio J. Iriarte and Francisco J. García Cubero.*

*3. Masked Tortilla Productions are connected to '**Kaw Liga's Shelter From The Storm**', a Spanish-language Dylan site (<http://www.geocities.com/kawligas/>). Some of the background information used in this review has been obtained from that site, to whose organisers and authors I am most grateful: credits will of course be found at the appropriate places ('Kaw Liga' is the name of a Hank Williams song from 1952, which was taken up by Dylan in 'Renaldo and Clara').*

I

Ever since Bob Dylan sang, back in 1964, of those famous 'boots of Spanish leather', references to Hispanic culture have been liberally sprinkled across his work. One need only think of 'Spanish Harlem Incident', 'Goin' to Acapulco', or 'Señor' to feel the presence of the Spanish-Hispanic theme in his songwriting. The references are, certainly, mostly Latin American rather than Spanish proper, but are none the less Hispanic for that; and twice - on the traditional 'Spanish is the Loving Tongue' (1973) and his own 'Romance in Durango' (1975) - he even sings a few phrases in Spanish.

As Francisco García (co-translator of the volume under review) has shown in his study 'Spanish Album Incident', an essay originally published in 'The Telegraph' in 1991 and now available in a revised, Spanish-language version on the 'Kaw Liga's Shelter From The Storm' site (<http://www.geocities.com/kawligas/album.htm>), there were even at one time, in the late

70s and early 80s, well-substantiated rumours of an all-Spanish album by Dylan. This album, which would have had official release only in the Spanish-speaking world, would have consisted of Dylan classics, translated into the 'loving tongue' and performed in that language by the master himself (there was even talk of the songs being translated by no less a person than the English poet, novelist and writer on mythology Robert Graves, a long-term resident of Majorca, but speculation was cut short by Graves' death in 1978).

The project never reached the recording studio: had it been realised, it would have been interesting to compare Dylan's efforts in the language of Cervantes with those which have actually been released by his compeers Joan Baez and Linda Ronstadt. 1974 saw the release of the Baez album 'Gracias a la Vida' ('Here's To Life'), sung entirely in Spanish (apart from one song in Catalan), a powerful piece of work including songs by the Chilean legends Víctor Jara ('Te Recuerdo Amanda' - 'I Remember You, Amanda') and Violeta Parra (the title track), and a recital of lines from Pablo Neruda's epic poem 'Canto General' (approximately, 'Song of all things'; for more on Jara, Parra and Neruda, see below). In 1987, Linda Ronstadt released 'Canciones de Mi Padre' ('My Father's Songs'), an equally impressive, 100%-sung-in-Spanish tribute to Mexican musical tradition - a project which became a trilogy with the subsequent albums 'Más Canciones' ('More Songs', 1991) and 'Frenesí' ('Frenzy', 1992). Both Baez and Ronstadt do, of course, have the advantage of Hispanic roots, but the idea of Bob Dylan allowing the claiming of a stake in his own work by the language of the people whom President James K. Polk deprived of vast areas of land in the Mexican War of the 1840s is ... to say the least, intriguing.

California, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada and more were, let us not forget, once part of Mexico, and the character in 'Black Diamond Bay' 'sittin' home late one night/In L.A. watchin' old Cronkite' might, if history had gone differently, been a Mexican citizen, staring at the TV in Spanish. Today, 20 million inhabitants of the planet's only-remaining-superpower are Spanish speakers; Spanish is taken as an option by 50% of US undergraduates; the total value of all Spanish-language books sold among the 'gringos' exceeds the equivalent figures for Chile or Venezuela; and the two front-runners in the third millennium's first US presidential race, Vice-President Gore and Governor Bush, *both* proclaim their proficiency in Spanish on their campaign websites ('El País', Madrid, 17 February 2000, p. 46). As a backdrop to this historic trend, we may note that, in certain Dylan songs, Hispanic or quasi-Hispanic figures intrude strangely, as if to shatter the complacency of the white American protagonists - as if to say: 'I have returned, and now I want what's mine!': we may think of the Jack of Hearts ('I know I've seen that face somewhere ... maybe down in Mexico'); or the Brownsville Girl, a woman from border territory who is most likely a Hispanic or mestiza ('way down in Mexico you went to find a doctor and you never came back'); or even the Sad-Eyed Lady of the Lowlands, with her inexplicable, disturbing 'Spanish manners'. Nicola Menicacci has, in an article ('The Spanish Connection') which may be found elsewhere on this site, gone into informative detail on the Spanish-Hispanic side of Dylan's work, primarily from the musical point of view. This present article, however, will focus on a rather different aspect of the subject, namely the translation of Dylan's songs into Spanish.

## II

It will be useful beforehand to examine the history of Dylan's reception in Spain and Latin America. To take the latter first, we may presume that the barbed references in several Dylan songs to US imperialism in the region have not gone unnoticed - from the early 'A Hard Rain's

A-Gonna Fall' ('the depths of the deepest dark forest/ ... Where the home in the valley meets the damp dirty prison/And the executioner's face is always well hidden' and 'North Country Blues' ('down in the South American towns/Where the miners work almost for nothin'), through to the much later 'Señor' (with its pregnant subtitle 'Tales of Yankee Power') and 'Union Sundown' ('the car I drive is a Chevrolet/It was put together in Argentina/By a guy makin' thirty cents a day'). 'Señor' (1978), in particular, contains lines that may be read as an indirect reference to a certain General Pinochet's US-backed coup in Chile in 1973: 'Señor, señor,/Let's overturn these tables,/Disconnect these cables/This place don't make sense to me no more' (the 'cables' may point to the ITT telecommunications company, which is believed to have been one of the prime movers behind the bloodstained coup). Another Dylan song, 'Trouble', from 1981, has the line 'stadiums of the damned', which some have taken as a reference to the National Stadium in Santiago where, in September 1973, the neo-fascist Chilean military herded, tortured and 'eliminated' their political opponents.

Dylan has toured Latin America a total of four times, taking in, all in all, four Spanish-speaking countries plus Brazil. He first performed 'down in the South American towns' in 1990, with two dates in Brazil (São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro). He played four shows in Mexico in 1991 (two in Guadalajara and two in Mexico City), and, later that same year, toured the Southern Cone, doing three nights in Buenos Aires, one in the Uruguayan capital Montevideo, and five in Brazil (two in São Paulo, and one each in Rio, Porto Alegre and Belo Horizonte). Most recently, in 1998, Dylan performed three dates in two Spanish-speaking countries (two in Buenos Aires, one in Santiago, Chile), plus three in Brazil (Rio, São Paulo, Porto Alegre). On that tour, he included 'Señor' in the setlist on two occasions - in Buenos Aires on 5 April and, notably, in Santiago on 15 April. It is also worth recalling that the Argentinian release of his 'Down In The Groove' album enjoys a certain minor fame among Dylan collectors, thanks to the 'different' selection of tracks which erroneously appeared on the original issue, in the land of the tango and nowhere else, in 1987.

In Peru, in May 1991 the publication 'Meridiano' featured an article entitled 'Jokerman', by Alejandro Ferreyros Küppers, in honour of Dylan's 50th birthday. This text was extremely enthusiastic, despite a number of factual errors which might suggest that access to detailed information on Dylan's work may sometimes be hard to find in South America, and concluded with a quotation from the Nobel-winning Mexican poet Octavio Paz: 'La fijeza es siempre momentánea' ('the fixed is always fleeting'), approvingly applied to Dylan. These two examples suggest that in Latin American intellectual circles Dylan has for some time been considered not only as a poet, but as one who can be mentioned in the same breath as other, celebrated poets. Indeed, the connection with Octavio Paz was underscored just after the latter's death; on 24 April 1998, in an obituary article in 'Público', a Mexican newspaper based in Guadalajara, a city where, as we have seen, Dylan played in 1991 ('Adiós, poeta' - 'Farewell, poet'; <http://www.publi.com/news/1998/0424/a02.htm>), Juan José Doñán named 'el cantante Bob Dylan' ('the singer Bob Dylan'), alongside the Swiss film director Alain Tanner and Italy's screen idol Marcello Mastroianni, as being among the ranks of 'los lectores y devotos pacistas' ('Paz's devoted readers').

**Dylan's work has had a substantial impact in Argentina, in a fashion which may not be unrelated to his 'popular poet' aspect; the Argentinian poetic tradition includes such figures as 'Almafuerte' (Pedro Bonifacio Palacios, 1854-1917) and Evaristo Carriego (1883-1912), who sang in demotic jargon of a tough, working-class world of gamblers, ruffians and sex industry workers and whose careers have been chronicled with a**

**connoisseur's enthusiasm in essays by their compatriot Jorge Luis Borges (best known as a fabulist and often considered one of the greatest Spanish-language writers of all time).** The Argentinian singer-songwriter León Gieco, an artist whose music combines regional-folkloric and rock elements, is described by 'The Virgin Directory of World Music' (ed. Philip Sweeney, London: Virgin, 1991) as 'Dylan-influenced' (p. 223) - a judgment confirmed in Spain by an article published in 'El País' on 20 March 2000 (p. 51) which claimed that many see Gieco as 'el Bob Dylan argentino' ('the Argentinian Bob Dylan'). Gieco was exiled by the military dictatorship in 1976. His best-known composition, 'Sólo le pido a Dios' ('I only ask of God'), was performed in 1982, with Gieco himself contributing vocals and harmonica (!), by the internationally known Argentinian chanteuse Mercedes Sosa (it is available on the CD 'The Best Of Mercedes Sosa', released by Polygram in 1997); the song could be described as a Spanish-language cross between 'Restless Farewell' and 'Masters of War', and certainly suggests that the man from Minnesota has not been without influence in the land of the tango.

Dylan has also had a considerable impact in Chile. The Chilean poet Jorge Teillier mentions Dylan in his volume 'En el mudo corazón del bosque' ('In the silent heart of the forest' - Santiago: Cuadernos de la Gaceta, 1997), in a poem entitled 'Cuartetos imperfectos a Heidi Schmidlin' ('Imperfect quartets for Heidi Schmidlin'), addressing the poem's dedicatee: 'Heidi, a quien un día retrató Durero,/cuyo rostro es un poema de Dylan' ('Heidi, whom [Albrecht] Dürer once portrayed/Whose face is a poem by Dylan'). **In 1993, the poet Raúl Zurita was accused in the Chilean press, by the writer José Christian-Páez, of plagiarising from Dylan's song 'Highway 61 Revisited' in his poem 'Anteparaiso' ('Ante-paradise'), published in 1982 (see Enrique Lafourcade, 'Poeta de la macaca' ['Poet of inebriation'], 'El Mercurio', 3 September 2000; Claudio Aguilera, 'Plagios literarios: peligrosa tentación' ['Literary plagiarisms: a dangerous temptation'], 'La Tercera', 28 October 2000; latercera@copesa.cl). In the year 2000, interviewed on Dylan's Nobel nomination, Zurita, who had meanwhile been awarded, in that same year, the Premio Nacional de Literatura (National Prize for Literature), admitted that he had 're-created' Dylan's song in that poem, and, while arguing that Chile's own poet (and Nobel candidate) Nicanor Parra would be a more suitable recipient, nonetheless did Dylan the favour of mentioning him as a serious candidate for the prize. Zurita's views were expressed in a press article ('Premio del dolor periférico' ['Prize of peripheral sorrow'], 'El Mercurio', 15 May 2000) in which various Chilean poets were asked for their views on Dylan as Nobel candidate; the sample included Nicanor Parra himself, who generously singled out his fellow-candidate's song 'Tombstone Blues' for praise.**

Dylan's work also invites comparison with that of the two giants of modern Chilean song, Violeta Parra (1917-1967) and Víctor Jara (1938-1973). Again, the 'Virgin Directory' states that the 'politically radical folk-linked' Chilean music of the 60s and early 70s 'owed much musically to Bob Dylan' (p. 230), though its local Andean roots are also of crucial importance. Violeta Parra (herself Nicanor Parra's sister) travelled the length and breadth of Chile collecting traditional music. Her own compositions in the popular style have become classics of Chilean folk music; she committed suicide in 1967. Víctor Jara was at first active in the theatre, and later performed both his own (mostly political) songs and other Spanish and Latin American writers' and poets' material (he also covered Pete Seeger's 'Little Boxes', in Spanish); on 15 September 1973, his brutal murder in the Santiago stadium at the hands of Pinochet's thugs converted him into a martyr to the cause of committed song. The movement of which both songwriters were part, the 'nueva canción chilena' ('new Chilean song') had

similarities with the US protest-song movement of the early 60s, and the work of both has certain features in common with Dylan's; Violeta and Víctor alike drew on the resources of both popular tradition and 'official' poetry, producing songs whose words stand up impressively on the printed page, even without the music (it has to be added, though, that Jara remained 100% committed to the 'popular' and 'protest' model songwriting to the - very - bitter end, and in that respect he is a figure more like Phil Ochs than Dylan). In the English-speaking world, Parra's 'Gracias a la Vida' - the very last song she wrote, just before taking her leave of the planet - has (as noted above) been recorded, and frequently performed, by Joan Baez. Jara's songs have been covered by Baez ('Te Recuerdo Amanda' - again as noted above) and by Judy Collins, who included a version of his 'Plegaria a un Labrador' ('Prayer to a Ploughman'), sung in Spanish, on her 1976 album 'Bread and Roses'. His name is reasonably well-known in Britain, at least in certain left-wing milieux, thanks partly to his marriage to an Englishwoman, Joan Jara; at the time of Britain's punk wave, his fate was mentioned by the Clash on 'Sandinista!', their highly political album of 1980. This legacy of Víctor Jara in the Anglophone universe was recalled in detail in October 1999 in Peru, in a commemorative lecture by the journalist María Elena Cornejo.

### III

If we now move 'across that lonesome ocean' and consider Spain, it can reasonably said that Dylan has long been popular among listeners and well-regarded among critics in the land of El Cid. His work has certainly had more recognition in Spain than, for instance, in neighbouring Portugal, where as late as the 1980s relatively few of his albums were obtainable on the market and, indeed, his reputation as a poet never seems quite to have got across. In Spain, before 1970 Dylan's albums were very difficult to obtain, except as imports: only a few EPs and singles were released on the Spanish market in the 1960s, mostly following the French versions - which means that during his most 'famous' period Dylan's work was, paradoxically, a relatively little-known phenomenon beyond the Pyrenees. This situation was remedied starting from 1970, when CBS opened its Spanish offices and started releasing its back catalogue: by 1973, all of Dylan's albums were available in Spain, and they have remained on sale ever since, originally in vinyl and cassette form and now, of course, in CD format.

A considerable number of cover versions of Dylan songs have been released over the years in Spain - not just in Spanish, but also in Catalan, Galician and Basque. The post-Franco Spanish state recognises these four languages as official. Catalan is spoken in Barcelona and the rest of the surrounding region of Catalonia, with variants in the Valencia region and the Balearic Islands; Galician, which resembles Portuguese, is the language of the Atlantic region of Galicia, in the north-west (main cities: Santiago de Compostela, La Coruña and Vigo); Basque is the tongue of the Basque Country in the north-east (main cities: Bilbao, San Sebastián and Vitoria). Catalan and Galician are both Latin-derived and, while unequivocally distinct languages, are reasonably close to Spanish; Basque is totally unrelated to the other three and is, indeed, not an Indo-European language at all.

The history of Dylan covers in Spain has been traced - once again by Francisco García - in an article entitled 'Bob Dylan: El libro de los discos españoles' ('Bob Dylan: The book of Spanish records'), privately published in 1993 by Masked Tortilla Productions. His research makes it clear that there has never been any lack of interest in translating and performing Dylan in Spain, although it does also seem that Dylan material has tended not to be covered by 'name' artists.

It appears from Francisco's article that Dylan songs began to be sporadically translated and covered in the Spanish state as early as 1964, but the earliest cover version in any of the state's languages that is actually dated in his text is 'No et serveixo', a Catalan translation of 'It Ain't Me Babe' released in 1968 on an EP by Albert Batiste. Other pioneer covers included several more in Catalan, by various artists (among them, interestingly, at least two different recordings of 'When The Ship Comes In'), and versions of - unsurprisingly - 'Blowin' in the Wind', in Catalan again (by the duo Ramòn Casajoana and Joan Boix), in Basque (by Juan Migel), and in Spanish (by Los Pekenikes). Also interpreted, in both Spanish and Catalan, in the 1960s or 1970s were 'Farewell Angelina' and 'Mr Tambourine Man'. Later years have seen a fair stream of Spanish-language covers, of titles ranging from the obvious ('Like a Rolling Stone', 'I Want You' or 'Knockin' on Heaven's Door') to the far more obscure ('If Dogs Run Free', and even, remarkably, 'Tell Me').

The above versions are all of individual Dylan songs, whether as singles or as tracks on EPs, LPs or CDs. Several entire albums of Dylan-in-translation have also been issued in Spain, the first being 'Los éxitos de Bob Dylan', credited to Danny Roberts (probably a pseudonym) and released in 1978. This was an unauthorised release, as were all its successors until December 1996, when « Bob Dylan Revisited: Un Tributo en la Lengua del Amor » appeared. This CD - the subtitle means 'A Tribute in the Loving Tongue' - was issued by Seminola Records of Valencia (catalogue number SE-0496-05-CD). It is mentioned by Lars M. Banke in an article entitled 'A Few Notes on Bob Dylan Cover Version Albums' ('On The Tracks', No 13, Spring 1998, pp. 10-19). Banke states that on this album 'various Spanish artists do a total of twelve Dylan songs ... translated by Francisco J. García Cubero, who is also the originator of the project' (p. 15).

This is, of course, the very same Francisco García who stars as co-translator of the volume now under review. Indeed, he translated - or, as the booklet notes put it, adapted - eleven of the twelve songs on the CD (the exception being 'De vuelta en la autopista 61', a.k.a. 'Highway 61 Revisited', which was translated directly by Lobos Negros, the group performing it). The musical approach is generally 'rock' rather than 'folk', and not on the whole over-obviously Spanish, although the project's one 'name' artist, Miquel Gil (who made his name with the extremely fine Valencian Mediterranean-folk outfit Al Tall), contributes passionate flamenco-tinged vocals to a decidedly transformed 'Has de servir a alguien' ('Gotta Serve Somebody'). The Spanish lyrics (but not the original English texts) are printed in full in the booklet, which also contains a prose-poem tribute to Dylan by Fernando Garcín (a Valencian poet), including the following touching words: 'Ésta es una pequeña aportación de cuero español. En la lengua del amor.' ('This is a small contribution made of Spanish leather. In the loving tongue'). The translations sung on this CD, it should be stressed, do *not* belong to the same project as 'Del Huracán a las Tierras Altas'. These versions are deliberately 'singable', respecting the originals' musical form rather than faithfully sticking to the sense of the words; with four exceptions ('Gotta Serve Somebody', 'Man Gave Names to all the Animals', 'Political World' and 'Everything is Broken'), the songs featured are all pre-1975; and a number of the selections are neither performed nor translated in full, i.e. some stanzas have been left out. Those translations from this CD which do overlap with the new volume are, then, *not* identical to the now-published ones, even though they are by one of the book's co-authors. In his article, Banke, confusingly and plain wrongly, claims that the songs on 'Bob Dylan Revisitado' are recorded 'in Catalan', which is not the case: they are *all* in Spanish, full stop! He also fails to

mention the crucial circumstance that the translations performed on this CD have - like those in our present volume - the signal merit of being officially authorised by Special Rider Music.

In his article, Banke also mentions a CD called 'Pirata', released on Boomerang Records in 1995 by an Iberian group called (unpronounceably) '7 Lvvas', on which 'nine of the fourteen songs ... are Dylan songs and some of the others are Dylan-related traditionals'. The translations, by Fredi Barreiro, are, Banke claims, in 'Galician-Portuguese' (p. 15). It would in fact be more accurate to say simply that they are in Galician, as this language, while historically a variant of Portuguese, is spoken in a region which has been uninterruptedly a part of *the Spanish state* for as long as that state has existed. 'Pirata' consists, indeed, of (free) translations/adaptations of nine Dylan songs, among them 'All Along the Watchtower', 'What Was It You Wanted?', 'Maggie's Farm' and 'Visions of Johanna' (on the two last-named, Maggie has become 'Maruxa' and Johanna has metamorphosed into 'Rosanna'), plus the traditional 'Barbara Allen' and 'Jim Jones' (the remaining tracks are by Bruce Springsteen and Jimmy Buffett). These too are rock-oriented versions; the packaging does *not* include the translated lyrics, which makes comment rather difficult for those not brought up in the shadow of Santiago's cathedral. Since then, '7 Lvvas' have, apparently, put out two more releases (both in CD-R format), entitled 'Que Tomas' and 'Nu', containing, inter alia, more Dylan songs in Galician, among them 'Jokerman' and 'Lily, Rosemary and the Jack of Hearts'. It is, at least, interesting to find Dylan's texts re-created in this fashion in a minority language like Galician, which few enough US 'Anglos' have even heard of!

**Since Bakke's article appeared, two albums have appeared consisting mostly of cover versions in Catalan, courtesy of the duo Gerard Quintana and Jordi Batiste. In 1998 they put out 'Els miralls de Dylan' (Música Global Discogràfica [Girona/Gerona] 28198/03), a CD consisting of performances (with backing musicians) of eleven Catalan translations of Dylan songs, together with an original poem by Pere Quart and two Dylan offerings in (somewhat dubious) English, namely 'One More Cup of Coffee' and a shortened version of 'Idiot Wind'. This was followed in 2000 by a second volume, 'Els miralls de Dylan: Sense reina ni as' (same label, 33000/03), containing another twelve translations plus 'Romance in Durango' sung in English. The arrangements may be described as folk-rock, and are in some cases - e.g. 'Sara' and 'Shelter From The Storm' on the second CD - outstanding, communicating Dylan's poetic vision in powerful and memorable fashion. Both CDs come with the Catalan lyrics (the translations are by various hands, including Quintana and Batiste); the range of material included over the two releases does not extend chronologically beyond 'Street-Legal' (represented by 'Señor' on the second CD), but does, ambitiously, encompass 'A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall' (on the first) and 'Stuck Inside of Mobile with the Memphis Blues Again' and 'Sad-Eyed Lady of the Lowlands' (on the second), all translated and performed in full. This project must, indeed, be one of the most ambitious attempts ever made to transpose Dylan into another language, to be mentioned in the same breath as Hugues Aufray's comparable efforts in French.**

**If we now move from cover versions to consider live performances by Dylan himself, we find that** Dylan's first tour of Spain did not take place till as late as 1984, but since then he has retraced Spanish stages with some regularity - in 1989, 1991 (the 'Guitar Legends' festival in Seville), 1993, 1995, 1998, and, most recently, 1999. The 1999 tour, from 9 to 22 April, took in not just the 'mountains of Madrid' and the 'coasts of Barcelona', but, in all, eleven cities (one night in each) in ten of mainland Spain's regions, from Santiago de Compostela in

Galicia to Murcia in the south-east. The present volume of translations includes, as a centre insert, sixteen previously unpublished colour photos of Dylan from that tour, by Manuel Díaz Echeguren.

Dylan's fame as a songwriter and poet has been consistently high in a country in whose various regions poetry and music have traditionally been no strangers to each other, whether in the medieval 'cantigas' (songs) and 'romances' (ballads), or in the 'saetas', the Easter chants of Andalusia (we shall meet the two last-named forms later in this article). It may also be reasonably stated that contemporary Spain is more accepting than Britain or the US of the notion that non-classical singers can legitimately record and perform 'official' poetry. Several well-known (and commercially successful) artists in the folk/singer-songwriter area have even made a point of specialising in the field of poems set to music. Among these are: Paco Ibáñez, who has recorded material ranging from medieval 'romances' to contemporary poets like Rafael Alberti; the very popular Catalan singer Joan Manuel Serrat, who has issued (in Spanish, not Catalan) tribute albums consisting entirely of poems by, respectively, Antonio Machado and Miguel Hernández, both of them prestigious twentieth-century poets; and Amancio Prada, who hails from León province, on the borderline between Castile and Galicia, and has recorded highly personal interpretations of poetry in both Spanish and Galician, including, notably, a fine tribute album of poems by the nineteenth-century writer Rosalía de Castro (Galicia's national poetess, who was herself strongly influenced by the folk tradition and has a status in her home region comparable to that of Robert Burns). In the Anglophone world, by contrast, such fusions of 'art-poetry' and 'popular music' are extremely rare: Burns' songs, certainly, continue to be recorded by Scottish performers, and William Butler Yeats' poems are quite often set to music in Ireland, but outside the Celtic fringes it is another matter. Joan Baez did record, back in 1968, an album called 'Baptism', consisting of highly credible versions of poems whose authors ranged from John Donne to Henry Treece, and even (in English translation) Spain's very own Federico García Lorca (for whom see below); but this album, fine though it is, is not exactly the best-known or easiest-to-find item in Ms Baez's back catalogue. In Spain, it is not culturally difficult for readers and listeners to accept the notion of the songwriter-poet, and this factor has no doubt facilitated Bob Dylan's reception there.

A fair number of critical and biographical studies of Dylan have been published in Spain over the years, and many of these are listed on the 'Kaw Liga's Shelter From The Storm' site. One interesting series which is not mentioned on that site is the set of four volumes available under the imprint 'Los Juglares' (Ediciones Júcar, Madrid). This is a collection of studies of contemporary musicians, generally combining biography, critical comments, photos and lyrics, which straddles the Hispanic and non-Hispanic musical worlds - and usually maintains a high standard of accuracy and usefulness (though, as we shall see, there are exceptions). The very first volume in the collection was ... 'Bob Dylan', by Jesús Ordovás, in 1972, and since then there have been 'Bob Dylan 2' by Mariano Antolín Rato (today a published novelist) in 1975, 'Bob Dylan 3' by Danny Faux in 1982, and - alas - 'Bob Dylan 4' by Vicente Escudero in 1992. Of these four, the volumes by Rato (polemically analytic) and Faux (rich in detail) are the most interesting. Ordovás' introductory study leans rather heavily on Anthony Scaduto's 'Bob Dylan', but it remains of undeniable importance as, quite simply, the first serious book on Dylan to appear in Spain (Scaduto's biography was eventually published in Spanish, again by Ediciones Júcar, in 1976). The weakest of the four is Escudero's book, which can only be described as hack-work - a botched piece of second-rate journalism, occasionally redeemed by a stray insight but spattered with typographical and bibliographical errors and riddled with

tell-tale signs that the author's command of English is not quite what he might like the reader to think. Each of the first three volumes includes a selection of lyrics in both the original and Spanish translation; Escudero's, however, does not (no doubt just as well), and so Los Juglares' (incomplete) set of Dylan translations goes no further than 1980 and 'Saved'.

The history of Dylan translation in Spain may be traced on the 'Kaw Liga's Shelter From The Storm' site. The key predecessor of the present volume is the two-volume set 'Escritos, Canciones y Dibujos' ('Writings, Songs and Drawings'), with translations by Carlos Álvarez and published by Editorial R. Aguilera/Ediciones Castilla (Madrid) in 1975. This is an officially authorised, bilingual Spanish/English volume, based on Dylan's 'Writings and Drawings' volume and extended up to 'Blood on the Tracks': the new volume carries on chronologically from where that one left off. Since 1975, a number of other books have appeared in Spain either wholly or partly dedicated to translations of Dylan, some of them including examples of his more recent work. The 'Kaw Liga's' site lists half-a-dozen of these, to which should be added the translations included in the three Los Juglares volumes mentioned above. In addition, the bulk of the Álvarez translations were reissued by Editorial Fundamentos (Madrid) in 1984, in two volumes - again bilingual - entitled 'Canciones 1' and 'Canciones 2' ('Songs 1' and 'Songs 2'). These were, at the time of writing, still available in Spain; it should be noted, however, that they do *not* include all of the Álvarez texts originally published in 1975 - the selection is confined almost exclusively to songs actually released on Dylan albums, and even then there are omissions (e.g. *all* the 'Basement Tapes' material is left out, as are the 'new' songs first released on 'Greatest Hits 2').

'Del Huracán a las Tierras Altas' is, meanwhile, unique in two crucial aspects: it is the *only* book of Dylan translations in Spanish to bring together *almost all of the songwriter's work from 'Desire' onwards*; and it is the *only* volume covering the period from 1975 on to have received *official authorisation* from Dylan's copyright administrators. Some, but not all of the Iriarte/García translations have previously appeared in limited-edition booklets, also issued by Masked Tortilla Productions, but what is most striking about the new book is its visible aspiration to quality, rigour and - for the period it covers - *completeness*.

#### IV

The Masked Tortilla has handed the fortunate Spanish-speaking reader a handsome, large-format soft-cover volume, graced with an expressive cover photo of Bob Dylan from 1999. Unlike its predecessor 'Escritos, Canciones y Dibujos', this is *not* a bilingual edition: only the album and song titles appear in English, a circumstance which immediately throws a greater weight on to the Spanish text, forcing it to stand or fall on its own. There is a one-page prologue, penned by the Argentinian singer Andrés Calamaro (Calamaro, who is a well-known artist in both South America and Spain, and has named or quoted Dylan in more than one of his own songs, opened for Dylan on eight nights of his 1999 Spanish tour, indeed covering the song 'Seven Days' on five of them; his text is an enthusiast's salute to Bob's creative power); this is followed by a three-page introduction of a factual and methodological nature, signed jointly by the two translators. There are very few annotations: notes appear only to a total of six texts - so, again, everything is down to the songs themselves and the quality of the translations. It should be stressed once again that this volume has, like 'Escritos, Canciones y Dibujos', the official imprimatur of Dylan's publishers - although this time, for whatever reason, the authorisation has not extended to permission to include the English texts.

The selection and organisation criteria are clearly set out in the translators' introduction. For a volume of this kind, a number of groundrules have to be set, concerning: which songs to include; what source texts to use; how to arrange and order the texts in the volume; and how to present the texts on the page. On all these counts, the criteria followed by Antonio and Francisco are eminently sensible and justifiable.

The basic rule followed by the translators is to include all songs composed by Dylan which have been officially released over this period, whether by Dylan himself or by others - or which have at least been officially published, even if no recording exists by anyone. This excludes most songs written and/or performed in collaboration, with the salient exceptions of the Dylan-Jacques Levy compositions from 'Desire' and the associated sessions, and the Dylan-Sam Shepard triumph 'Brownsville Girl'. Out, then, are the Travelling Wilburys songs; out are the unreleased songs composed with Helena Springs; out are numbers like 'Silvio' to which Dylan wrote the music but not the words; and out are the minor co-compositions 'Got My Mind Made Up' and 'Under Your Spell' - which, I respectfully submit, few will miss. Nor will many cry into their pillows over the omission of 'Legionnaire's Disease', 'Had a Dream About You, Baby', or 'Night After Night'; the absence of 'Seven Days' is, however, more regrettable. The above four are, unless I am mistaken, the only songs from the period that seem to meet all the criteria but have not made it into this book. Dylan students will, inevitably, miss all the fine folk, blues and old-time numbers interpreted on 'Good As I Been To You' and 'World Gone Wrong', but those songs, we have to admit, were not written by Dylan, however much he may have made them his own. 'World Gone Wrong' is, however, represented by Dylan's booklet notes to the CD; these and the author's notes to 'Desire' are the only two specimens of Dylan's prose to have made it into this volume.

The original texts for the translations have been taken from the official sources - the book 'Lyrics 1962-1985' (up to 'Empire Burlesque'), the sheet-music issues for individual albums, the CD-ROM 'Highway 61 Interactive' and the official Dylan website ([www.bobdylan.com](http://www.bobdylan.com)). Only one version of each song is translated (no variant readings). Stanzas included in the printed text but omitted by Dylan on record (e.g. the 'missing' 'shadow in the door' verse from 'New Pony') have generally been kept, but where there is a discrepancy between the printed or electronic text and what Dylan sings on record, the translators' policy has been to opt for the latter. This last rule, it must be said, has in fact not been applied in a hard-and-fast fashion. In stanza 2 of 'Where Are You Tonight?', for instance, the translation follows the printed text from 'Lyrics' ('the time and the place that the trouble would start') and not the version performed on 'Street-Legal' ('the time and the place that we'd part'); while the text used for 'The Groom's Still Waiting at the Altar' is actually a compromise between the 'Lyrics' variant and that sung by Dylan on the released version (the choruses follow the record, but in stanza 1 the 'walls deteriorated' reading from 'Lyrics' has been chosen in preference to the 'wild goose chase' variant from the record). However, the point is, we might conclude, not to follow a one-size-fits-all model of 'authenticity', but to establish the *best possible text* of a song from among the permissible alternatives - an approach which is, surely, further justified if the chosen variant is then to serve as the source text for the *best possible translation*.

The sequencing of the song texts over the volume follows the same principle as 'Lyrics', i.e. an album-by-album approach. This is, of course, more complicated than it might seem, thanks to the existence of out-takes, single-only tracks, etc, and the solution adopted for these cases is, again, that of the English-language volume. The sequence chosen for the individual album-and-associated-tracks units is: first, the tracks from the album; then material from singles;

then out-takes released only later; and, finally, 'songs from the sessions' that have been officially recorded only by other artists, or else published but recorded by no-one (this approach, incidentally, means there are no separate sections for 'Biograph' or 'The Bootleg Series vols. 1-3'). By way of example, the 'Desire' section consists of: the nine tracks from the 1975 album (seven of them co-written by Dylan with Jacques Levy); Dylan's sleeve notes to the album; 'Rita May', a track released only on a single (1976) and on the Japanese compilation 'Masterpieces' (1978); 'Abandoned Love', an out-take released on 'Biograph' in 1985; 'Golden Loom' and 'Catfish', out-takes released on 'The Bootleg Series' in 1991; 'Sign Language', a song from the 'Desire' period which appeared on Eric Clapton's 1976 album 'No Reason to Cry', with Dylan helping out on vocals, but is to be found on no Dylan album; and, finally, one last, very obscure song from around the same time, the unreleased - and, it seems, uncovered - Dylan-Levy number 'Money Blues'. The approach, then, is roughly chronological, although the chronology is one of composition, rather than release dates. Other kinds of arrangement would of course have been possible. The songs could have been arranged alphabetically (but, if so, by English or Spanish title?); or else thematically, following the compiler's notion of what the nineteenth-century British anthologist Francis Turner Palgrave called the most 'poetically-effective' order. The latter option would have been intriguing, and would surely have thrown up some interesting juxtapositions, but the chronological approach has the virtue of (approximate) simplicity, and allows the non-English speaker to follow the songs album by album, track by track, translation in hand.

## V

For the songs are, indeed, arranged on the page as poems, and poetry is what they come out as. The translators have, wisely, not allowed more than one song per page, and have in all cases kept the original division into stanzas. The result is that the book has the appearance of a volume of Spanish-language verse - an appearance that is fully justified by the content. In the great majority of cases, Dylan's songs - *in these transformed and translated versions* - read, beyond any doubt, not as 'songs' but as 'poems'. The only substantial exception, the odd minor composition apart, is virtually the entire group of 'Empire Burlesque' songs from 1984, which I am not alone in believing to mark the all-time nadir of Dylan's songwriting - material which, thank goodness quite untypically, consists of lover-for-your-life 'songs' and nothing more). The translations have, indeed, been conceived to be read, not to be sung - hence the disappearance of the originals' rhymes and metrical schemes. What we have in Spanish inevitably looks far more like free verse - though not entirely, thanks to the retention of the stanza form and, in many songs, the repeated device of the refrain. Something is, clearly, sacrificed, above all in musicality; idioms can also get lost, and puns unavoidably disappear. On the other hand, Dylan's power of imagery comes over undimmed in translation, and the same is true of his narrative gifts (a number of songs - among them 'Isis', 'Brownsville Girl', 'TV Talkin' Song', and 'Highlands' - read as fine Spanish-language short-stories-in-verse). And on the credit side, in many cases the loss of rhyme is amply offset by remarkable moments of sonority and verbal force in the very Spanish of the translation. All these points will, of course, be clearer from concrete examples, and these I shall now endeavour to provide.

## VI

Clearly, no translation - still less a deliberately non-rhyming one - can hope to reproduce in full the multiple poetic characteristics of Dylan's writing - rhyme, rhythm, alliteration,

assonance, onomatopoeia, metaphor, personification, puns and wordplay, quotation and allusion, reanimation of idiom and cliché, and so on.

To take the aspect of rhyme first, Dylan's 'skipping reels of rhyme' may be largely absent from the translated texts, but here and there the Spanish language allows a rhyme to be preserved, as in the superb 'wagon/dragon' coupling in the fourth verse of 'Señor', which comes out, in Spanish too, as 'vagón/dragón'. Indeed, in 'When He Returns', stanza two, the original 'arrow/narrow' internal rhyme ('Truth is an arrow and the gate is narrow that it passes through') is finely rendered by a parallel, brand-new internal rhyme in Spanish, corresponding exactly to the two rhyming words in the English - 'flecha/estrecha' ('La Verdad es una flecha y estrecha es la puerta que atraviesa': a keenly balanced, sonorous line that fully matches the original).

It is true that this translation fails to reproduce - probably no translation could! - the extraordinary effect of Dylan's closing *non-rhyme* in 'Man Gave Names to all the Animals' ('He saw an animal as smooth as glass/Slithering his way through the grass./Saw him disappear by a tree near a lake ... [THE END!!!]'); the sting in the tail here comes, literally, from the *absence* of the word 'snake', conjured up as the logical rhyming-partner for 'lake', and I certainly can think of no Spanish word of a serpentine signification that might rhyme with 'lago', or, indeed, any synonym for 'lake' that would rhyme with 'serpiente'. Nonetheless, the translation runs: 'Vio un animal suave como el cristal./deslizándose entre la hierba./Lo vio desaparecer tras un árbol, cerca de un lago ...' - and if 'lago' doesn't twist ineluctably onwards to 'serpiente', even so, the word that renders 'grass', 'hierba', does, suggestively, form at least an off-rhyme with another Spanish term for 'snake', 'culebra' (which is related, via Portuguese, to the English 'cobra') ... Still within these pregnant three lines, the onomatopoeic effect in the English (those suitably 'hissing' s-sounds in 'smooth', 'glass', 'slithering', 'grass', 'disappear') is partially retained in the Spanish ('suave', 'cristal', 'deslizándose', 'desaparecer'), and, in addition, the sonority is enhanced by the *introduction* of an internal rhyme, 'animal/cristal'.

That final line of 'Man Gave Names to all the Animals' brings us on to the general question of alliteration and assonance. These poetic techniques, to which Dylan frequently resorts, are - with a little ingenuity - easier to reproduce in another language than is rhyme. A song which throws out some interesting challenges in this respect is 'Jokerman'. The first line offers a hissing alliterative sequence on 's', similar to what we have just seen for 'Man Gave Names ...', and this time preceding an actual naming of the word 'snake': 'Distant ships sailing into the mist,/You were born with a snake in both of your fists while a hurricane was blowing'. The translation offers: 'Barcos a lo lejano perdiéndose en la niebla/naciste con una serpiente en cada puño mientras soplaba un huracán': the hissing sound is lost in the first stanza but does persist in the second, while the line beginning 'barcos', with its alliterations on 'n', comes out finely balanced, making the reader feel the stately, swaying motion of the ships. 'Jokerman' is, though, a song particularly rich in assonances, notably on the sound 'I'. The same first stanza has the phrase 'the eyes of the idol with the iron head', which contains three drawn-out long 'I's; stanza 2 offers: 'So swiftly the sun sets in the sky,/You rise up and say goodbye to no-one'; and the chorus, above all, gives us the line: 'Bird fly high by the light of the moon', which contains no less than four long 'I's. These repeated 'I' sounds connect directly with the song's basic questions: what kind of 'I', or ego, does the Jokerman symbolise? is he an image of the authentic, creative self ('Michelangelo indeed could have carved out your features'), or of the dark, destructive self ('manipulator of crowds', 'going to Sodom and Gomorrah')? For the three passages with repeated 'I' sounds, the translation offers: 'mientras brillan los ojos del ídolo de cabeza de hierro' (stanza 1); 'El sol se pone deprisa en el cielo,/te levantas y no te

despides de nadie' (stanza 2); and 'pájaro, vuela alto a la luz de la luna'. The first two, it must be said, are literal rather than poetic translations, with the assonance lost. In the line from the chorus, however, the translation has merits all of its own: instead of the assonance on 'I', it introduces a rapid alliteration on 'l' ('vuela', 'alto', 'luz', 'luna'), which finely communicates the flitting movement of the song's moonlight bird. This is one of those fortunate moments where the Spanish text creates its own poetry, giving rise to a brand-new sonority which compensates, at least in part, for the poetic effects lost from the original.

As the text of 'Jokerman' suggests, ambiguity and doubleness are, indeed, among Bob Dylan's recurrent themes - as in the line from 'Angelina', 'My right hand drawin' back while my left hand advances'. On the linguistic plane, one means of highlighting the doubleness of language is to resort to punning and wordplay, and, indeed, Dylan frequently employs these devices. The problem for the translator is that, as should be self-evident, it is wellnigh impossible to transpose a pun intact from one language to another. In the present volume, three songs throw up this conundrum in particularly acute form - 'I and I', 'Disease of Conceit' and 'Union Sundown'. 'I and I' is a song which, carrying on from 'Jokerman's exploration of the divided self, unforgettably dramatises the clash of authoritarian and libertarian selves within a single human consciousness. It has the theme of doubleness written into its title - which the Spanish text renders as 'Yo y yo'. This is correct enough, although even here - when the title phrase is repeated in the refrain ('I and I/in creation where one's nature neither honours nor forgives' - 'Yo y yo,/en la creación, donde la naturaleza de uno ni honra ni perdona'), the reader has to note that the conventions of Spanish typography - unlike 'I' in English, 'yo' takes a capital letter *only* at the beginning of a line or sentence - already mean that the double theme is not reflected on the page with the perfection of the English text ('I' and 'I' are *typographically identical*, 'Yo' and 'yo' are not). In stanza 3 come the arresting lines: 'Took a stranger to teach me to look into justice's beautiful face/And to see an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth'. The phrase 'an eye for an eye' is of course biblical, from Exodus 21:24 ('Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot'), but it also contains an audacious pun on 'I' ('an I for an I'), thus replicating the song's theme of the split self - especially as the eyes are by definition two in number. Dylan thus uses the ambiguity of language to create an imaginative link between the patriarchal law of the Old Testament and the song's broader theme of the struggle between the liberal or creative self and its severe, punitive alter ego. The Spanish text, however, translates Dylan's 'eye for eye' line: 'y a ver ojo por ojo y diente por diente', and - as no identity applies between 'ojo' (eye) and 'yo' (I) - the eye/I pun simply vanishes into thin air.

Exactly the same problem recurs in 'Disease of Conceit', with its lines 'Whole lot of people seeing double tonight from the disease of conceit/Give you delusions of grandeur and an evil eye/Give you the idea that you're too good to die/And they bury you from your head to your feet'. Here, as in 'I and I', we have the theme of doubleness ('seeing double'), explicitly linked to an 'eye' which can also be heard as an 'I'. The 'evil eye' of malice is, at the same time, an 'evil I' afflicted by pride, 'conceit' and 'delusions of grandeur' - not to mention immortality - an arrogant 'I' that gets its come-uppance from the knock-out blow of death. For his arresting pun on 'evil eye/evil I', Dylan has very possibly drawn on 'The Tell-Tale Heart', Edgar Allan Poe's celebrated tale of obsession, murder and self-destruction first published in 1845 - in which the narrator murders his neighbour, an old man who, he believes, has the 'evil eye', but whose imputed malice may equally be a projection of his murderer's own dark self or 'evil I' ('I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye forever'; 'for it was not the old man who vexed me, but his Evil Eye' (Poe, 'The Fall of the House of Usher and Other Writings', Penguin edition (1986), pp. 277, 278). However, once again the Spanish

version of 'Disease of Conceit' cannot communicate this element of the song's complex linguistic and textual connotations. The line 'Give you delusions of grandeur and an evil eye' simply becomes 'Te provoca delirios de grandeza y mal de ojo': 'mal de ojo' is certainly the Spanish equivalent of 'evil eye', but the eye/I duality has fallen by the wayside.

'Union Sundown' is a song that has a rather different kind of pun written into its title, the reference here being not metaphysical but political. The word 'union' in the title can refer either to the United States (as in Woody Guthrie's line 'Every state in this Union us migrants have been', in 'Pastures of Plenty') or to trade unions/labour unions (as in Dylan's own early 'Talkin' New York': 'even joined the union and paid my dues'). Whichever way the listener takes it, the message is that *neither* the United States taken as a whole *nor* that country's trade unions are doing anything to protect the interests of workers, either at home or abroad: industrial jobs are being shed by an Uncle Sam bent on free-market restructuring, while those in Asia and Latin America who replace the sacked US workers are viciously and cynically exploited. Both the US and the unions are explicitly mentioned in the song text (stanza 3: 'nothin' you got is US-made'; stanza 4: 'the unions are big business, friend'), but in the title and the chorus ('it's sundown on the union', both senses are compressed into the one word 'union'). This feat of compression is impossible in Spanish, where the word for 'trade union' is not 'unión', but 'sindicato': the translators have plumped for the 'United States' sense of 'union' for both title and chorus, rendering 'union sundown' as 'ocaso de la Unión', although, still, 'los sindicatos' make a brief bow in stanza 4. Some cases of seeing double, alas, come out single in translation ...

Idioms are another snare for the translator: many English idioms are not translatable into Spanish, although a common European and Christian heritage means that some exceptions to this rule exist. One of the hallmarks of Dylan's writing at its sharpest is his knack of breathing new life into pre-existing idioms by extending and developing them - for instance, by returning the abstract back to the concrete; or, alternatively, by placing two tired old phrases in surprising juxtaposition and thus resurrecting the expressive potential of both. In 'Heart of Mine', we find the line 'you can play with fire, but you'll get the bill': Dylan takes the familiar phrase 'play with fire', and unexpectedly expands its sense - asking the listener to imagine a metaphorical arsonist being asked to pay up in figurative greenbacks! Here, our translation has: 'puedes jugar con fuego, pero te pasarán la factura' (the second part of the translated line means, literally, 'but they'll pass you the bill'). This *does* manage to reproduce Dylan's conceptual wordplay in Spanish, as, fortunately the idiom 'play with fire'/'jugar con fuego' happens to exist in both languages. In 'Foot of Pride', Dylan's extraordinarily word-rich tirade against the unrighteous, the outcome is less happy. This song, again, has Dylan giving new life to a stock expression, namely 'laughing all the way to the bank' - which he converts into 'sing «Amazing Grace» all the way to the Swiss banks'; the specificity of 'Swiss banks' converts the phrase back from abstract to concrete, while to imagine the lucky depositor not laughing but singing - and a hymn at that! - adds an unexpected note of comedy. The translation, however, only has: 'cantar «Amazing Grace» camino de los bancos suizos' - a correct enough literal rendering, but one that can't bring out the connotations of the original. The same song offers the arresting line: 'They kill babies in the crib and say, «Only the good die young»', which shows Dylan welding together two clichés with devastating effect: the unregenerate, he implies, even have the nerve to justify their cruelties with a totally inappropriate rhetoric. The translation here has: 'Matan a los niños en la cuna,/y dicen que

« Sólo los buenos mueren jóvenes »' - a rendering which, though literal, does contrive to work, since 'only the good die young' is an axiom out of the Greco-Roman heritage that is common to both English and Spanish cultures. So it seems that for idioms and clichés and their transportation between the two languages, the conclusion is ... you win some, you lose some.

Inevitably, certain specifically Anglophone cultural references vanish in translation. In particular, Dylan's frequent quotations from older song traditions, above all the blues, and from the Bible, are especially culture-specific: the language of the blues is a quintessentially American form of English, while no Spanish translation of the Bible has the cultural resonance that the 1611 King James Bible (or Authorised Version), from which Dylan quotes so liberally - and not only in his 'Christian period' - has in English-speaking countries. The Spanish-speaking listener-reader is unlikely to guess from the translation alone that Dylan is - with slight amendments - quoting Robert Johnson at key moments in 'Changing of the Guards' and 'Where Are You Tonight?' ('my last deal gone down', 'the juice running down my leg'), or that 'Tryin' to Get to Heaven' is largely a collage of quotations from old blues, folk and gospel songs. Nor will it be obvious, except to those very familiar with the Bible in Spanish, that the title of 'Foot of Pride' comes straight from Psalms 36:11 ('Let not the foot of pride come against me'), or that entire lines of 'In the Summertime' ('Fools they made a mock of sin', 'Poverty and shame was theirs') are near-verbatim quotations from Proverbs, 14:8 and 13:18 ('Fools make a mock at sin'; 'Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction'). The specificity of the King James Bible is central - Dylan is quoting not just from the Bible but from *this* English version, with all the literary and cultural gravitas which it has accumulated over several centuries; and - given that the Authorised Version is a translation itself - that connotation cannot be got across in a Spanish translation of Dylan.

Literary allusions constitute another culture-specific aspect of Dylan's texts. In 'Jokerman', stanza 2, a well-read English-speaking listener will recognise the line 'Fools rush in where angels fear to tread' as a verbatim quotation from Alexander Pope's poem of 1711, 'Essay on Criticism', which in turn supplied the title for E.M. Forster's novel of 1905, 'Where Angels Fear To Tread'. The literal Spanish rendering, 'Los tontos se apresuran a entrar donde los ángeles temen pisar', cannot carry the same baggage of literary connotation. Further on in the same song, when, in stanza 4, Dylan sings: 'Well, the Book of Leviticus and Deuteronomy,/The law of the jungle and the sea are your only teachers', the Spanish person encountering 'Tus únicos maestros han sido el Levítico, el Deuteronomio, la ley de la jungla y del mar' cannot be expected to realise that 'the law of the jungle' is the title of a celebrated poem of 1895 by Rudyard Kipling, which hands down a harshly violent and competitive view of the world that is of direct relevance, not only to 'Jokerman' (as in stanza 5: 'The rifleman's stalking the sick and the lame,/Preacher seeks the same'), but also to another song on the same album, 'Union Sundown' ('This world is ruled by violence/But I guess that's better left unsaid').

In other, more mundane cases the translators have omitted cultural or way-of-life references, presumably in the interests of accessibility. In the Dylan-Levy song 'Joey', the idiomatic line: 'It always seemed they got caught between the mob and the men in blue' become the rather bald: 'Siempre parecían acabar atrapados entre la mafia y la policía'; and the specific reference to the New York electricity company: 'Let's blow this place to kingdom come, let Con Edison take the blame' is glossed, literally but ponderously, as: 'Hagamos volar este sitio al infierno, y que la compañía eléctrica cargue con la culpa'. Again, in 'Ten Thousand Men' the line 'Ten thousand men dressed in Oxford blue', has been translated in simplified fashion as 'Diez mil

hombres vistiendo uniforme azul', replacing the specific 'Oxford blue' by a non-specific 'blue uniform' - presumably on grounds of over-obscurity to Spanish ears. To an Anglophone listener, however, 'Oxford blue' not only denotes the famous old English university, but also connotes establishment-approved sporting prowess (an 'Oxford blue' is a member of one of that university's prestige sports teams, and notably of its rowing 'eight'), and so, by evoking good-old-traditional-English values, intriguingly connects with another song from around the same period - 'Dignity', with its 'Englishman stranded in the blackheart wind', who stiff-upper-lippedly 'bites the bullet and looks within' ... Sometimes, alas, nuance cannot quite cross the chasm between cultures.

To all this, however, there is an upside, for there are also moments where Dylan's texts have been felicitously 'localised' by new connotations arising from the translation into Spanish, which fruitfully enrich the writing in unexpected ways. In the Dylan-Levy song 'Isis', the line: 'as we rode through the canyons, through the devilish cold' becomes: 'mientras cabalgábamos por los cañones, a través del frío diabólico'. This curiously reminds the listener that the apparently so-American 'canyon' actually derives straight from the Spanish 'cañón', and, indeed, has set me wondering whether the song's dream-landscape, with its 'pyramids, all embedded in ice', might not be a fusion of ancient Egyptian elements *plus* quite different features of a snowbound, Andean stamp (and its alluring 'turquoise' and 'gold' may be the Incas' ...).

Later on, 'What Can I Do For You?', on the 'Saved' album, offers an even more interesting case of localisation. In the closing stanza, where Dylan writes: 'I know all about poison, I know about fiery darts', the translation has: 'Sé todo sobre la ponzoña, sé todo sobre las saetas ardientes'. 'Dart' itself is somewhat archaic in English in the sense used, i.e. 'arrow' (the phrase 'fiery darts' is actually from Ephesians, 6:16), and, similarly, in Spanish 'saeta' is less obvious than 'flecha' (which we have already encountered rendering 'arrow' - not 'dart' - in the translation of the earlier 'When He Returns'). The interesting thing is that 'saeta', apart from meaning 'dart'/arrow' (etymologically, it is related to 'Sagittarius'), is also the name of a type of flamenco-related traditional devotional chant, performed in Andalusia at, of all times of the year, Easter ('and it's Eastertime too!'), to commemorate Christ's passion. A fine anthology of saetas may be found on CD under the title: 'Saetas - Cante de la Semana Santa Andaluza' ('Saetas - Songs of Easter Week in Andalusia'), on the French label Audivis (B 6785, 1993). The English-language notes to this recording quote the comments of José María Sbarbi, from 1880, who describes the saeta text as a 'brief, fervent spiritual maxim, capable of producing in the mind an impression similar to that caused in the body by the wound from an arrow' (which may remind us of Dylan's own lines from 'Restless Farewell' in 1964, 'if the arrow is straight/And the point is slick,/It can pierce through dust no matter how thick'). In the twentieth century, Antonio Machado wrote a poetic variation on the theme - entitled, suitably enough, 'La Saeta' - which is superbly set to music and performed by Joan Manuel Serrat on his tribute album of 1969 (already mentioned above), 'Homenaje a Antonio Machado, Poeta' ('Homage to Antonio Machado, Poet'). This added detail brilliantly coalesces with the guiding theme of the album - which is, of course, salvation - and also creates a direct link to the Easter-related elements in some of the other songs ('Saving Grace': 'well, the death of life, then come the resurrection', and 'In The Garden': 'when He rose from the dead, did they believe?').

Mention of 'In The Garden' leads on to another circumstance where the Spanish text adds a fresh layer of density to the original - which lies, interestingly enough, in the particularities of

Spanish typographical convention. Spanish is, to my knowledge, the only European language that employs *double question marks* - that is, a question is *both* introduced by an (upside-down) question mark (the symbol ¿) *and* followed by the same device (but this time right-side-up, by the lights of most of Europe's other languages). It so happens that a number of Dylan's songs from these period - 'In The Garden', and also 'Señor', 'What Can I Do For You?', 'Are You Ready?', 'What Good Am I?' and, notably, 'What Was It You Wanted?' - consist, to a greater or lesser extent, largely of a pile-up of questions. The Spanish convention has the effect, on the page, of *doubling* the number of question marks and thus underscoring the presence of the interrogative mood in these songs: 'What Was It You Wanted?', a song of 56 lines, has (title excluded) 32 question marks in English, but, in Spanish and as '¿Qué era lo que querías?' ... 64! The element of doubt comes out, quite literally, doubled - curiously but not inappropriately reinforcing the doubting-Thomas aspect of these songs.

Another modification of sense and feel dictated by the peculiarities of Spanish - this time in the realm of grammar - occurs in 'Ring Them Bells' ('Tocad las campanas'). In the English text of this song, each of the four stanzas (and also the bridge) opens with the same formula, 'Ring them bells' ('Ring them bells, ye heathen', etc; 'Ring them bells, Saint Peter', etc). However, across the song some of these addresses are plural and others singular, and in Spanish, when employing a verb (e.g. 'tocar', 'to ring') in the imperative mood, one has to distinguish grammatically between singular ('toca') and plural ('tocad'). The translation thus switches back and forth between '*Tocad las campanas, paganos*', etc, and '*Toca las campanas, San Pedro*', etc - introducing a structural roughness and asperity into the song which is not there in the smoother, freer-flowing English original.

Conversely, in the two 'Latin American' songs from this period - the Dylan-Levy 'Romance in Durango', and 'Señor' - which have a significant *Spanish-language presence in the original*, the translation has, inevitably, the effect of smoothing out the text's rough edges. The original text of the Mexico-located 'Romance in Durango' has something of a mestizo character, with the repeated lines of Spanish in the chorus ('No llores, mi querida/Dios nos vigila ... Agárrame, mi vida' - 'Don't cry, my darling/God is watching over us ... Hold on tight, love of my life'), plus an array of Spanish words strewn across the entire song ('chilli peppers', 'fandango', 'cantina', 'corrida', 'torero', 'tequila', 'padre', 'fiesta'; plus the placenames 'Durango' and 'Torreón', and the personal names 'Magdalena', 'Ramón' [both invented characters] and 'Villa' [the historic revolutionary leader Pancho Villa]). All in all, this 'gringo' song has rather a lot of Spanish. The translation, naturally, retains all of the original's Hispano-Mexican lexicon, with one exception ('padre' - priest - is rendered by 'cura', the latter being the more usual word in Spanish); but what it can't do, short of keeping some of the original *English* words in the Spanish text (a road not taken by the translators), is reproduce the rough, improvised feel - somehow in line with the urgency of the drama which the song narrates - which the original acquires thanks to the deliberate use of an Anglo-Spanish macaronic language (it should be added that the translators have *not*, as they could easily have, added any footnotes of the type 'these words are in Spanish in the original').

In partial compensation, the title chosen for this song in the Spanish version - 'Romance en Durango' -, though apparently almost identical to the English title, in fact acquires an additional resonance, not present in the original. The Spanish word 'romance' can signify 'a romantic love story' - a sense considered an anglicism but admitted by the dictionaries - but it is, more crucially, also the name of a particular literary genre. A modern work of reference, 'The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory' (by J.A. Cuddon;

Harmondsworth: Penguin, 3rd edn., 1991), states: 'The background to the *romance* is essentially popular, being generally connected with oral tradition, and there is some similarity with the English ballad' (p. 808). These features connect with Dylan's own interest in traditional sources; besides, and appropriately enough, a Spanish 'romance' is more often than not a stirring narrative ballad of a blood-and-thunder, fall-by-the-sword stamp. The song's title may, then, remind the Spanish-speaking reader of the medieval 'romances', with their titles like 'Romance del Infante vengador' ('Ballad of the vengeful prince') or 'Romance del Prisionero' ('Ballad of the prisoner') - or, alternatively, of Federico García Lorca's celebrated twentieth-century re-creations of the genre.

At this point an apparent digression may be in order. Lorca (1898-1936) was butchered in Granada by General Franco's fascists, soon after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War; his poetry was strongly influenced by popular Andalusian and gipsy traditions, and in 1928 he published an entire volume of 'romances', with titles such as 'Romance de la Luna, Luna' ('Ballad of the Moon, Moon') and 'Romance sonámbulo' ('Ballad of sleepwalking'), under the name 'Romancero Gitano'. That title, which may be translated 'Gypsy Ballads', might remind Dylan listeners of the phrase 'gypsy hymns', from 'Sad-Eyed Lady of the Lowlands'. Other Lorca volumes include 'Poema del Cante Jondo' (1921, published 1931), a title which is a direct admission of folk influence ('cante jondo' is flamenco song) and 'Poeta en Nueva York' ('Poet in New York', 1930, published posthumously, in non-fascist Mexico, in 1940), a title which may recall 'Talkin' New York' from 1962, sequentially the first self-penned song that the Dylan listener encounters, which recounts the adventures of a greenhorn singer-guitarist and ... poet in New York.

In addition, Lorca's creative interests extended beyond poetry to music. Not only did he include a poem called 'La guitarra' in 'Poema del cante jondo', he played an excellent flamenco guitar and composed guitar pieces. One of his compositions, 'Zorongo gitano', was recorded in 1972 by the flamenco guitar wizard Paco de Lucía; it may be found on a compilation CD entitled 'Entre Dos Aguas' ('Between Two Waters' - Philips 814 106-2, no release date given). **The poet was a pianist too: in 1931 he recorded, accompanying the singer Encarnación López Júlvez ('La Argentinita') on piano, a set of ten traditional Spanish songs which he had collected and arranged himself - a project which testifies to Lorca's abiding interest in his country's popular musical tradition. This material was reissued on CD in 1994 by the Sonifolk label, under the title 'Colección de canciones populares españolas' (catalogue number 20105). Lorca's work has continued to fascinate Spanish musicians to this day. For instance, in 1998 the contemporary flamenco 'cantaor' (vocalist) Enrique Morente released a CD called 'Lorca' (Virgin 847030 2), consisting mostly of his own settings of the poet's texts. This was a follow-up to an earlier release of Morente's from 1996 entitled 'Omega' (El Europeo Música EEM 001), a recording dedicated to Lorca and ... Leonard Cohen (the Cohen-Lorca connection will be examined shortly).**

Lorca was also, as is well known, a person of openly non-heterosexual propensities - not exactly a comfortable identity in 'nationalist' Spain after the obscurantist, intellectual-hating Franco launched his 'Catholic crusade' on 18 July 1936; and it is at least possible that in Dylan's 'Standing in the Doorway' (on 'Time Out Of Mind', 1997), composed all of 61 years after Federico's martyrdom, the lines: 'I'm strummin' on my gay guitar/Smokin' a cheap cigar' may conceal a sly tribute to the Spanish poet. On the surface, 'gay' in this generally rather archaic song might seem to have its 'old-fashioned' meaning of 'joyful' (our translation renders the lines as: 'Estoy rasgueando mi *alegre* guitarra/mientras fumo un puro barato'; '*alegre*'

means 'gay' in the older sense). However, the phrase 'gay guitar' somehow draws attention to itself, and may indirectly point to Lorca. Even Dylan's rakish (and wondrously politically incorrect!) detail of the 'cheap cigar' would fit with Lorca's lifestyle, and, indeed, the cigars smoked in Spain most often come from Cuba, a country to which the poet paid a three-month visit in 1930 (see Ian Gibson, 'Federico García Lorca: A Life', London: Faber & Faber, 1989, pp. 282-302).

Another interesting link between Dylan and Lorca is provided by Leonard Cohen. In 1988, Cohen included 'Take This Waltz', his own English translation of Lorca's poem 'Pequeño vals vienés' ('Little Viennese Waltz', from 'Poeta en Nueva York'), on his album 'I'm Your Man' - whose title phrase, significantly, Dylan quotes in 'Can't Wait', another song from the 'Time Out Of Mind' collection. **Not only is Cohen the Anglophone singer-songwriter of modern times most often compared to Dylan, he and Dylan are long-standing acquaintances (Dylan contributed backing vocals to Cohen's 1977 album 'Death of a Ladies' Man', and has, more recently, performed Cohen's song 'Hallelujah' in concert), and, notably, the Canadian poet-singer is an enormous admirer of the Andalusian poet, whose work he has known and loved since adolescence: Cohen even went so far as to name his daughter Lorca, and in 1986 he took part in the official commemorations, in Granada, of the fiftieth anniversary of Federico's martyrdom (see L.S. Dorman and C.L. Rawlins, 'Leonard Cohen: Prophet of the Heart', London: Omnibus Press, 1990, pp. 36, 353). It seems only fitting that Enrique Morente's album 'Omega' should feature a version of 'Pequeño vals vienés' - with Lorca's original words and Leonard Cohen's tune (the same album, coincidentally, includes a Spanish translation of 'Hallelujah!'). The Lorca-Cohen-Dylan connection is, indeed, a tale of three poets!**

Bob Dylan's own concert of 18 April 1999 in Granada was sponsored by a cultural foundation called 'La Huerta de San Vicente (Fundación García Lorca)' (the same Foundation, incidentally, appears in the credits to both the Morente recordings mentioned above). Laura García Lorca, the poet's great-niece and chairperson of the Foundation, visited Dylan backstage before the concert, and according to reports in the local press in Granada, brought along *Federico's own guitar*, for Dylan to see and - it may be - even play on it ... This happened, admittedly, after Dylan had recorded 'Standing in the Doorway'; and yet, all in all, one might wish to conclude that to hypothesise Lorca's ghost lurking under the surface of that song may, indeed, not be too far-fetched.

To return from Lorca to Dylan's texts, in the song 'Señor' the explicit Spanish-language element is confined to the one repeated title word - but that word, 'Señor', is also the song's keyword, and it occurs (title apart) all of *fifteen times* in both the English text and the translation (twice at the beginning and once at the end of each of the five stanzas, the two bridges excluded). Here as in 'Romance in Durango', the end-product in Spanish is unavoidably smoother and more homogeneous than the original (apart from the disruptive appearance of the US placename 'Lincoln County', as 'Condado de Lincoln'). As to whether that is a gain or loss, 'I can't think for you,/You'll have to decide', but it remains true that a certain hybrid roughness is still present in the title ('Señor [Tales of Yankee Power]'; 'Señor [Cuentos del Poder Yanqui]'), with Hispanic and 'yanqui' lexical elements held in sullen tension, as befits the song's implied theme of culture conflict. It may be added that the outlaw theme in 'Romance in Durango' and the 'Yankee power' motif in 'Señor', taken together, connect fascinatingly with the overtly anti-American (but Whitman-admiring) Pablo Neruda and his play of 1966, 'Fulgor y muerte de Joaquín Murieta' ('Splendour and Death of Joaquín

Murieta'), which tells the true story of a Chilean adventurer, lured to California by the Gold Rush of 1849, who, after the murder of his lady companion by pernicious 'yanquis', took to an outlaw's life, robbing from the rich to give to the poor like another Pretty Boy Floyd or John Wesley Harding ... In addition, the word 'Señor' is ambiguous in Spanish; in the context of this song - as we can reasonably suppose Dylan knew when writing it - it can either mean 'sir' (as a polite form of address), or mark a direct supplication to the Christian deity ('Lord'); this particular double meaning, while certainly present in the English original, comes out more clearly in Spanish.

There are also songs where Dylan's original contains one or more references to Hispanic culture, isolated but still striking. This is the case with 'Angelina' and 'The Groom's Still Waiting at the Altar', two songs from 1981. In 'Angelina', the first half of stanza 4 reads: 'There's a black Mercedes rollin' through the combat zone/Your servants are half dead, you're down to the bone/Tell me, tall man, where would you like to be overthrown,/In Jerusalem or Argentina?'. These lines contain more than one Spanish/Hispanic allusion: firstly, 'Argentina', which supplies a rhyme for the song's title and keyword 'Angelina' (itself possibly a Spanish name); and, secondly, 'Mercedes'. The latter is a woman's given name of Spanish origin. The motor company's founder named his firm's celebrated model after his daughter Mercedes; the name became fashionable following its gracing a character in 'The Count of Monte Cristo', the famous romantic novel of 1845 by Alexandre Dumas - two of whose other titles, 'The Three Musketeers' and 'The Man in the Iron Mask', find echoes in Dylan's work, in 'My Back Pages' and 'Up To Me' respectively. In full, the Spanish name Mercedes is 'María de las Mercedes', or '[the Virgin] Mary of the Mercies' (the 'Orden de Nuestra Señora de la Merced' - 'Order of Our Lady of Mercy' - was founded in 1218 to rescue Christians captured by the Moors, an operation no doubt perceived as a manifestation of divine mercy). This etymology, in the text of 'Angelina', punningly connects the sinister black vehicle, ironically or otherwise, with the phrase 'begging God for *mercy*' in the closing stanza. Michael Gray, in his book 'Song and Dance Man III: The Art of Bob Dylan' (London: Cassell, 2000), wonders whether Dylan's writing in this song may not be influenced by the 'magic-realist' fiction of such Latin American novelists as Colombia's Gabriel García Márquez, author of such works as the best-selling 'Cien Años de Soledad' ('One Hundred Years of Solitude', 1967), and suggests (pp. 434-435) that the 'combat zone' portion of 'Angelina' may be a nightmare vision of totalitarianism in Latin America, with the 'tall man' as a dictator figure. One might also think here of the Argentinian military dictatorship of 1976-1982: in May 1981, when Dylan laid down 'Angelina', Argentina's ruler was General Viola, whose successor, General Galtieri of Falklands/Malvinas fame, was in fact to be 'overthrown' along with the military regime soon afterwards, in 1982. It may be added that in 1993, in his sleeve notes to the 'World Gone Wrong' album - translated in our volume -, Dylan mentioned, in the context of the song 'Delia', the name of Evita Perón, the second wife of Juan Perón, President of Argentina (1946-1955 and 1973-1974) and the archetypal caudillo's spouse (Perón, though thrice elected to power, is typically seen as an iron-fisted, populist strongman).

'Angelina' is an intricately constructed song, with a rhyme-scheme that throws up a whole series of ingenious rhymes on its titular name. The five rhyme-words that answer to 'Angelina' are all of Latinate or neo-Latinate origin, and four of them - 'concertina', 'Argentina', 'arena' and 'hyena' (in Spanish, 'hiena') - are identical or near-identical in both English and Spanish (the exception being the legal term 'subpoena'); 'arena', in particular, conjures up that world of corridas and toreros earlier visited by Dylan, as we have seen, in 'Romance in Durango'. The translation, indeed, retains three of these rhymes - 'concertina', 'hiena' (a near-rhyme) and

'Argentina' - but replaces 'subpoena' by 'citación' and 'arena' by 'ruedo' ('arena' *would* have been possible in Spanish, but 'ruedo' appears to have more specific bullfighting connotations). The resulting rhyme-pattern is incomplete ('Angelina' is rhymed with only in stanzas 1, 2 and 4 of the 5), but still replicates something of the original's effect of inevitability. The pun on 'black Mercedes'/'begging God for *mercy*' is, however, lost, as the latter phrase is rendered 'implorando a Dios misericordia' (today, 'misericordia', not the rather archaic 'merced', would be the more usual translation of 'mercy', and Dylan's 1989 album title 'Oh Mercy' is similarly rendered in this volume as 'Oh, Misericordia'); one element in 'Angelina's' richness of connotation has thus disappeared, but, even so, much of that richness does come across in the translation.

'The Groom's Still Waiting at the Altar', also from 1981, contains further references to the Hispanic world. In this song's refrain, 'West of the Jordan, east of the Rock of Gibraltar', Gibraltar is of course - whoever may own it today - a Spanish place-name, and the fact that 'altar', the word with which 'Gibraltar' is paired in the song's chorus, is the same in Spanish as in English fortunately allows the 'Gibraltar/altar' rhyme to be retained in the translation. The song's other Hispanic place-name is 'Buenos Aires', which Dylan audaciously rhymes with 'January': 'What can I say about Claudette? Ain't seen her since January,/She could be respectably married or running a whorehouse in Buenos Aires'. This becomes: 'Que puedo decir de Claudette? No la he visto desde enero,/podría ser una esposa respetable o regentar un burdel en Buenos Aires'. The word for 'January', 'enero', provides at least an approximation in sound to 'Buenos Aires', while the rhythmical neatness of 'whorehouse/Buenos Aires' finds a partial equivalent in the alliteration on 'burdel' and 'Buenos'. Both versions thus highlight the phenomenon of the sex industry outlets of Buenos Aires: this may be an ironic musical reference on Dylan's part, as if music led back not to the salvation promised by Christ, the waiting groom, but to the damnation of the underworld, for, as is well known to popular music historians, and **as Jorge Luis Borges has shown in his study 'Historia del tango' ('History of the tango', 1930)**, it was in the inferno of those outlets ('**los lupanares**') that a new musical form was born, subsequently to become famous the world over - the *tango*, as earlier mentioned by Dylan himself, in the phrase 'Valentino-type tangos' in 'Farewell Angelina', from 1965 ...

## VII

A successful translation is not only a matter of nuance and sonority - qualities which this one often amply achieves - but also, naturally enough, of accuracy. On this count, Antonio and Francisco have performed most impressively, demonstrating an excellent, in-depth knowledge of the English language. I shall, however, permit myself a handful of cavils here - concerning one song and two individual words.

The song title 'Ye Shall Be Changed' is translated as 'Serás transformado': 'serás' is a verb in the second person singular, and that person is employed throughout the translation. However, the pronoun 'ye' is a biblical and archaic variant on 'you' in the second person *plural*, and, besides, Dylan based this song on a passage from I Corinthians (15: 51-52) which reads: 'Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed (51), In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed (52)'. Dylan changes the first-person 'we' to the second-person 'ye', but retains the plural: the song text alternates between the more usual 'you' (in the stanzas) and the biblical 'ye' (in the chorus), but the addressee is clearly,

throughout, a (male) second person plural subject. The listener may imagine what Dylan elsewhere calls a 'preacher ... a-talkin', giving a sermon to an all-male congregation. The Spanish text has second person singular all the way through, which is, I have to conclude, not coherent with the original. I am also not entirely happy about the equivalents chosen in certain cases for the words 'shore' and 'highway'. In 'Angelina', stanza 1, line 5, Dylan sings: 'Blood dryin' in my yellow hair as I go from shore to shore'; the translation reads: 'Con la sangre secando en mis cabellos rubios, voy de playa en playa'. 'Shore' has been rendered as 'playa' (beach); I would submit, however, that the picture Dylan is painting here is the rather archaic one of a Wandering Jew figure travelling endlessly from one place to another, and that 'shore' is therefore used in the correspondingly archaic sense of 'country' - as in William Blake's line from his poem 'A Little Boy Lost', 'Are such things done on Albion's shore?', which might prosaically be glossed 'Are such things done in a country called Britain?'. A more appropriate Spanish rendering of 'from shore to shore' might, then, be 'de tierra en tierra'. In the case of 'highway', the translators have twice rendered this word - so crucial to Bob Dylan's world-picture - as 'autopista', which I fail to find completely satisfactory. In 'Disease of Conceit', 'comes right down the highway' becomes 'llega por la autopista', and in 'Make You Feel My Love' 'the highway of regret' is translated 'la autopista del remordimiento'. The problem is, 'autopista' specifically means 'motorway' (in UK English) or 'freeway/expressway' (in US English), and is very concretely 'modern' in its signification. 'Highway', by contrast, is a very *old* word. 'Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary' (Springfield, Mass., Merriam-Webster, 1988) defines it thus: 'a public way; *esp*: a main direct road', dating it from before the twelfth century; and this, I suggest, is how Bob Dylan uses it. A highway in early Dylan is most certainly not a communications artery reserved for motor traffic, but a road that anyone can walk down with their good old callused feet, or else flag down a ride on. The very-early-60s Dylan sings: 'Well, I'm walkin' down the highway/With my suitcase in my hand' ('Down the Highway'), and: 'You can hitch-hike on the highway/You can stand all alone by the side of the road' ('Quit Your Low Down Ways') - and I do not believe that this word's basic sense and feel has changed in later Dylan. In the two translations in question, I feel that 'highway' would have been best rendered, not by 'autopista' with its brash Los Angeles connotations, but by the far older, all-purpose Spanish word 'carretera', which will serve for a road as ancient as the Romans as well as for one built yesterday.

The above are all minor objections, and all in all this volume of translations is highly impressive, in terms of both fidelity and aesthetic effect. In very many cases, Dylan's songs have been transformed into finely sonorous Spanish poems; indeed, this exemplary sonority is present in a number of translations which I have not quoted from at all in this review, such as 'Golden Loom' ('Telar dorado'), 'Every Grain of Sand' ('Cada grano de arena'), 'Blind Willie McTell', and 'Not Dark Yet' ('Aún no ha oscurecido'). As a final example, I would now like to transcribe one entire lyric in both the original and the Spanish version, and then make a few comments on the translation. For this purpose, I shall take a song which I have not examined so far, namely 'Man in the Long Black Coat' ('El hombre del largo abrigo negro'), from the 'Oh Mercy' album (1989) - a song which many believe is one of Bob Dylan's very finest recent productions.

## VIII

### MAN IN THE LONG BLACK COAT

## I

Crickets are chirpin', the water is high,  
There's a soft cotton dress on the line hangin' dry,  
The window's wide open, African trees  
Bent over backwards from a hurricane breeze.  
Not a word of goodbye, not even a note,  
She's gone with the man in the long black coat.

## II

Somebody seen him hangin' around  
At the old dance-hall on the outskirts of town.  
He looked into her eyes when she stopped him to ask  
If he wanted to dance - he had a face like a mask.  
Somebody said from the Bible he'd quote.  
There was dust on the man in the long black coat.

## III

Preacher was a-talkin', there's a sermon he gave,  
He said: « Every man's conscience is vile and depraved,  
You cannot depend on it to be your guide  
When it's you who must keep it satisfied. »  
It ain't easy to swallow, it sticks in the throat,  
She gave her heart to the man in the long black coat.

## IV

There are no mistakes in life, some people say  
And it's true sometimes you can see it that way.  
But people don't live or die, people just float.  
She went with the man in the long black coat.

## V

There's smoke on the water, it's been there since June,  
Tree-trunks uprooted 'neath the high crescent moon.  
Feel the pulse and vibration and the rumbling force,  
Somebody is out there beating on a dead horse.  
She never said nothing, there was nothing she wrote,  
She's gone with the man in the long black coat.

## EL HOMBRE DEL LARGO ABRIGO NEGRO

## I

Los grillos cantan, el agua anda crecida,  
 hay un suave vestido de algodón tendido, secándose.  
 La ventana abierta de par en par, árboles africanos  
 torcidos hacia atrás por una brisa huracanada.  
 Ni una palabra de adiós, ni siquiera una nota,  
 ella se fue con el hombre del largo abrigo negro.

## II

Alguien le había visto merodeando  
 por el viejo salón de baile en las afueras de la ciudad  
 él la miró a los ojos cuando ella le paró para preguntar  
 si quería bailar; su cara parecía una máscara.  
 Alguien dijo que citó la Biblia,  
 el polvo cubría al hombre del largo abrigo negro.

## III

El pastor estaba hablando, dio un sermón,  
 dijo que la conciencia de los hombres es vil y depravada,  
 no puedes fiarte de ella para que te guíe  
 cuando eres tú quien debe satisfacerla.  
 No es fácil de creer, se hace un nudo en la garganta,  
 entregó su corazón al hombre del largo abrigo negro.

## IV

En la vida no hay errores, dicen algunos.  
 Es cierto que a veces lo puedes ver de este modo,  
 pero la gente no vive o muere, apenas flota.  
 Ella se fue con el hombre del largo abrigo negro.

## V

Hay humo en el agua, está ahí desde junio,  
 troncos arrancados de cuajo bajo la alta luna creciente.  
 Se siente el pulso, la vibración y una fuerza que retumba,  
 hay alguien ahí afuera golpeando a un caballo muerto.  
 Ella nunca dijo nada, nada dejó escrito,  
 se fue con el hombre del largo abrigo negro.

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This is not the place for a detailed analysis or interpretation of this song (I have, in fact, already published one elsewhere on this site, in which I suggest it can be read as a harsh indictment of Calvinism in US society). I shall simply make a number of brief comments which will, I hope, serve to confirm the observations I have made above in relation to individual phrases or lines from numerous songs, but this time in the context of a single, whole text.

Firstly, Dylan's title, 'Man in the Long Black Coat', has a superbly sinister ring: it consists entirely of simple, monosyllabic words that nonetheless suggest something dark and violent just under the surface. The Spanish title, though polysyllabic, if anything goes one better by atmospherically piling up, in the three words 'largo abrigo negro', alliteration on 'r' and 'g' and

three part-rhymes on '-go'. In the first stanza, the alliteration (on 'b' and 'r') in the fourth line of the original ('bent over backwards by a hurricane breeze') is matched in the Spanish by a parallel alliteration on 't', 'r' and 'c' ('torcidos hacia atrás'), and a similar effect appears in both texts when the last stanza closes the circle by bringing those trees around again: 'Tree-trunks uprooted 'neath the high crescent moon'; 'troncos arrancados de cuajo bajo la alta luna creciente'. The original, with a devastating simplicity, rhymes 'coat' with five fellow monosyllables ('note', 'quote', 'throat', 'float', 'wrote'); the Spanish, by contrast, reproduces neither the rhymes nor the simplicity, and in this respect pales against the original. Another kind of mismatch occurs in the final stanza, with its extraordinary image: 'Feel the pulse and vibration and the rumbling force,/Somebody is out there beating on a dead horse.' This is, in fact, a particular striking instance of Dylan's capacity - to which I have already drawn attention - of breathing life into the inert corpse of cliché. Indeed, on this occasion he pulls it off with a half-dead phrase *about* deadness - the hackneyed old metaphor 'flog a dead horse', which the Eighth Edition of the Concise Oxford Dictionary (Oxford: O.U.P., 1990) defines as 'waste energy on something unalterable'. Dylan makes the listener see someone quite *literally* flogging ('beating on') a dead horse, *and actually hear and feel* the sounds of the flogging ('the pulse and vibration and the rumbling force'). This remarkable effect cannot, alas, be reproduced in the translation, for the expression 'flog a dead horse' does not exist in Spanish: the Hispanic listener can certainly see, hear and feel the act of beating, but will remain unaware that Dylan, by reanimating a moribund phrase, is at the same time casting a withering gaze on a hidebound, puritanical US society that endlessly repeats its narrow-minded, anti-human obsessions. Yet despite this, the Spanish line 'Se siente el pulso, la vibración y una fuerza que retumba' has a nobility and resonance of its own, and - even if the *specific* cultural connotations are lost - does communicate something of the original's *general* sense of regret and sadness at human folly. All in all, this Spanish re-creation of 'Man in the Long Black Coat' has a sonority and, indeed, 'rumbling force' resounding through it that allow it to stand cheek-by-jowl with the original in all dignity.

## IX

This volume of translations does, indeed, stand up, in its own right, as an entirely worthy and credible body of Spanish-language writing. It has, deservedly, been well received in the Spanish Dylan community. On the 'Radio 3' station, Jesús Ordovás gave Francisco García a sympathetic interview. In the peninsular press, the book obtained brief but favourable mentions in 'Efe Eme' (a music magazine whose title means 'FM'; review by Eduardo Guillot, No 15, February 2000, p. 62) and 'Levante' (a Valencian newspaper; notice by Ricardo Rodríguez, December 1999), and full-length treatment in two other publications. On 20 December 1999 'La Razón' featured an enthusiastic review article by Alberto Bravo ('Bob Dylan ya no tiene secretos' - 'Bob Dylan has no secrets any more'); and two months later Mariano Antolín Rato published a similarly eulogistic piece in the Madrid daily 'El Mundo' ('Bob Dylan, un corazón que no se rinde' - 'Bob Dylan, a heart that won't surrender' - 22 January 2000, p. 53; <http://www.gigantes.com/2000/01/22/cultura/22N0109.html>). We may note that Ordovás and Rato are themselves both authors of Spanish-language Dylan books (q.v. section II above). In their reviews, Guillot and Rato both stressed the poetic quality of Dylan's texts and mentioned his status as a candidate for the Nobel Prize for literature; while both Rato and Bravo, interestingly, used the same adjective to describe the book, namely 'imprescindible' ('essential'). **In Chile, too, a favourable review appeared in the national daily 'La Tercera' ('Todas las letras de Bob Dylan en castellano' - 'All [sic] of Bob Dylan's lyrics in Spanish' - 24 January 2000;**

**24.46.3a.esp.breves.html); this (unsigned) notice was brief but appreciative, once again noting Dylan's status as Nobel nominee, and also pointing out that Dylan, like the Chilean novelist Isabel Allende, is a past recipient of the Lillian Gish Prize, awarded for an 'outstanding contribution to the beauty of the world and to the enjoyment and understanding of life'. The Hispanic media world has, then, not failed to point up both the importance of this new volume and the merits - too often ignored - of Bob Dylan's more recent songwriting.**

There are still too many who claim that Dylan's later work is almost always qualitatively inferior to his 'famous' songs of the 60s. This view is, I fear, received wisdom in large sections of the general listening public; a recent example is provided by Ian Kearey, in his rather superficial review of Michael Gray's 'Song and Dance Man III' (q.v. above), published in the March 2000 issue of the UK magazine 'Folk Roots'. Kearey writes: 'Dylan's best work belongs to the 1960s, with a few honourable exceptions, and how can anyone justify such sheer effort on lesser writings?' ('Folk Roots', No 201, p. 72). Even leaving Gray's monumental work apart, I would venture to suggest that the present review contains, both in my account of the Iriarte-García translations and my comments on the dynamics of the songs, more than enough material to refute the 'bien-pensant' view typified by Kearey. The high-quality writing to be found in the volume under review is *not* a matter of 'a few honourable exceptions': it is there in an actual majority of the songs from this period - powerfully-written, linguistically daring performance poems, which hold their ground in translation too!

Indeed, the majority of the Dylan texts in this volume come across not so much as 'Spanish-language songs' as 'Spanish-language poems' - less *songs* to be compared with the works of Víctor Jara or Violeta Parra (remarkable as those are), than *poems* which may stand side-by-side with those of the established figures of the Spanish and Latin American canon. Individual lines in 'Bufón' ('Jokerman') or 'Cada grano de arena' ('Every Grain of Sand') match the forceful sonority of comparable lines from Pablo Neruda's 'Alturas de Macchu Picchu' ('Heights of Macchu Picchu') or Octavio Paz's 'Cuento de dos jardines' ('Tale of two gardens'); the demented power of 'El pie del soberbio' ('Foot of Pride') recalls Nicanor Parra's equally manic 'Soliloquio del individuo' ('Soliloquy of the Individual'); and the emotional anguish of 'Donde las lágrimas caen' ('Where Teardrops Fall') would not be out of place in the tear-stained pages of another Chilean, the tragic Gabriela Mistral. It is salutary to recall here that Mistral, Neruda and Paz were all Nobel literature laureates (in 1945, 1971 and 1990 respectively; the Spanish-speaking world has so far had ten in all, five of them poets), *and*, of course, that Bob Dylan is himself now a Nobel nominee. The expressive force of these new Spanish translations may serve as another arrow of desire, to fill out the quiver of those around the world who are battling for full recognition of the poetic stature of the English-speaking artist without whom this new book could never have existed - the true *original*, in all senses of the word, that is Bob Dylan.

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NOTE 1: 'Del Huracán a las Tierras Altas' was published in November 1999 in a limited edition of 200 numbered copies, as authorised by Special Rider Music. A copy has been deposited in the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid. The limited edition was officially sold out as at April 2000, but enquiries may be addressed to Francisco García at:

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NOTE 2: My thanks to Andrés Urrutia for information on Raúl Zurita and Nicanor Parra, and to Leandro Fanzone for information on León Gieco.