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Cuentos de angustias y paisajes de Carlos Salazar Herrera
The Plausibility of Substituting a Folk Dialect with a
Regional Dialect

Traducción e informe de investigación

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Magíster en Traducción Inglés-Español

Presentado por

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**NÓMINA DE PARTICIPANTES EN LA ACTIVIDAD FINAL DEL
TRABAJO DE GRADUACIÓN**

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Presentado por la sustentante

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ABSTRACT

The present graduation project is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master's Degree in English-Spanish Translation at the Universidad Nacional, Costa Rica. Its contents support the plausibility of substituting a folk dialect with a regional dialect for the translation of the dialogues found in Carlos Salazar Herrera's *Cuentos de angustias y paisajes*, as a way to convey the socio-linguistic characteristics of the Costa Rican peasants featured in the short stories. Based on consent given by descriptive grammar, and on Christiane Nord's theory about the translator having a free reign to chose the way he/she wishes to carry out his work, this translation and research project show how a "literary dialect" can be translated systematically, based on the more outstanding syntactic, morphological and phonological rules prescribed by African American Vernacular English (AAVE), a dialect currently spoken mostly in Southern states of the United States.

Key words: Literary translation, dialectology, sociolinguistics, AAVE, Costa Rican literature

RESUMEN

Esta traducción y proyecto de investigación se presentan como uno de los requisitos para obtener el grado de Master en Traducción Inglés-Español de la Universidad Nacional, Costa Rica. Su contenido demuestra la pertinencia traductora de sustituir un dialecto utilizado en literatura costumbrista por uno regional para la traducción de los diálogos en la obra *Cuentos de angustias y paisajes* de Carlos Salazar Herrera, con la intención de transmitir las características sociolingüísticas de los campesinos costarricenses, quienes son los protagonistas principales de estos cuentos. Apoyado por los principios de la gramática descriptiva, y basado en la teoría de Christiane Nord, acerca del libre albedrío del traductor para llevar a cabo su trabajo, esta traducción e investigación demuestran como un dialecto literario sí puede ser traducido sistemáticamente, basándose en las características sintácticas, morfológicas y fonéticas más sobresalientes del inglés vernáculo hablado por Afroamericanos (AAVE según sus siglas en inglés), un dialecto comúnmente hablado en la actualidad en los estados del sur de los Estados Unidos.

Palabras clave: Traducción literaria, dialectología, sociolingüística, inglés vernáculo, literatura costarricense.

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Cuentos de angustias y paisajes

TRANSLATED TEXTS

THE BOCARACÁ

It happened in the immense solitudes of *Toro Amarillo*.

Out there, a house interrupts the jungle's continuity and Jenaro Salas was the first to bring down some trees to build his craggy house.

It was a big shed built out of bark covered logs that stuck out on a forgotten road. In the winter, it was a swamp; in the summer, a desert.

The hovel looked even more humble under a ceiba tree that went as high as a prayer.

Jenaro was a troubled man because he believed the land did not like him; he had misjudged it. He thought it was his enemy and perhaps that was why the region sometimes tormented him, at other times it laughed at him too.

He ended up feeling scared of the solitude, of the shadows, of the darkness and of the silence. He lived in ceaseless fear. He didn't know why.

At night his dreams were slow to visit him. That was when the breathing of his wife and his baby son, or the sputtering sounds of the charred logs, still alive in the wood burning stove, brought him solace and joy.

On the moonless nights, the small flame of a lantern had the power of a lighthouse.

One afternoon, after a hard day's work up on the mountain, Jenaro was coming home pulling an ox cart loaded with palm hearts. As he got closer to his shack, he found his baby near the humble gate. He was crying, clearly wanting to say something he couldn't.

Fear made him put the child aside and run into the house...

But his wife wasn't there.

He called her name over and over again. Filled with anguish, he went out the back door and, as if he was an agitated compass needle, pointed his eyes in all directions; finally he looked towards the north, downhill, next to the stream that ran a stone's throw away.

He ran again. There was his wife, lying on the ground, pale, and unconscious. Close to her, still twisting and convulsing, was a snake about two feet long with its head crushed.

It was a *bocaracá*, an eyelash viper.

Jenaro knew all too well that a few minutes could make the difference between life and death. He didn't have time to lose applying homemade remedies, or calming down the crying baby whose little eyes requested answers. He would find the antivenin but, to do it, he would need to rush through a good twelve miles of rough road.

He dragged his wife to the house and left her on a makeshift bed.

He went for his horse. He made a horse rein out of a piece of cord. He snatched a whip out of a tree. He got on the horse bareback, and lashing both its rumps, he let it rip down the dreadful road.

Let us find out what had happened.

Tana, Jenaro Salas' wife, was busy with her chores that afternoon when she saw her child coming. He was laughing out loud. He had found a strange object that had pretty colors.

It was a snake, a *bocaracá*; and he was holding it by its neck.

She had the courage to drown a scream and to walk towards her baby, asking him to let her see that strange vine; but he wanted to play and ran down the road, holding the viper prisoner in his mischievous hand.

She pretended to play, and followed him while shouting prayers in her mind asking he wouldn't trip and fall...or get his free little hand near the head of the snake.

She caught up with him when he stopped at the edge of the stream.

She got closer to her child, singing a song she had forgotten.

She approached him from behind. The song was becoming a plea.

She held his wrists. The plea was turning into crying.

He was laughing. Her crying was now turning onto laughter too.

She extended his tiny arms as if forming a cross with his body; as if he were doing penitence. Then, gliding her right hand over the child's arm, she held his small hand tight so he wouldn't let go of the viper.

She first knelt down. Then she sat on the ground.

She pressed his left arm between her legs. Trying to substitute his naïve fingers for hers, little by little, she started to unfold them with her fearfully shaking left hand.

Whereas her macabre laughter gave away her horror, the child laughed willingly, enjoying the fun of playing with his mother.

Twisted around her arms, the green, black and golden colors of the viper's body made it seem like a double bracelet.

"Gimme that vine! ..."

"Gimme that snake! ..."

"Gimme that *bocaracá!* ..."

"Don't be stubborn my dear child! ..."

"Gimme that demon! ..."

At last the triumphant hand of the mother held the head of the viper. It had not emptied its fangs.

The child started to cry.

She picked up a stone and crushed the viper's head with it.

While smashing it she also gashed two knuckles on her left hand.

Later...

Later the fear she had so forcefully controlled overwhelmed her and she fainted right there; her spirit left her.

When her spirit returned, she found herself on her makeshift bed. She rushed to the door of her shack at once and saw her husband. He was galloping away on his horse.

She called him, "Jenaro!" She yelled his name, "Jenaro! Jenaro! ..."

Desperately she shouted, "Nothin's happened! ... Jenaro!"

But the man had disappeared behind a tormented cloud of dust.

THE BRIDGE

The sounds the wooden bridge made were like a love song to Chela's heart.

A wooden bridge that sounded like a xylophone!

Every time a horse's trot would make the bridge's planks sound, Chela would get so excited as to confuse her cheerful heartbeat with the rattling thumps.

She would then stick her head out the window of her house and, as soon as she would make sure it was Marcial Reyes passing by on his horse, she would run along to a bend in the road and she would wait for him.

The colt was already used to the drill, and as if it wanted to show off, it would rear up on two legs adding a neighing to the stunt.

Chela was an orphan; she lived with her godfather. He asked her once, "If Marcial Reyes loves you, why doesn't he come visit you here?"

And she would say, "But 'e not ma boyfrien'."

"Then...what's he to you?"

"Well...nothin'. A frien'."

"Hmm! ..."

One moonlit evening Marcial Reyes left his horse under the care of a wild tobacco tree; he jumped over the barbed wire fence and walked up to the grassland with Chela.

She went along as if bound by reins braided with words.

And in a private refuge formed by the black boulders at the top of the hill, Marcial Reyes kissed Chela, and kissed her over and over again...

The wind was making waves on the fields of purple flowering spikes of the molasses grasses, and in the private refuge the flowers of a large *poró*¹ tree which had grown next to the boulders continued to fall.

“Don’t ya tell no one!” he said.

“No.”

“Ya swear?”

“Yes.”

Chula formed the sign of the cross with her fingers and sealed her promise with one more kiss, with one last kiss.

From then on, Marcia Reyes stopped crossing the bridge that sounded like a xylophone. Now he would go all the way around the flagstone road, and it was the flagstone road he continued to use to visit the town.

That was why, every time a horse would trot on the bridge, the sound of the planks made the girl’s heart ache.

Poor Chelae’s situation was known to everyone. To make matters worse, one Sunday morning, Marcia Reyes walked out of the church with pretty Rosario Vasquez on his arm, wearing a veil and orange blossoms.

A few months went by. The purple flowers of the molasses grass were gone; but, at the top of the hill, the flower of the *poor* tree continued to fall, padding the empty bed that remained protected by the unemotional and accomplice mute boulders. Those strange rocks were like dolmens, like memoirs.

That sonorous bridge had become torture for the saddened Chula.

¹ *Erythrina poeppigiana*.

One day, the town's priest found Chela on the wooden bridge, chewing on a red mombin sprout.

"It's been a long while since your last confession my dear child," he said.

She turned her gaze to the ground.

The priest insisted, "Why don't you go to confession?"

Slouched over, Chela continued to look at the bridge's resonant planks.

How could she confess if she had sworn 'not to tell no one!'

One hot summer night someone torched the bridge, no one ever found out who did it.

What a pity, it was a wooden bridge that sounded like a xylophone!

THE LIMESTONE QUARRY

Long ago, in times with no history, the sea had been there. That's why there are shell fossils in the bluff.

"Good afternoon, Eliseo."

"Good afternoon, Ñor² Rosales. What brings ya 'ere?"

"Nothing Eliseo, just the pleasure of seeing ya."

And mister Rosales walked into the limed shed of the limestone quarry.

Almost everything is white: the road, the bridge, the wall, the fence, the house and the tree trunks. In the background, the steep limestone bluff has the gray color of time. The rays of sunlight hit the rocks of the slope as they fall, and their pieces are scattered through the pastures.

"Say, Eliseo...why don'tya sell me this farm, with the house, limestone quarry, cart and yoke? "

"No, Ñor Rosales...how can ya say dat?"

"Eliseo, I'm a man of few words. I'll giveya sixty thousand pesos³ cash."

"No, Ñor Rosales. Yer offer's mighty good, but I ain't selling."

"Hmm ...Yer sure attached to this place, Eliseo."

"Dat's right, Ñor Rosales."

"Well, Eliseo. Nothing I can do then. I gotta go."

"Well, Ñor Rosales, may God go with you."

And the old man walked out of the limed shed of the limestone quarry.

Just about everything is white.

² Short for "Señor."

³ Currency of the time.

Lina, Eliseo's young wife, is also white—very white. Pretty, very pretty she is. Her chestnut hair has the highlights of a burning kiln, and her eyes are green, as the tender leaves of the lime trees.

No one knows why Cholita, Mister Rosales' goddaughter, started to hang around the quarry. She has a dark complexion, her eyes are black and her hair is even blacker. That's what Cholita is like.

Whenever Eliseo burned rocks in the kiln, there she was in his way, asking useless questions. When Eliseo led his ox cart, she would jump on it to look for fossilized shells among the rocks.

When Eliseo prepared to blast the bluff, Cholita was there; with her hands crossed behind her back, standing straight up, watching the quarrymen.

And the worst of all was that Eliseo was becoming attracted to the magnificent contrast of her dark complexion against the white of the landscape.

“Why don'tya go home, Cholita? Lemme work.”

“Oh, Mistar Eliseo.”

At nightfall, the man would return home and gaze at his wife: white, really white, green-eyed, and with light chestnut hair. Then he would think about Cholita: her dark skin, maybe too dark, with her black eyes and her shiny charcoal hair. Then he would think about the landscape. White the bluff, white the trunks, and the house and the fence and the wall and the bridge—all white. The narrow path bleached by the lime dust spilled from the carts...and the reddish white of the calcinations.

And his wife:

“Tell me, Eliseo: why's Ñor Rosales' Cholita hangin' around in the limestone quarry?”

“Whatta I know?”

“She’s gettin’ attractive. Ain’t she, Eliseo?”

“Whatta I know?”

“Ya like ‘er, Eliseo?”

“Whatta I know? Whatta I know! Jeez!”

And the husband would walk out to the porch, to immerse his eyes into the darkness of the night.

One morning Lina decided to pay a visit to her neighbor.

“Good morning, Ñor Rosales.”

“Good morning, my dear. Please come’n take a seat.”

“Thank ya very much. I’m fine ‘ere...Say, Ñor Rosales, I’ve come ta...I dunno how ta tell ya...It’s fer the good’av yer goddaughter. Ya knows, Ñor Rosales, a girl like dat so young an’ pretty...”

“Oh, ma’am, say no more! If ya just knew how much I’ve suffered because of the darn girl. I can’t find the way to bring ‘er ta ‘er senses. Yes, yes, I know, I know. She hangs around in Eliseo’s quarry. What a shame! A beautiful girl like ‘er so conceited and so attracted ta men! Wouldn’t ya say? Somethin’ could happen ta ‘er! Oh! What a disgrace the girls of today are! Back in my day...”

“Well, Ñor Rosales, if ya already knows, ya knows what ya gotta do. Ya hafta excuse me, ‘cause I left the rice on the hearth.”

“Well my dear. Thank ya so much for lettin’ me know. I’ll talk to the darn girl again.”

“But please don’t tell ‘er it was me...”

“Don’tya worry my dear; I never give names ‘cause I don’t like gettin’ people in trouble. Give my best to yer husband.”

“Thanks, Ñor Rosales. Forgive me fer disturbin’ ya.”

The old rascal hid a smile of contempt.

Lina was very sad when she left from mister Rosales' house. She knew that nothing had been gained and much had been lost with that silly visit of hers.

A day later, before the silver pavilion of the slope, stood the pretty dark figure of Cholita.

Eliseo happened to see her and, just for an instant, he thought that if Lina had been the one standing there, her white complexion would had been absorbed by the white bluff, to the point where she would had been indistinguishable from the rocks.

“Gettaway from there, girl! There's a load a dynamite.”

Eliseo ran, reached Cholita, grabbed her hand and, half dragging her, pushed her into a cave behind the boulder. There was an explosion and rocks fell over the place.

Inside the grotto, the quarryman held the girl in his arms, his limed hands feeling the heavy rise and fall of her frightened breast.

It was as if he had found a black diamond among the white wilderness of the sharp slope.

“Now git! The danger's over. Why don't ya get on Cholita?”

“Oh...Eliseo, why don'tya lemme go?”

“Get goin'! Ah don't wantya! Ya hear? Ah don't wantya! Ah don't likeya!”

And he covered her face with kisses

When they came out of the grotto, they found Lina standing in front of them. She seemed like a lime statue. Her eyes were on fire.

She didn't say a word. She just turned around and walked away.

The end of the day caught Lina in her porch. She was hemming sheets. Sometimes she would look up at the bluff on one side, and then over to the other side where she could see the steeple of *Patarrá* little church.

Lina adores her husband, even though the white serenity of her temper does not allow her to show it with tender gestures. She loves him because Eliseo is a man in the whole sense of the word. She suffers and is distressed because she knows her husband is capable of loving two women at the same time, and with the same intensity.

But Lina was not willing to share him with another woman. She was always like the limestone: cold, still, attached to the rock. But now she had been reduced to dust in the hot kiln of jealousy. This had transformed her into quicklime, with a pent up white hot flame.

Having spied on Eliseo, she expected him to drop a full load of cold reproaches, or indifference, over her caustic whiteness. She would then burst into flames that would turn her into a handful of slaked lime.

Her husband came home. White is the wife, white are the sheets, white is the porch. There was nothing in his wife that would contrast against the unchangeable scenery. Cholita, on the other hand, was a black shiny presence that looked seductive in a strange way...like a black star in the white sky.

Eliseo thought it was not his wife's fault she was so white. He also thought the whiteness of the landscape was destroying her.

He waited for her to talk, but she did not say a word. She raised her head and offered him a soft smile. She looked at him through a blur of tears. He said, "Yer eyes are so beautiful!"

She looked down and continued mending the sheets.

Lina expected something like a bucketful of cold water, but instead there were only five drops of warm water: 'Yer eyes are so beautiful!'

Thankful and pacified, she yielded to a sad silence.

The rays of the sunset shuttered upon the rocks of the slope.

From time to time the dynamite explosions cracked the rocks of the quarry...afterwards a chain of tremors was blown by the wind along the mountain range.

Beads of anguish rolled down from the tender leaves of the lime trees with each detonation.

That night Eliseo decided to visit the old man.

"Good evenin' Ñor Rosales."

"Good evenin' Eliseo. What brings ya 'ere at this time of the evenin'?"

"Well Ñor Rosales...I came ta know if yer still interested in buyin' the limestone quarry."

"Hum...Yer a strange man Eliseo. Well...we might do something 'bout dat. Lemme tell ya dat I'd almost forgotten 'bout it; however, now dat ya bring it up, we could make a deal. I warn ya dat I ain't as interested now an' Ah not gonna pay ya sixty thousand pesos for it. I said sixty thousand before? Right? Yes, yes. Sixty thousand. It's a lot of money. Ha, ha!!"

"Ya knows...if ya'd taken my word when I offered..."

"Well, Ñor Rosales, an'...how much ya gonna offer me now?"

"Eliseo, I'm a man'v few words. If ya wants to make a deal, I offer ya fifty thousand."

"Fine. Take it!"

“Hum...Ya seem in a rush! If ya want, we could go ta my lawyer tomorrow.
An’... tell me my friend, what made ya change yer mind?”

“I just wanna buy a farm in Higuito...It has a coal mine!”

The old rascal extended his right hand to Eliseo, while hiding a smile with his left.

THE YOUNG BULL

“Toh ... toh... toh...toh! ...”

The deep voice of the cattlemen could be heard as they were herding a hundred head of cattle along the road.

Hooves and horseshoes churned vast clouds of dust on the path, lengthened by the heat.

The day was fleeing, leaving behind only the twilight.

“Toh ... toh... toh! ...”

The voices of the cattlemen could be heard in the distance.

On the crest of the barren hill, Luisa saw the silhouette of four horsemen and a circular saw of tightly herded bulls which was running...and running...with their sharp pointed horns.

“There goes Juan Ignacio! ...He’s one of those four!” said Luisa, with the inner cry of a great but hopeless love.

And the night started with the twinkling of Sirius and Aldebaran.

Darkness was gored by the herd of young bulls and the screeching of the *majafierros*⁴ began to pound the night.

A young bull broke loose from the herd and started running away from the pen.

Juan Ignacio spurred his horse to a gallop after the young bull. The harassed young bull attacked the horse, and both the rider and his horse rolled on the ground. It then charged Juan Ignacio time and again, until it finally gored him in the ribs with one of its horns.

⁴ Small owls.

There was nobody else quite like him, like Juan Ignacio. He was the hacienda's best plainsman; a roper like no other; a good young man and a good friend. He could guess the weight of a head of cattle at just a glance, and he knew the age of a stud by its neighing. No one like him could make a horse rear up or get a stunt out of a bull. No one like him could improvise a riddle and let out a shout that, like a falling star, could streak across the sky.

Today, none of the plainsmen went to work. No one was at the hacienda, and the young bulls were all shut in the bullpen. The entire town had gathered around Juan Ignacio's corpse, to look at him for one last time, even if it was like that...to say their last good-bye to him, not expecting a response in return. But not all the people were at the late Juan Ignacio's house. No. Luisa was missing; shy Luisa, the insignificant and quiet girl who lived across from Juan Ignacio's house. Nobody had noticed the absence of the poor girl. How would they if she was such a small thing? ... So much so, it seemed she didn't even exist!

Luisa was by the bullpen ...she was looking for a young bull. She did not know which one, but she was looking for a specific one. There were many, a lot, and they all looked alike. But there would be one, a young bull different from the rest, it would have a mark. A murderous young bull! ...She would recognize it!

Dawn was announcing itself with the cheerful crowing of the roosters.

No one in the bullpen was taking care of the cattle!

"There's the murderer! ..."

Luisa found the young bull with the blood stained horn.

She unwrapped a rifle she carried in a gunny sack; she looked at the young bull with hatred...and she put a bullet into its head.

"How sweet vengeance is!" she whispered while crying.

At Juan Ignacio's house someone said, "Who fired that shot?...Everybody's here!"

THE GOURD

It was a day just like any other when Tito Sandí left his home.

He left a note saying, 'I'm leaving, don't look for me. Loves you, Tito.'

The neighbors wondered about his disappearance.

'It's so strange. Such a fine man so dedicated to his work and so attached to his family. Could there be another woman? ... Impossible! Tito Sandí adores his wife and his two children. What could have happened?'

A dejected Zoila, Tito's wife, willingly and diligently took charge of the few acres of land her husband had left, and they produced enough for the family to live.

Made of adobe, logs with a clay tile roof, the house rested half way up the hill facing the west wind.

March would bring sunsets featuring a sun as large as an ox cart wheel painted with red lead, and it would fill the house with a chromatic harmony; solid, bold and warm colors, as in one of poor Gauguin paintings.

Time went by, striding through their lives, leaving permanent prints on things and on feelings. Since Tito's leaving, the summer had splashed its colors over the house five times, without a single word from the missing man. That was until one hot afternoon, when a strange man showed up at Zoila's house. He was a quiet old man, somehow mysterious and secretive. He seemed like a wooden statue that showed the grooves left by the chisel. It was a mahogany figure that could speak, but slowly, very slowly; quietly, and using short phrases kept apart by distressing periods of silence.

"Afternoon, ma'am. Ya Zoila de Sandí?"

"At yer service."

“Thank ya ... Same ‘ere. M’a name’s Juan José Zárate, friend’a yer husband Tito Sandí.”

“Really? Ya knows whar he is?”

“Yes ma’am...”

“Com’n sit down please.”

“Tank ya” ... It hot out!”

“Yes, very hot sir.”

“...All of us got sorrows in dis life. Ain’t we?”

“Yes, but we’s gotta have patience.”

“Das the way it should be. As lon’ as we healthy...”

“Dat’s the main thin’.”

“...How is yer children?”

“Very well, thank God.”

“Their name is Tito and Zoila, like ya...Ain’t dat right? Yer husband tol’ me.

Whew! ...it hot!”

“Ya wants glass av water?”

“No, ma’am. Thank ya.”

“...But, whar is him?”

“Who?”

“Tito Sandí, m’a husband!”

“Oh! ... Yes ma’am ...very far, a place call Curridabá...he stay there...there he stay.”

“An’ tell me, ya mus’ tell me! Why don’t he come? Why don’t he write? Why he leave us? What he doin’? How he doin’? Tell me ‘bout ‘im, soon, please! Don’t ya knows I bin dyin’ fer five year ta know ‘bout Tito?”

The air was filled with emotions.

With tight lips, Juan José Zárate raised his head slowly and started running his eyes across the ceiling beams. Then he turned his gaze at the floor and, without looking at Zoila, he spoke even slower, as if he was telling a secret, using short phrases still separated by distressing periods of silence.

“He dead three day ago...Tito Sandí die...He die a leper...Before he die, he tell me dat when he git sick...like dat, he leave ‘is family so ya no git sick too. People them say it contagious, but dat not true. Tito say dat he believe he done good. Dat he ain’t tell ya ‘cause ya’d no let ‘im leave. Dat ya always be afraid near ‘im ...He tol’ me how ta get ‘ere ta dis house, an’ he asked me ta tell ya all. Oh! An’ dat he don’t send nothin’, ‘cause he don’t got nothin’ ta send ya. Then he tol’ me somethin’ very strange...and very nice, ‘If he could send somethin’ it’d be a gourd filled wif tears’.”

When Zoila de Sandí uncovered her face, which she had hidden in the folds of her apron, Juan José Zárate had left, swallowed by a sunset like no other seen before.

THE BONGO

“Hey, bongo man! Where are you heading?”

“Ta *Jicaral*'s salt mines!”

“Do you have space for me?”

“Yes, get in frien!”

A *bongo*!⁵...How similar to a short story it is!

A bongo is a small sail craft in which just a few people can fit. The hull is dug out of the trunk of a big *espavel*⁶ tree, one stroke at the time, with an ax and an adze.

A bongo is only for calm waters.

A bongo cannot venture into the open sea, like big ships do, where lots of people fit and lots of things happen on their long trips.

A bongo cannot lose sight of land because, after all, it is still a tree.

The sunset paints its colors on the gaff sail and the foremast; and at night the mast and the spanker boom, the grappling hook and the outrigger, sketch out new patterns among the constellations.

The bongo man was a good old man in his sixties. Tough on the outside, like a keel. Transparent inside, like a sail.

He was in the coastal trade business in the *Golfo de Nicoya*. Running to and from places like *Pitahaya*, *Jicaral*, *Lepanto*, *Chomes* and *Paquera*...Salt, sand, charcoal, plantains, mangrove, coconuts and tamarind.

In an act of kindness, the bongo man had assumed the responsibility of raising a little girl after her mother, a distant relative of his, died. Ever since then he had devoted

⁵ Dugout.

⁶ Wild Cashew tree.

himself to taking care of his only two loves: the bongo and his adoptive daughter, Natalia, who always tagged along on his trips.

“And, where is Natalia?” I asked him.

As if having a huge sorrow, the bongo man let his head stoop, and it seemed to me he was strangling guilt with his hand.

“She drown...She drown on me right ‘ere in dis gulf. Not lon’ ago...It was ma fault. Ah’v suffer so much!”

Let us see what happened to the bongo man.

One day, almost at dawn, during a high tide, the bongo man weighted anchor and, with the wind blowing to the northeast, he crossed the gulf towards Puntarenas.

It was a bad day. Near *Chomes* calmness held him prisoner and he was at the mercy of the current for several hours. The bongo man was at the helm and Natalia was on the bow’s bench. A big load of plantains separated them.

There was nothing to do but wait.

The bongo man had seen that Natalia...was not just a girl anymore. He had noticed how self conscious the young woman was when pushing down her skirt every time the southern breeze uncovered her thighs, and he had imagined how the limes were ripening in the lime tree...

Taking advantage of the calm that day, he told her, ‘Natalia, yer not a girl no more and...Ah not dat old. Ah’v provided fer ya, Ah’v taken care of ya, and Ah’v loved ya so much. Ah thinks, dat...well, Ah bin thinkin’ dat if yer grateful and...ya loves me a little, well, fathar Raimundo tell me we could get married, there’s no reason why...’

‘No, Ah don’t want no marriage!...Ah can’t, *tata*⁷!’, she interrupted him. ‘Ah loves ya...but not like dat. Ah’m grateful, but...’

‘No but’s, Natalia!’ changing his tone the bongo man shouted. ‘Ah’s taken care av ya fer maself, an’ it’s settled.’

‘Tomorrow ya come wif me ta church. An’ don’t call me tata no more. Ya ‘ear me?’

Not a word was spoken about the matter afterwards.

The bongo man cast the anchor in deep waters and, while waiting for favorable winds, he felt asleep on the stern’s bench.

When he woke up, Natalia was not in the bongo.

The rest of the day and the entire night he kept looking for her in the dark gulf.

“Natalia!...M’hijita!...”

And he never saw her again.

Hanging high up in the space, like an anchor, a black sea bird kept still for a long while. Then it glided down, as if searching the immensity of the sky.

The bongo man looked at me and said, “Ya knows, sometimes the water splash ma face, just like now, an’ Ah don’t knows if Ah’s cryin’, ‘cause... them sea and tears is salty waters.”

“Tell me,” I asked the bongo man, “did Natalia know how to swim?”

“Like a fish.”

“And tell me, did she have a boyfriend?”

“Not dat Ah knows av...Sometimes Ah sees ‘er wif Jacabo, a good boy who used ta help me ta load the bongo.”

⁷ Affectionate and colloquial word for father.

“And Jacobo, where is he?”

“Round then ‘e tol’ me ‘e gonna go ta Punta Quepos ta work an’ left wifout’ a word.”

After a short silence, with his eyes wide open and in a different tone of voice he added, “*Hombre*⁸!...Ah ain’t thought ‘bout dat!” And then with a sweet face sprinkled by sea water...or by tears, he said, “If dat’s dat, God bless ‘er!”

In the heart of the *Golfo de Nicoya*, an albatross plummeted into the water and emerged with a sea bass. Another albatross, flying at sea level, snatched the fish and fled away towards the mangrove swamps.

⁸ Costa Rican expression of surprise, astonishment; also used to simply start a sentence.

AMBUSHED

He didn't need to think about anything else. He had it all thought out! He'd thought about it all.

It was five thirty in the evening.

Hidden in the bushes, holding his rifle, Gabriel Sánchez kept a close watch over the shortcut Rafael Cabrera usually took on his way home every evening at six o'clock.

He had it all thought out!

Gabriel would shoot across a distance of about 80 paces to the trail that goes around the *Cerro de los Pavones*.

There the lonely and dependable trail.

Here, the dense and concealing thicket.

Cabrera would pass through there.

Gabriel would shoot him from here.

'I'll get even with you once and for all,' Gabriel had told himself, and he was prepared to keep his word.

A while back, he had bought the rifle at a gun shop. No one knew of its existence. He had hidden it out in the mountains, under rain resistant pieces of bark.

He had it all thought out! There would be no slip-ups. He had gone over his plan time and again.

And now, crouching on his heels, caressing his weapon, he waited and waited, without taking his eyes off the bend in the road.

He had decided to ambush Rafael Cabrera, and he was there to do just that, emotionless, like a stone.

'I'll get even with you once and for all.'

The big red March sun was about to hide.

Finally, there, on the trail that goes around the *Cerro de los Pavones*, with the sunset at his back, appeared the other's silhouette.

Gabriel looked at his watch. It was six o'clock in the evening.

He would keep his word! It was just a matter of seconds.

He then began to feel his heart pound, and got angry at his weakness.

Right in front of him, within his reach, he saw a bunch of berries. He picked a few and threw them in his mouth. Then he spat them out. They were not berries.

The other had arrived at the place he had chosen to kill him.

He lifted the butt of the rifle to his shoulder, held his breath, took aim, and shot. The echo repeated the loud bang of the weapon.

The other covered his chest with his arms and fell violently, stumbling down a small slope, where he laid face down in the dirt.

Gabriel Sánchez was glad he had killed him. He started to carry out his alibi.

He went down the cliff to the shore of the river, and threw the rifle into its depths. He proceeded to find the canoe he had hidden days before in the weeds. He climbed into it and pushed off.

He rowed. He rowed with all the strength of his muscles. He needed to get away from there fast.

Once he reached the other side, he let the river take the canoe and fled into the jungle.

His pace was slow and he was calm now. It was as if nothing had happened. He didn't even think about it. He would deal with it later.

A motmot bird followed him for a long while, jumping from tree to tree, until it got tired of chasing that unimportant man.

The unimportant man finished crossing the jungle, came out of an overgrown meadow and then got to the wide, open road.

Delighted, he entered his house. There was no one. He hand rolled a cigarette from shredded tobacco leaves, lit it, and pleasantly filled his lungs with the smoke.

No one had seen him!

He lay down in a hammock and exhaled a long column of smoke.

Night fell.

Satisfied with his plotting skills, and with the way he had handled his case of nerves, he began to enjoy the blissful flavor of revenge.

He needed to strengthen his conscience with the powerful reasons he had to kill. So, he went over all the motives that had made him take such an oath, 'I'll get even with you once and for all!'

Rafael Cabrera was now dead... He had asked for it! He deserved it! ...There was no other way!

He remained in the hammock with his hands behind his neck for a long while; picking old kernels of memory from the ear of corn of his mind.

All of a sudden he remembered: he usually went to Acón's place at around this time. It was a small grocery store where hired hands, and owners from neighboring haciendas, would gather to chat.

His absence could raise suspicions. Besides, his brother was about to get home, and would surely wonder why he was there. He decided to avoid any possible questions.

From now on, every single move had to be considered. Even the most insignificant detail could trip him up.

It was then Gabriel understood that, in a way, he had lost his freedom.

Just like he did every evening, he headed to Acón's place to chat with the hired hands. They were probably already talking about Cabrera's murder.

Gabriel would have to look astounded by the news. Perhaps he would also condemn the atrocious crime. Pretending sadness, perhaps he would even add, 'Poor mister Cabrera...They had no right to kill him!'

Under the night sky, and surrounded by crickets, his pace was slow.

As he walked, he decided to get rid of a bundle of thoughts that were troubling him, but, the burden in his mind became heavier. He didn't know why a sense of anxiety had fallen over him. The closer he got to his group of friends, the more rattled he became.

It was as if the truth he was trying so hard to hide had been stamped on his forehead. He feared his eyes would betray him. Suddenly he was scared of himself. He thought he could fall victim to his own madness and, out of the blue, spill the whole story himself.

He wished he could rip apart his restlessness, but it was too late. New fears were embedded in his brain.

'Had someone seen the smoke from the gun? Had someone seen him coming down the cliff? Throwing the rifle into the depths of the river? Rowing down the river? Leaving the canoe float away in the river? Crossing the overgrown meadow? What about the motmot bird that had followed him for so long? Would it tell on him?'

He started laughing, and then he got scared of hearing his own laughter.

'No, no one knew! His plot had worked. He had to kill him! Rafael Cabrera was now a corpse, lying there, on the trail that goes around the *Cerro de los Pavones*.'

He looked at his watch. It was a little after eight. Putting his hands into his pockets, he walked into Acón's store with an air of indifference. The place was full of

people. Gabriel said hello to the boys by brushing the brim of his hat with his fingers. He then sat down on some boxes that contained supplies, in a corner of the store. He lit a cigarette, and when he looked up, he noticed how some of the hired hands were staring at him. His blood boiled and rushed through his veins.

He felt the cruel silence that had filled the room. Their stares joined those of some others, and then of some more, and more.

He trembled.

His hands were cold, and he started to sweat.

Some men were whispering something, while giving him a look out of the corner of their eyes. After that, nothing could be heard, only the silence.

Gabriel thought it would be better to smile. His laugh was painful; it was being constricted by fear. He noticed that the corners of his lips were trembling. He realized he had no strength to talk, or even to move. He didn't have the courage to stay there.

The town councilman had just walked in, and Gabriel Sánchez could hear how two or three people kept saying, "You're the one to tell him."

Followed by other men, he walked towards Gabriel at a slow pace. That was when Gabriel reacted. He would deny it all! Besides, no one could prove anything! He had made no mistake! He was sure! Full of poise, he raised his head, "Gabriel, come with me", said the Councilman. Once outside, with grief in his voice, he added, "Not two hours ago, your brother was ambushed and killed on the trail that goes around the *Cerro de los Pavones*."

THE WITCH

Escazú, city of witches, lying on the skirts of the hills, as if it had tumbled down from the hills tops, spreading its rocks...and its *guarias moradas*⁹.

There, in a white house with a blue door, accompanied by five cats and one silence, lives Elvira...the witch.

They say she was pretty back in her day. They say she married a local young man and they insist they made a happy couple. They add that one morning the young man went to work...and has not come back yet. A thousand rumors ran all over town; in the end mystery picked up the gossip and fled with just a bundle.

Not having any other way to learn about what had happened, the young wife went to fortune tellers and witches; she ended up learning the art of witchery and successfully practiced it.

One hot afternoon of the third month of the year, a young girl with dark coffee brown eyes knocked on the blue door of the white house.

“Whatisit, girl?”

“Lemme in, *Doña*¹⁰.”

And the young girl told her story: she was fierce in love with a handsome young man from the neighborhood, her boyfriend, but she was losing him...and did not know why.

“And whattaya wan’ from me?”

“A talisman, ta make’im love me.”

⁹ Costa Rica’s national flower. *Guarianthe skinner*.

¹⁰ A polite way to address an older woman whose name might not be known.

Determined to look for the talisman which would grant happiness to its possessor, the witch opened the old cedar chest, its edges embellished by brass tacks. In it were all the tools of her trade: wax dolls stuck with pins; and, in some clay pots, water left out in the open where the red-necked Nightjars birds had bathed at night.

For a long while the witch stared at all those things; then she closed the chest and looked at her client. She was a gracious young woman, but very scruffy.

The old woman put a huge wooden bucket in a corner of the room, and then brought in some washbowls filled with water.

“Undress, girl.”

“What?”

“Take them clothes off.”

“What fer?”

“Ya av ta bathe in the miraculous water.”

“Ere?”

“Yep.”

“Ah’m embarrassed.”

“Nonsense.”

Meanwhile, Elvira the witch dipped a *platanillo* flower into the water saying, ‘*Cegua, recegua nariz de manegua...*¹¹’

The old woman helped her unfasten her clothes and they dropped around her feet in a circle.

“Ere, magic soap.”

¹¹ A spell regarding a legendary character: a seductive woman who would appear to any man riding alone at night. When the man had fallen under her charms, her head would turn into that of the skull of a horse, scaring him from ever being a womanizer again.

The witch poured the water down the girl's shoulders, making her jump in the bucket, sprinkling the living room's dirt floor.

Having dressed the girl, Elvira the witch made her sit on a stool; she combed her hair into a tight pair of braids which then graciously tied to her head; and put a *guaria morada* behind her left ear, and spanking her, she dismissed the girl.

"And da *talisman*, Doña?"

"Foolish girl, yer da *talisman*."

Elvira the witch stared at the girl for a long while, as she walked over the cobblestone street.

"Whatta pretty girl!..."

The girl disappeared as she turned around the corner and the old woman remained at the white house's blue door.

"I can't even be no witch no more!"

The afternoon was still hot; the last drops of sunshine were still dripping from the sunset's distillery.

"And how Ah lost ma husband! ..."

At the center of the road, through some sort of art of alchemy, the transmutation of one metal into another was happening.

"Alas! Ma little poor memories! ..."

Then, the *reinas de la noche*¹² let their jarred fragrant essences out at the first call of the constellations.

¹²Trumpet-shaped fragrant flower of the Brugmansia tree, known in Costa Rica as "Queen of the night."

Next to the church's tower, it looked as if a moon eclipse was about to happen...or was it the clock?

¡It was the witching hour!

Elvira the witch went into the white house through the blue door, took her broomstick, and started sweeping the living room.

THE CRICKET

José *el indio*¹ had found an isolated gloomy place in the wide bay beach, and among calabash and tamarind trees he built his shack.

The high tides of March and its beating waves would jolt the shack's base, shaking the whole place.

"Ah can't sleep tonigh' eithar!... Dat cricket's makin' me crazy!"

During the low ties, the rolling waves were afar, barely pushing themselves into the shore, and the still shack continued to roast. José *el indio* jumped off his *tabanco*¹³, lit the lantern and started looking for the cricket to smash it.

"Ha! It's 'ere, nexta the knapsack."

But it was no longer chirping there.

"Dis shack's a calamity!" he said, and thumping his fist against a wall, he made its frame creak. The cricket kept quiet and the man went to lie down.

A few seconds later the chirping returned. High pitched. Persistent, off-again and on-again.

José *el indio* suffered from insomnia. Time and time again he would pace in search of sleep. At times he would lie down on the *tabanco* and shut his eyes tight with anger. He would first blame his anguish on the cricket, only to blame it on the shack right after. Without knowing, he finally got close to the real culprit, "If Ah jus' had someone ta talk ta! ..."

He decided to make an effort to stop listening, to turn deaf, and turned his thoughts towards his sorrows: A moon ago he was left alone. His wife, whom he loved

¹³ Loft, where people would sleep safely away from the reach of animals.

more than himself, was in labor pain, and in the middle of moans and tears...she had finally calmed down under a cross...in the shade of the coconut trees.

Ever since then José *el indio* lived in the dreadful solitude of his shack, embittered by his memories and sleepless because of his bitterness; however, at that moment, what was agonizing, crucial and inadmissible was that a cricket had taken over his dwelling.

“Dis shack don’t love me!”

Once again he lit the lantern. He thought he had heard it in the frame of the roof. He climbed up the beams, and like a monkey, he hung from them while searching all over.

“Nothin’! Maybe it’s gone.”

He rolled a towel around the scruff of his neck and went around his shack several times.

“Nothin’!”

He went in and felt like crying. He contained himself so as not to give the cricket the satisfaction.

He turned the lantern off and on, leaving no time for the shadows to settle.

“Ah hears it there! It’s there! ...”

He put a hand to his ear to listen better.

“Dat darn cricket has ta die!”

Slowly, quietly, barely breathing, he got closer to the corner from where the shrieking sound was coming.

“Dat’s dat! It’s gotta be ‘ere, behind the kerosene bottle.”

He got rid of the bottle. He looked up and down with a thousand eyes. He removed the dust. He scratched the dirt with his fingers. Nothing!... It was not there.

Almost crying he repeated, "Dis shack don't love me!..."

The sea was far away from the shack, that the tearing of its white ribbons could barely be heard as they were torn apart by the shore.

José *el indio*'s footsteps left a trail in the sand that looked like a chain.

He stopped and turned around to look back. For a moment he beheld the shack on fire.

His face glowed twice. First with the glare of the fire...and then with a strange and triumphant smile.

THE KISS

“How did Miguelillo Ureña die?...I'll tell you: he drowned.”

“But ...Miguelillo Ureña knew how to swim! ...”

Right beside a piece of sky that was sleeping on the riverbed, with beseeching eyes, lost in a daydream and his shaking hands grasping a bamboo cane, lived the fisherman, dying of sadness.

The fisherman's name was Miguelillo Ureña, and Miguelillo Ureña had not yet seen fifteen springs, his life was filled with sadness, for he had fell deeply in love with Rita Camacho, a girl five years older than him. Rita Camacho lived on the other side of the river, in front of a deep pool, behind the bamboos on the river's edge.

Rita Camacho had turned into something like a packed cluster of the best oranges in a matter of a few years, as if a spell had been cast upon her.

From here, dying of thirst, the young fisherman looked at Rita Camacho time and again through the bamboo canes, and he would watch her curves rise and fall, defying those of the clouds.

The clouds would sometimes take the shape of white bears immersed in the river, at sunset they would turn into dragons; and holding on to one of their scales, Miguelillo would end up asleep, not letting go of his bamboo cane.

The night would open his eyelids with the corners of the stars.

The next day everything followed the same pattern: the water's gentleness, the willow trees looking at themselves in the river, the bamboos' secrecy, the stones' silence, the yellow leaves sailing, the bears and the dragons.

Every now and then, in the afternoons, Rita Camacho would go down the river to fill the clay jar with water, and the fisherman's heart would then beat like a *tambora* drum.

"Hi, Miguelillo! Catch much?"

"So, so. 'Ere's da biggest fer ya."

And the best fish would land at her feet. Much the same way, he would have wanted to throw his heart which, like a plantain flower, was big and shedding its layers.

The days passed, but the torture didn't. Miguelillo Ureña, always next to the pool of water with his soul holding on by the thread of a loving look, would curse and suffer while throwing stones into the still waters. The stones would make concentric ripples that would grow only to die silently; just like someone who does not have anybody with whom to share his anguish.

One afternoon filled with the sun's steam, Rita Camacho came to the river's edge, swaying the juicy clusters of her body, and showing her dazzling white teeth she asked Miguelillo in an ungrateful flirting tone, "Ya like me?"

The young fisherman would have wanted to answer her, 'Do I like you? ...But, don't you see that because of you I'm dying little by little? That I'm about to burst into tears? But, don't you know that when a boy my age falls in love this way, with a fully grown woman like you, he cries and swears and blasphemes, as if he were a burning mountain?...'

But he didn't say a word. He leaned his head a bit ashamed and dared to show a grin. A very shy one.

"Good bye, Miguelillo. I leave ya ta yer fish."

And, as if punishing him, Rita Camacho left, taking her reflection on the water with her.

'How I love her!'

He would have wanted to beg her too: 'Wait for me. In five years, I'll be twenty...' 'Wait another five years!' –he hurt. 'Yes. I will wait five years! A thousand years if necessary! ... But, if I'm working, who'll be looking at her?'

How many times he felt like not loving her, so he could go back to being happy!

One warm night, Miguelillo, stretching as much as he could to boost his growth, fell asleep on the hammock of his house. Then he dreamt again the absurd dream he had had before: the willows and the bamboos were dancing, and the gray river stones played with the ripples in the water. Sometimes, Rita would pass by without so much as even touching the ground. Then, the clouds would erase the house and everything would disappear, except the one thing that was real, because everything was false: the river, the trees and the house, everything, except his love...

Then, that house. Rita's house emerged again and it was made of cardboard, with doors made of paper. How easy it was to break off that door!...Miguelillo wanted to run and tear it apart, but he was planted in the field and each of his fingers was like a thin, knotty, yellow bamboo cane.

The path to get to Rita Camacho was very long, as long as a century.

Miguelillo woke up.

The irrepressible urge to run to the river's edge overwhelmed him, to look, even if it meant just looking at the closed door of her house where his inner world dwelled.

He jumped and started running down hill, like a hurricane, breaking branches.

He forced himself through the bamboos and saw Rita Camacho.

He saw Rita Camacho...and he saw something else too. He saw someone kissing her...No more and no less than Juan Ramón Santana...A good-looking man popular among the local girls.

It was a never-ending kiss!

Huge ripples of water. Circles of light expanded tumultuously...huge, as passion is.

Then...the eternal silence of the stones, the bamboos secretly talking. The waters' cooing song. The constant sailing of the leaves. And the night filled with star dust.

THE SHOUT

All he had, he had lost: the land, the house and his crop.

He had lost it all. His will, his dreams, his time.

At the end of the day, his creditors got everything. He handed over his entire hacienda, along with his ten years of hard work.

His name...Matarrita.

Like a hermit crab, all by himself, he had gone all the way out to the hilltops of *Santa María de Dota*, looking for bountiful and fruitful lands.

He also wanted to have a view of the seashore so his eyes could go sailing every now and then in the afternoon.

For ten years he continued to transform the stubborn mountain, crammed with trees, into farmland. He built a house, hung some pictures on the walls, and taking advantage of how quiet they were, he talked to them.

For ten years he got up early to see the last sprouts of the night with the first rays of the sun...

And that morning they had come to tell him that not a single thing was his anymore.

He had asked for a loan from a moneylender and, when the interest started to pile up, simultaneously, the land began to change owners.

They came with a sheet of paper, and in that tiny piece of paper, they wrapped everything they could find!

Matarrita did not say a word. What could a poor illiterate person like him say?...

He had lost it all. Even his will to seek a solution.

There was no begging; no complaining.

Furthermore, he added a smile...and kept his grief to himself.

At sunset he saddled his horse and left, leaving behind ten years of sweat and pain sown in land that someone else was going to harvest.

Step by step he got farther and farther away from his sown fields, just like someone would walk away from a party where so much energy had been wasted.

In the unsettling hilltops, during the *cilampas*, a drizzling rain, the cold weather torments the joints and baffles the spirit. It was the *cilampas* season.

Matarrita pushed his ears into the brim of his hat, rubbed his nose and pressed his legs against the horse's belly, seeking the warmth of the steam.

At dizzying speed, the rainy wind howled like wild dogs.

His girlfriend lived around there. She lived with her parents, the Ortegas.

Matarrita thought he should visit them so they might know about his failure and postpone the wedding.

The house was locked up. He knocked on the door repeatedly. No one answered.

"Hello! ... Anybody home? ...It's me, Matarrita..."

He waited a few seconds before calling again, "Ñor Ortega! ... Mela!"

He put his ear to the door, "It's me ... Matarrita..."

How many things he thought he could tell her! How he wished they would offer him a tin mug of hot coffee! How badly he wanted to smoke a cigarette, sitting by the hearth in the kitchen!

Then he saw a window open a few centimetres, "It's me... Matarrita..."

They closed the window and fastened the latch, but they would not open the door.

“Well”, he told himself as he went back to the road that led to *El Empalme*, “this is over too.”

He still had his godfather, Ñor Aguilar. He lived nearby, on a deforested plain. Matarrita visited him yearly on his saint’s day to bring him a small token of appreciation.

Surely he would give him a tin mug of hot coffee.

He turned the rein towards the left and then knocked on the door.

The drizzle, almost horizontal, pounded on the walls and the wind shook the poorly nailed tin roof.

“Godfathar! ... It’s your godson, Matarrita. I’m very cold!”

But the door did not open either.

Matarrita looked through a crack in the wall, saw the empty house. He looked around. There was nothing but bleak devastation; it was like a nightmare. On these bare hilltops the ghosts of the storm scare everyone away. They would flee looking for the lowlands.

Further ahead, nothing: not a house, not a soul, not even a bird.

For a moment the man thought about the warm weather of *Bahía de Moín*.

On its dreadful run, the rainy wind was now going from one place to the other and, at times, thick fog monsters would gather around.

The shivering oak trees dressed themselves with moss and the older trees wore the old man’s beard, *barba de viejo*, to protect themselves from the cold. The orchids trembled in the armpits of their branches and the moans of the oak grove slid down the vines.

Every now and then the wind throws its razor sharp knives of rain at the oak grove, making it tremble and drip hard. But the ground is covered with umbrella-shaped mushrooms.

As he got to *El Empalme* Matarrita got off the horse. He took it by the rein and turned it toward *Santa María*, and then he smacked it on the rump with his whip.

He had just remembered that the horse was not his either.

He rubbed his rein free hands while he kept looking at the horse trotting towards the pastures.

It was then that he realized how distressful his loneliness was. He felt alone, detached, without a single homing instinct in him...he had no path. And as he wandered away, carrying a bundle of grief, he was getting lost on a narrow muddy trail in the fog veiled oak grove.

As he tripped through the fields, the vines and wild grasses grabbed his legs like carnivorous plants. He was shattered, fatefully lost in that gloomy forest of gallows trees; the night fell over him as the hanging ropes watched.

His body was numbed by the cold, his eyes blurred by the fog, his restless mind was filled with bitterness; all of a sudden he thought he could be dead.

He was surprised by the fear he felt that, perhaps in an unconscious outburst, he could have hung himself from one of those vines, giving in to the persistent invitation of a whispering voice that had followed him the entire afternoon...

Then he thought he had to convince himself that he was not dead yet. He had to do something to solve the need he had of coming back to life.

Something that would release him and that would ease his burdens. Something that would make his blood boil and that would comfort his soul. Something to break the silence and to scare away the sadness...Something that, at a given time, would have the miraculous power of straightening out the confused spirit in everything around him.

And he found it.

He filled his lungs with air and let out a prodigious shout of joy that made the oak grove tremble.

I met Matarrita yesterday. He told me his story. He lives a quiet life at the *Bahía de Moín*, and he has let his beard grow. Every now and then he lets his eyes go sailing over the Caribbean Sea.

THE WINDOW

The letter said he would return that night; and that night she was waiting. Sitting on a bench by the window, time and again her gaze climbed up the hill all the way to the Big Dipper.

The moonlight that painted the wrinkled houses across from hers made them look even older. The luminous ink of the fireflies drew flickering lines in the air. The wind that ran through the pastures gathered the fragrance of the wild flowers and, just like the house cat, entered the room through the window, filling it with its aromas.

The acoustic jar sang as the dripping water from the stone filter fell into it. As a drop fell in, a note rang out; as another fell in, another note rang out. The iron pot over the hearth stones sang as it never had before.

Having been exposed to the smoke of so many candle stubs, a Guatemalan San Antonio figurine had turned black.

The flame of the wick jumped without ever tripping. It was an elf made of fire. A gust of air that jumped through the window finally knocked it over and blew it out. The woman then ran to the kitchen, stole another from the hearth and, protecting it with her hand, returned to the room where she had been waiting.

That's when he came in.

The fragile flicker of the flame cast a huge embrace on the wall. Once she could speak, she asked: "What'd ya like?"

"Gimme a glass'av water from the clay jar." It had been seven years! Seven years he had wanted to drink a fresh glass of pure water from that acoustic clay jar. Because there, where he had been for so long, the water was warm and brackish.

After this, he caressed his house's small living room with a gaze. His house! His home! He then noticed she had made sure there were no steel bars on the window. With a grateful look, he thanked her.

THE DULZAINA

“Darn good fer nothin’ son av mine! ... Look, I gonna divide yer inheritance amon’ yer brothars! Throw dat *chirimía*¹⁴ away and farm the land!”

Ñor Bernardo, the landowner, had four sons. Three did well working the land, but, Miguel pulled beautiful melodies out of his *dulzaina*¹⁵.

Ña¹⁶ Felipa, Ñor Bernardo’s wife and mother of the young men, would once again think how the fondness for music was hereditary in her parents’ home. Her brothers, her uncles, grandparents and great grandparents, all would squeeze a sound out of just about anything that would fall into their hands. Sticks, gourds, horns, hides and bamboo canes would little by little be transformed into musical instruments that pleased the ear. How could she not have a son with the same blood?

Miguel earned good money; however, he earned it his way: making xylophones. Xylophones he would tune with the diapason of his *dulzaina*, which made them sound like the song of a goldfinch.

One day, at a cattle ranch, he snatched a horse conch from a cowboy and blew into it a note so clean, and so pure, so prolonged, and so high it broke the clouds in the skies and made them rain.

The *dulzaina* player used to seek retreat in the higher grounds of the mountains. Under the wide silence of the altitude, he would practice variations of the tunes birds would give him. The wind would blow down parts of melodies, and it was in one of those occasions when Ña Felipa told him, ‘the music from that *dulzaina* has...something like a light blue color within it.’

¹⁴ A disdainful name for a Flageolet.

¹⁵ Flageolet.

¹⁶ Short for “Señora.”

One morning just like any other, the old man made a proposition to his son, “Look, Mguel, take dat mountain next to the rivar, till the soil, and plant sugar cane. If ya do dat, Ah’ll give ya the plantation, the crushin’ of the cane and the sugar mill.”

The *dulzaina* player dove deep into his thoughts and answered, “Fine”. And with all the strength of his arm he threw the *dulzaina* into the depths of an entangled cliff, laying open just fifty steps away from the house.

Miguel started to bring trees down. Old stubborn trees were knocked down against the roaring protests of the entire mountain which, little by little, and against its will, was relinquishing its right to continue being a mountain.

Filled with anguish and looking down at the low lying grounds, through the kitchen’s wooden grid, the mother sighed, ‘Dat boy gonna kill ‘imself!’, while over the love of two fires she was warming up a mug of chocolate for that son, who was hers more than the other three put together.

Miguel made logs out of the thick wood, he chopped the thin branches into firewood, he then gathered what was left and set it on fire.

The night of the blazing fire, swollen pieces of the mountain climbed up to the skies. The mountain range was illuminated and the moon turned red.

The next day some brushwood was still lit and sputtering in a cloud of smoke that smelled like resin.

The farmer weeded out the land, made it burst into clods, and wetted it with his sweat ...and at the slow pace of time the yellow sugar cane finally grew thick and sweet. Then the *pailas*¹⁷ boiled and, among the flying bees, the molds yielded a pyramid of goldenrod *tapas de dulce*¹⁸.

¹⁷ Big wok like pan used to boil sugar cane juice.

¹⁸ Cylindrical pieces of dried and evaporated sugarcane juice that is not refined or bleached.

Everyone had grown a little older.

“Well done, ma son!” The landlord approved after the task had been achieved.

“A promise’s a promise. ‘Ere’s the deed. “

That night Ña Felipa called Miguel softly and said to him, “Ah’d nevar thought at ma age Ah’d climb down ta the bottom av the precipice.”

The *dulzaina* was wrapped in a piece of cellophane paper which was...like a light blue color.

THE MESTIZO

“Dis my house, com’n ‘an sit ‘ere.”

The night was about to fall.

The man lit a lard candle; I could see him then. He was a *mestizo*, a mixed blood, he was a bitter sort of man from the coastal regions, indifferent; maybe victim of the torrid weather. His face was marked by the whip of the harsh noon sun.

We sat at a table.

“Have you lived here long?”

“Five year.”

“But...aren’t you married?”

The man stared at me, unfriendly and distrustful. Then he turned his gaze to the floor.

“Ah had a wife...she dead! Ah don’t wan’ no other.”

There was a jug in a corner. The man put it on the table.

“Moonshine.”

We had a drink. After that, he was the only one drinking.

“She dead. Ah don’t wan’ no other.”

Then he started to talk. More than talking, he was thinking out loud.

“She dead. Gonna be two years. Lemme think...Yes! ...Two years. Manuela not a good woman. Ah was attached ta her. It was all’er fault. Ah happy she’s dead!”

The man continued to drink.

“One day Ah went to *Chomes* to buy a mule ta go ta *Orotina* ta sell fish. Ah was away fer eight days. When Ah come back, Manuela not the same. We always get alon’ fine togedar, Ah was attach ta her. Well, Ah decide ta talk ta her an’ Ah says, ‘there

sometin' wrong wif ya, Manuela, ya not yerself. Whassup? Tell me, whassap wif ya? ”

The man swallowed another drink.

The soft glow of the sea made its way in through the cracks of the shack. The ebbing ocean was quiet, barely moaning. The splashing sound of the waves against a boat in the mouth of the *Tárcoles* River and a frog's monotonous ribbit could barely be heard.

"Ain't nothin' wrong wif me man. Lemme be!"

"Look, Manuela, yer not like dat, ya 'v changed. Ya was not like dis before."

"She tell me, 'Well...each one's differen'."

"Ah got dis rage inside bot, ta avoid confrontin'er Ah stay quiet."

The candle over the table was sputtering, shaping a lard stalactite. Then he filled his tin mug.

"Well, one day Ah find'er talkin' ta a man called Juan Lobo. Juan Lobo use ta live half hour from 'ere. He gone, who know whar. Dat same day at nigh' there was a storm. The ocean is churning and there is a lightnin' storm. Ah go to get the mule dat run outta control. Then Ah see Manuela packin'er clothes. 'Wassup...Manuela? What's dat?' ”

"Ah rememba Ah saw 'er dat day talkin' ta Juan Lobo and then Ah thought dey was messin' aroun' while Ah was in *Chomes*. `Look scoundrel, ya not gonna live wif dat man!' ”

"Well...the dammed woman tell me ta ma face, 'Yes, Ah gonna live wif 'im. Ah like 'im more than Ah like ya. Each one's differen'."

"Fine, Ah tell 'er. Go now! But righ' now!...Dat's if ya can!... She start ta walk towards the door."

The eyes of the *mestizo* were ablaze, and he would drink time and again not being able to get drunk. With his big hand he gripped the neck of the jug as if he wanted to strangle it. A high calibre rifle hung from a nail on the wall.

“Each one's differen’”, grunted the *mestizo*; and, after a pause he added, “Ah tell ya there was a storm dat nigh’?”

He put a cork in the jug.

“Well...a lightnin’ bolt killed ‘er!”

THE COLORS

Just like he had done so many other times, Mateo got to his house stumbling drunk. He called his wife and daughter. He took two knives and started to grind them one against the other. It gave him pleasure to scare people who were weaker than him; he then buried the sharp blades of both knives in a dead tree. He spat out some foul words and, getting courage from the alcohol he had consumed, said what he had wanted to say so many times before, “I got bore av ya Antonia!I av another woman... Ah gonna leave ya wif dat brat! ...”

And he left zigzagging his drunkenness down the dusty road.

Antonia saw him going away and took refuge in the arms of her daughter, who had wisely remained silent.

‘Flor d’itabo’ was the name Mateo and Antonia had given to their daughter. Someone had said that, ‘she was pale and bitter like a *flor d’itabo*¹⁹ and that she had sprouted up among hateful blades.’

Just like the flower, she liked high places from where she could look down at the multicolored linens which the day would shed at sunset.

“Why ya like lookin’ at the sunset *m’hija*²⁰?”

And Flor d’itabo tried to explain it to her mother with the limitations of her language,

In her own words, she said she liked to watch how the colors mixed in the sky, creating new and varied hues, and that she had the gift of discovering new chromatic harmonies no one else could see, or that perhaps the colors lived within her.

¹⁹ An edible flower whose trunk has sharp, long and firm leaves; it normally grows in its treetop.

²⁰ Reduction for “mi hija”: Spanish for “my daughter.”

The mother didn't understand a word. She feared for her daughter's mental health.

Not far from there was Gabino Sojo's ox cart factory.

Flor d'itabo asked her mother for permission to get a job in the shop. She wanted to decorate ox carts with her painting. She wanted to work on what she felt came from her heart, because her sensitivity was full of colors.

The ox cart factory was a big old house, located on a high plain. From there she could see the vast extensions of pastures, the stubble fields and sown grounds whimsically arranged in triangles, patches and quadrangles, all lit up with sun strokes, just like one of those seductive pictures no one understands.

A red bougainvillea extended its purple shadow over a yellow road. Flor d'itabo would draw new templates; coloring the sides and the gates of the carts later with stylized strokes...and all the ox carts would be filled with ornamental rhythms, with drawings and colors inspired by the grasses and the clouds.

Later, the ox carts would be displayed like a traveling exposition of decorative drawings, inviting people to see them by the honking of their horns.

"Whatta nice ox cart!...Where dey paint it?"

"Whar else?... At Gabino Sojo's. Flor d'itabo painted it"

And the fame of the ox cart decorator spread all over town, over neighboring towns and even further, much further, from one side to the other, all the way to where the seas begin to turn green.

On one of so many other days, Mateo decided to take his daughter away from the mother. He showed up at the ox cart factory later in the afternoon. He looked overbearing and determined. As he approached the gate of the shop, he saw his wife bringing coffee to the girl. He called her, "I'm 'ere fer *Flor d'itabo*," he said straight out.

“Wanna tak’er from me?”

“Yes!”

“Ah don’t giv’er ta ya!”

“She mine!”

Antonia thought it over and said plainly, “Flor d’itabo ain’t yers.”

Mateo was speechless for a moment. He was about to throw himself on his wife to hit her, but all of a sudden he stopped, “Who’s’er *tata*?”

“She is mine, I’m her *tata*!” Gabino Sojo’s voice interrupted him as he approached them.

Mateo opened his mouth to blurt out another insult, but he stopped as soon as he saw Gabino unsheathe his machete.

“Fine then!” said Mateo cowardly, “Then Ah don’t ‘av anythin’ ta do wif either one av ya.”

And he walked away swinging his arms more than usual.

The owner of the ox cart factory and Flor d’itabo’s mother stood there facing each other.

“Forgive me, Antonia,” he said.

“Thank ya, Gabino”, she said.

THE BOATMAN

Dear God! All the rivers have Like an arrow shot by a bow, the shout crossed through the shadows, piercing the distance.

Asking for a boat to come to the north bank of the *Grande de Tárcoles* River mouth, the shout followed the sound of the water in the pitch dark night.

A star fell into the sea. It was the last star left.

Soon the bright flame of a carbide lantern came from the south bank like a luminous answer in slow-motion. “Da boatman’s comin’...”

The light was moving at a distance, drifting towards the Pacific; at times it would be lost, but then it would appear again, brighter and brighter.

Clouds of mosquitoes flew over the rotten smell of the trash accumulated by the splashing water under the pier. The croaking frogs, the chirping crickets, the running water, and the wind blowing the branches; all in an endless unchangeable low pitched melody.

It was dark for a long while, and then the light drew closer, casting reflections on the waves.

The rowing rhythm of the oars striking the water could be heard each time louder, louder, louder each time, until the prow hit the pier.

“Good evenin’, m’a friend.”

“Evenin’ ta ya m’a friend.”

The boatman lit up the face of the man who had called. His face was not familiar to the boatman.

The man who had called came into the boat, and the boat started to drift toward the riverbank, going under the branches of the shore, making its way among the alligators.

The boatman dimmed the light and explained, "Goin' downstream Ah gets blinded by the light and, if ya ain't careful, the riva throw ya into the sea or strand ya on d'a bank. Dis riva is a shifty ol' cuss!"

The sand banks in the mouth of the river stop and stockpile the driftwood, which become sculpted forms left by the rising tide.

The oars were cutting the water like a rudder, and the oarlocks were crying out for oil.

"And where ya headin' m'a friend?"

"Ta *Las Agujas*, m'a friend."

The boatman kindled his lantern while turning toward the middle of the river.

"Ya gotta know how ta do dis."

"Seems like it m'a friend."

The two men talked every once in a while, not looking directly at each other's face, because the night had hidden within its darkness all what the night held. The carbide lantern was focused on the other side of the river, far from them.

Just to make small talk, the boatman said, "Excuse me fer askin', What's yer name?"

"Juan de Dios Pereira, at yer service."

"Juan de Dios Pereira?...Wouldya look at dat!... Ah's Antonio Guadamuz! 'Member me?"

Pereira didn't answer. Guadamuz raised the oar and broke it over Juan de Dios' head.

Antonio drew his lantern near Pereira's face and stared at him for a long while, remembering.

"Ya look so old, Pereira! Ah hardly recognized ya..."

"It's been so lon'!.. Thirty year maybe. Ya think we'd not meet agin?... Well, ya see, how it is, Ah ain't give ya no time ta rememba. Ya look so old, Juan de Dios Pereira! ..."

And pushing him with the oar, he knocked him out of the boat and into the middle of the river.

The hard thud of the heavy body falling into the water was followed by the splashing of the alligators. Guttural noises were heard while bloody bubbles burst on the surface of the boiling water.

The boat floated away with the help of a paddle, drilling through the pitch black night.

The boatman got to the south shore. He cast the anchor and, after sinking his eyes in the dark depths of the river, he just walked away. He walked hunched over, with the entire weight of the night on his back, remembering old things, things that were nearly forgotten. The waves were taking off their white clothes as they reached the beach, and were leaving them lying there.

Guadamuz said out loud, "Ah finally found ya Juan de Dios Pereira. Ah'd almos' forgive ya. Ah'd sworn Ah'd kill ya when Ah saw ya. Fate brung ya ta me through the dark...very dark riva, easy, very easy, so I could keep m'a word."

"Yer a shifty ol' cuss, Mista riva!"

And the breeze carried the words out to sea.

THE DROUGHT

He looked like one of those “*ocarina*²¹ players” his ancestors had carved.

Still, frozen, crouched for hours on end.

His face was like moss on a stone, a reflection of the plants, except the plants were still green.

Outside, next to the plants set by the entrance, the *indio* was always growing roots...and a heart as well. After being there for so long, the *indio* had taken on the shack’s color.

The shack was becoming sonorous within the womb of the drought-dry mountain.

A shack of split trunks, vines, plantain leaves, bark of palm trees ... and mud.

Inside the shack was his partner, the *india*.²²

On the inside, she was one of those puddles of clear water where the moon could look at its own image. A thing of the mountain!

It did not rain.

The clay-colored robins got tired of asking for water.

The leaves from the great big trees fell down.

The earth and the sun drank up the river.

Leaves, leaves, and more leaves. Once they turned yellow, they could no longer hold on. Dried up leaves in every last corner of the jungle. Dry were the pigs’ mud puddles and the stamen of the flowers.

²¹ Ancient flute like instrument.

²² Female indian.

Waterless were the water vines and the creek beds. Dry were the noses of the animals...One heart already dry and another drying up.

With clumsy steps, the *india* was coming out of the shack. She stopped. She looked at the *indio*. She looked at the shack. She looked at the road. She looked once again at the *indio*, the *indio* who was her man. She drew closer to him, until she touched him. She waited. She waited, but he did not open his mouth, he did not look at her, he did not move.

The *india* took off walking, fleeing slowly, very slowly.

The *indio* stayed. His head embedded in his hands. His elbows wrapped around his knees. His feet deeply rooted in the earth.

As the silence grew, it filled the shack, turning it into a lifeless shell.

She had told him. She had warned him she would leave forever, because she could not deal with it any longer. Because he did not look at her, because he did not talk to her, because he did not love her. Because such silence was hurting her like an ulcer.

He wanted to tell her something, but he had never said anything before to her, so he did not say anything time either.

The *indio* did not know how to say anything, not a word would come out of him, he did not have it in him.

All the *india* wanted was a few words to scare away the silence. A little bit of tenderness to shorten the hours. Once in a while, a smile to brighten up the shack. Perhaps a caress...but...it was too much to ask.

The *indio* and the *india* could not find the place where both their paths became one.

One time not long before, while walking into the jungle, she was fascinated by a *manigordo*²³ and its mate. He would lick her fur, rub his body against hers, would jump up and down around her, he would look at her; he would get close to her making ripples on her spotted back. Thankful, his mate would respond to him with the same tenderness; her pupils showed it. Later..., later they would lie down together and then they lavished themselves upon each other.

The *india* recognized the *indio* was not like that.

The woman was fleeing, at a slow pace. Her feet sank up to her ankles into the dry leaves, and her chest was filled with a grief that rose up to her eyes.

She did not want to nor could she leave the *indio* when she saw the *manigordos*, but now she did. Now that she was about to have a child! ... She now embraced her escape with all her heart and soul.

She was running terrified from the man whom she thought could smash her *indiecito*²⁴ with a gaze of indifference.

Not that she wanted her child all to herself. She wanted to share it, but in equal parts. She wanted to divide it into two loves, which would provide half sadness and half happiness to each one.

It was too much for her alone!

dried up!

So that the *indio* would not smash the *indiecito* with his gaze of indifference... That was why she had not told him. He, her man, did not know she was bearing a child. He would never know. The pregnancy was evident. He could have guessed it if he had only looked at her...But the *indio* did not look at her.

²³ Ocelot.

²⁴ Baby Indian.

The long path was reverberating heat. It was long and somber, just like life!

With a glow coming from within, the *india's* face lit up when she thought, 'And what if he knew? Maybe if he knew?' And she stopped running away. 'Maybe he is expecting it!'

She began to walk toward the shack now.

She walked fast... and faster. She ran. She backtracked all the way. She broke the wrinkled leaves, which sounded like the tiniest bells ...or heartbeats, ever.

How short and how long the path is!

She spotted the shack from afar. Outside was the *indio*, just as she had left him. He still looked like one of those *ocarina* players carved in stone.

Stone with moss. Crouched. The color of the shack. Right next to the entrance, outside. Growing roots. Mute, and the same heart...

The *india* was afraid when she got there. Like a stray dog that goes to steal a slice of meat. She was scared.

And the *indio* did not move.

The woman swallowed a fistful of courage and told him everything. She said it all in one phrase, and waited for the reaction.

It was such a long instant. Silence can last so long!...

The *indio* experienced the greatest joy. He had waited his whole life for this.

He wanted to embrace his *india* with the *indiecito* she carried inside. He wanted to say what he could not say. He wanted to laugh, shout...He couldn't.

He wanted to open his chest with his own hands so that she could see him inside. He wanted to thank her...But he did not say a word.

He remained still, with his head embedded in his hands.

The *indio* could not talk. He did not have it in him. He was closed off, with a huge drought inside. He was born that way.

The *india* turned to flee again, deep into the mountain.

The *indio* still wanted to call her, but his voice would not come out; he wanted to get up, but his feet were rooted in the ground.

He remained crouched, like the *ocarina* players.

He tried to look at her, but his vision was blurred.

‘Could I be going blind too?’

He rubbed his eyes. He was sweating.

Then the *india*’s figure running away from silence began to blur again.

That was not sweat...

It was coming out of his eyes!

THE RAINSTORM

Pacho was a quiet man who had set his shack in a jungle clearing.

The shack looks like a mushroom in the clearing.

All around, the cedars grow so tall they stick their treetops into the clouds, and the palmetto trees look like lit rockets.

A *manú*²⁵ tree. A *burío* tree. A bird. An eyelash viper. The howling of a howler monkey. A thousand noises without a known origin.

It started to rain.

Lying in the loft, Pacho felt the drowsiness of an old ox.

Every now and then a rainsquall would leave the trees all shaggy. Some cedar tree would break.

The man chewed tobacco with lazy jaws.

Pacho had a white mare, which had given birth four times. That horse was all he loved.

Man and beast would go together to *Siquirres* to negotiate charcoal. Both traveled quietly. The man and the beast were one.

Pacho had a wife too.

Three hundred feet from the shack, are the steep cliffs of the *Reventazón* River; almost in front, the *Siquirres* River; and very far away, from the backside hill, is the blue line of the Caribbean Sea.

The rainstorm had set in with the stubbornness of a *chicharra*²⁶. An entire night of rain, then an entire day; one more night, and even one more day. Deep in the land the spillways gushed out. The trees were bent and fear made the shack tremble.

²⁵ *Miconia guianensis*.

The rainstorm!...

Lying in the loft, Pacho continued to feel the drowsiness of an old ox.

“Want coffee?”

A groaning sound, coming from the man’s stomach, was the answer.

He was tired of listening to the sound of the rain. The rainstorm was drenching every single nerve of his body; it was crushing his head, it tempted him with its wet hands, it was mocking him; it was as if the water gushing out of the gutter were falling on his senses, splattering stars of water.

‘If only there was thunder!’

Pacho came down from the loft and saddled his mare. The man and the beast – who were one-, left the shack without saying a word.

The woman saw how they turned into tiny pieces in the distant grey.

The man and the beast went down the path, on the dead wet leaves, under the water drops which fell like pellets, over the vertical entanglement of trees and vines.

A vulture moved from one tree to another.

‘My poor nag,’ thought the man, ‘good worker and patient. Four deliveries! Asking nothing from life. Just a small field of pasture. Nothing else.’

Rain drops were running down his nose as Pacho slouched forward.

Now he had to fight his way along the path, pulling on weeds and branches.

The mare, always quiet, splattered mud that splashed her belly.

‘Damned rainstorm!’

The man was very fond of his white mare. Of course he loved her!

‘What a good horsy.’ And he stroked her haunch. ‘Damned rainstorm!...’

²⁶Giant cicade – *Cicadidae*.

As if it were a knife, the wind lashed against his neck; meanwhile, the rain continued to drench the mountain.

Pacho was looking for José. José owed him a few *reales*²⁷ from the last charcoal delivery.

‘Whatta way av rainin’!...’

The river was swollen and roared loudly.

Pacho and the mare threw themselves into the water and started to swim in the shallowest depth. Both extending their necks, and breathing through flared nostrils.

‘Could there be landslides on the railroad?...’

Pacho continued talking to himself.

‘The yucca’s ruined. Darn!...With the money José owes me...He owes me?...’

Pacho had just realized José had paid him two weeks before.

‘Damned rainstorm!...’

The rising water was dragging them in an almost infinite diagonal; but the other side was right there. Pacho held on to a tree branch. Then he could see how the mare was not swimming, she barely floated, she kicked, she would sink and then come up again, only to be dragged away by the water. He saw how she hit the river rocks and the trees on the edges, spinning in a whirlpool...and then he did not see her anymore.

‘My poor horse!...Four deliveries!...My wife on the other hand...Why live without my horse?...’

And he let go of the branch, abandoning himself to the current. Damned rainstorm...that had wet his nervous system! ...

²⁷ Currency of the time; a very small of money; currently, less than half a nickel.

Through a break in the clouds, the sun peeked for an instant at what was happening.

THE MARSH

After having chopped an entire cart of mangrove wood, under the slanted shade of a fig tree, Maurilio was peeling mangrove sticks over a forked wooden trunk with a wooden club.

Just four or five steps away Toño was looking at him, sprawled face down over the bow of an old run down dugout.

The fire red mangrove slivers looked like sparkles scattered over the sand.

“Don’t ya ever get tired av jus’ hangin’ ‘round Toño?”

“Nah. Sometimes Ah get tired av watchin’ ya work.”

A little further away, under the shade of an almond tree, sitting on an overturned *panga* boat, Oliva was fishing for cockles from a pile of shells.

A loud tug boat was towing a chain of barges loaded with livestock.

Towards the *Chira* Island, the sun's rays passed through breaks in the clouds..., looking like the ropes and tackles of a huge ghost ship, barely visible because of the distance.

The marsh’s red glittering made it look like a hammered copper sheet.

From time to time, shifting his gaze away from Maurilio’s work, Toño would let his eyes rest on Oliva.

Maurilio would keep peeling mangrove sticks.

In such hot weather, Oliva, sitting so with her small wasted figure and her dark hair, looked like a gourd filled with fresh water.

Maurilio put his pride aside and said, “Leave ‘er ta me, Toño, don’t be no bad friend. Yer lucky wif women...not me. Fer you she’s like all da rest, you want ‘er jus’ ta

trick 'er an' dishonor 'er. Ah want 'er to marry 'er, and ta love 'er all ma life, 'til I dies...
Leave 'er ta me, Toño, don't be no bad friend!"

"Fine, she yers Maurilio. Dat's it."

And Toño left, leaving the port open so his friend could sail at his heart's content.

Maurilio finished his work, and on his way to Oliva, came under a windmill where a fishnet was getting dry, and playfully hit it with his big hand to make it turn.

"Ah'm so happy ya came Maurilio," said the girl. "Ah so whished ya'd come!"

"Ah'm 'ere ta serve ya, Olivita."

"Thank ya; dis what Ah wants from ya Maurilio, ta give a message ta Toño. Please tell 'im tonigh' Ah waits fer 'im at dat boat..."

Maurilio turned around and walked away very slowly. As he walked by, he stopped the windmill that was still turning. He got to the pile of mangrove wood. He grabbed the wooden club with which he had been peeling mangrove sticks and, with all his might, he flung it off into the marsh...as if all his hopes had gone to hell!

THE FOLK HEALER

In the foreground a bare tree, naked, with no moss on it.

It was standing, but lifeless. Ancient, huge and petrified, it was more than a hundred years old.

In the background...

The fog, so chaotic it stirred within its own thickness, just like a soul would when losing its body to death.

A skull of a young bull calf lying there, the eye sockets full of water. And further ahead, almost invisible, the grey spot of a house half destroyed by the mist.

Constantino, the folk healer, got off his mule and trusted it to the petrified elder. Looking superstitiously at the skull, he walked through the white walls of fog with no effort; as if he was a ghost.

“Anybody home?”

“Who’s there?”

“Tino.”

“Com’n in”.

The folk healer pushed the door and stepped into the house while painting the walls with his gaze.

“Excuse me, whar’s Isaías?”

“Come dis way Tino. I think he’s dyin’,” answered Isaías’ wife.

The folk healer approached Isaías, put his hand on the sick man’s forehead, lifted his eyelid and looked into his eye.

Outside were the shroud, the skull of the young bull calf and the dead trees; all reluctant to die. Inside was the room of the sick, filled with breathing, ears, eyes and a silence full of words.

“How lon’ he sick?” asked the folk healer.

“‘Bout a week.”

“How it start?”

“He cold, throwin’ up, feva and a pain in ‘is back.”

“Uh huh.”

“He whezzin’ and out ‘v breath.”

“Uh huh.”

The folk healer walked a few steps towards the kitchen and then called the sick man’s wife.

“Tell me somethin’ Lupe, why ya call me ta come see Isaías?”

“Wasn’ ma idea. Evar since he got sick, he tell me: ‘brin’ me Constantino. I know he make me feel betta’. Knowin’ ya live so far, and Ñor Lolo so close, I surprise he ask for ya. How I could convince ‘im? Uh? What Ah suppose ta do?”

Suddenly, the folk healer could make out the figure of two girls of approximately the same age; they were close together, as if protecting one another, just sitting down in a dark corner of the kitchen.

“Dey ma daughters,” Lupe thought it necessary to explain, “the only children I’av. Poor girls, they’re an egg wif two yokes, deaf an’ mute too.”

Constantino didn’t say a word. He went back to the sick man’s room and sat on the bed.

Leaning against the wall, while biting an edge of her apron, Lupe thought, “Twenty years ago happened what happened; those two unfortunate creatures were the

consequence. To make matters worse, they were twins, and they were Constantino's. No one in the world knew that truth, only her." The folk healer, sitting on the bed, thought, "Twenty years ago happened what happened; ever since then he had left the place and lived very far away, alone, not knowing a thing about that family...until today. But now, a suspicion was breaking his heart. What if those two unfortunate girls..."

The sick man moved and pulled the folk healer away from his thoughts.

"He need dressins on 'is ches' an' back an' ta smell the seven herbs", said the folk healer. "Ah got ma mule out, and Ah go to town to brin' mustard. Meantime, Lupe, ya go to the kitchen and warm up a bright red blanket."

The woman went to do what she was told.

The folk healer stared at the sick man.

Isaías opened his eyes and, with great difficulty, spoke to Constantino in this manner, "Look Tino...don't bothar wif no remedies...Ah may die tonight...Ah sent fer ya ta take care 'av ma wife...and yer two daughters."

The folk healer felt as if his heart had fallen out of his body and knelt down to pick it up.

"Ah will", he said.

And he kept his word.

THE BRAID

Her skin has the color of an earthen jar; her eyes are black.

Her smile was white.

Straight is her hair, full are her legs.

Her buttocks were firm, her steps were agile, and under the impeccable blouse, her ripening breasts trembled.

“Darn brat! Whar was ya? Do yer chores! Wouldya?”

Teresa would then hasten to scrub the pots, greasy inside, soot blackened on the outside; and while warbling a song she would laugh with her white smile, she would turn her gaze to the pebbled road or would even trip over the pig. When the afternoon was nice, she would secretly gather with the neighborhood boys and girls under the arches of the bridge.

“Darn brat! Whar was ya? Do yer chores! Wouldya?”

Teresa would then hurry to wash the grime off the clothing on the *pochote*²⁸ washing tray, and always humming a song, she would hang the clothes from the barbed wire or would spread them out in the pasture.

The girl was like a joy dwelling in a house.

But once...

But once, Teresa stopped singing and laughing. She felt there was something strange. It was not sadness. No! It was not fear either. It was...like a fright. That was it! A fright lasting for too many days.

²⁸ *Bombacopsis quinata*.

She would then walk through the pasture's trail open-mouthed, with her eyes wide open, doing and undoing her braid.

"Just'er age," her mom had said when seeing her pensive, curled up in the kitchen, always braiding the ends of her hair.

And no one knew Teresa had a hidden fright.

"Why ya stop singin' *m'hija*?"

Teresa would just shrug and look away.

The house is located on high ground. From up there the city looks like sprinkled sugar, sparse over the plateau down below.

Every now and then the sugar grains find their sheen stolen by the shadows of passing clouds.

The trunk of a *targuá*²⁹ tree divides the city in two.

The intense wind tears off the leaves which take a long time to spiral down to the ground.

"Leave yer hair alone, Teresa."

"Dis braid's tightenin' ma neck."

And a few months later, the local midwife helped Teresa to push out her fright.

At night the city looks like a lot of fallen stars.

²⁹ *Croton draco*.

THE HALFBREED

“Malaquías Badilla! ...”

“Isidro Mena! ...”

“Jacinto Alfaro! ...”

One by one the farm’s foreman called the men by their names and handed them their pay.

The sweaty group of men was getting their week’s pay.

“That Halfbreed’s a filthy swine”, whispered Miguel Camacho, “he took ma row. Just ‘cause he’s a bully ‘e thinks ‘e can, but he’s gonna pay.”

“Miguel, don’t get inta trouble wif the Halfbreed.”

“Ah ain’t afraid of nobody!”

“Well, ya bin warned.”

It was a Saturday. The coffee plantation had been nicely trimmed by the sturdy crew.

At dusk the men had gathered at the town’s grocery store. Some were drunk, carrying out pointless and heated conversations. Others were playing cards, and the rest, clearly out of tune, sang accompanied by a guitar and a flute.

All of a sudden a foul-mouthed Miguel Camacho raised hell among the plantation men.

Drunk and enraged, he cut the air with the edge of his machete while searching the place with a fateful look.

“Whar’s the Halfbreed?” he shouted.

Everyone stayed still. The Halfbreed wasn’t there.

Miguel Camacho shouted again, “Whar’s the Halfbreed?”

Some of the men approached Miguel.

“D’a Halfbreed’s not ‘ere. Why ya lookin’ fer ‘im?”

With his look Miguel had bitten the man who had asked.

“Ya ask me why? To cut ‘is throat!”

“Calm down, Miguel.”

“Go git d’a Halfbreed. Dey say he’s such a macho man.”

“The Halfbreed’s mean. Ya betta avoid ‘im.”

“Ah’s more av a man than the Halfbreed!”

“Ya be careful Miguel! Ain’t ya m’a frien’?”

“Ah got no friens. Whar’s dat filthy swine?”

Deaf, blind and mad, Miguel Camacho had gone out to the street holding the machete in his hand.

“As soon as the Halfbreed get ‘ere there’s gonna be a killin’.”

“Miguel’s righ’. The Halfbreed take ‘is row so dey pay ‘im more.”

“There come the Halfbreed!”

There, high up the road, in the half light appeared the athletic and brutal figure. A tragic silence fell over the farm workers. The Halfbreed was slowly getting closer, taking delight in chewing on a cigar. Miguel gripped the handle of the machete and walked decidedly toward the man.

“Git yer machete out, ya filthy swine, we’s gonna fight!”

The Halfbreed stopped in his tracks and stepped back.

“Defen’ yerself or Ah kill ya anyway!”

No one could believe their eyes. The Halfbreed, for the first time in his life, was walking away from a fight, he was showing fear, and he was stepping back.

Miguel pressed on, “ya afraid?”

People expected the tiger to leap on its adversary. Someone would soon lie down dead on the road and, no doubt, that someone would be poor Miguel.

“Wassup Halfbreed? Whar’s the man? Ya coward!”

From a distance an echo only repeated the last words.

“Halfbreed.”

“Man.”

“Coward.”

The Halfbreed looked at the crowd and, wiping his mouth with the back of his huge hand, as if to stop any word from coming out, he turned around.

It was then when Miguel Camacho pretentiously and arrogantly shouted, “Look at ‘im, d’a bravest’v all!”

Meanwhile, the Halfbreed was walking to his house, feeling the mockery of all the farm workers coming down on him as stones thrown at him.

Ildenfonso Mora had caught up with the Halfbreed and, grabbing him by his arm, he asked, “Wassup, Halfbreed? What was dat?”

The Halfbreed looked at him smiling.

“Ya knows what? ... M’a wife jus’ had a child.”...

His eyes sparkled like fireflies in the moonless night.

THE STILL

There is a vertical rock formed of triangular slabs of slate.

The river flows silently, twice as deep as the rock is high.

Gushing water streams falling from the heights are reduced to a misty rain.

Humidity fills the crevices with gigantic ferns.

Every now and then a flagstone breaks loose from the tall wall, interrupts the water's monologue, and makes the iguanas flee.

The river is like a constant stream of kindness lying at the bottom of the cliff.

Right in front of the boulder was Ramón Jiménez's *saca*, a moonshine distillery.

"Whatta good business!"

Thin threads of distilled moonshine would continue to fill the jugs.

"Chepe! Brin' more firewood."

The sunset was beginning to throw serpentines under the fog of the streaming water.

"Whatta good business!"

"But risky."

"Nonsense! The *Resguardo*³⁰ don't get 'ere."

"Well, who know..."

But one afternoon the *Resguardo* did get there. There were many horsemen. Like a locust plague, they were all over and took the still and the jugs, and they also took Ramón Jiménez with his hands tied.

³⁰ Local authority.

A long time went by and, just like any other afternoon, Ramon Jiménez went back to the place.

An hour down the river from where his first *saca* was, Ramón Jiménez started to distil moonshine again.

The moonshiner rubbed his hands happily.

“*Don*³¹ Ramón, there’s a man comin’ down the slope!”

“Take a peek. Who’s he?”

Chepe went up, hiding in the scrub. Then he came back down.

“It’s Pedro Rojas.”

“Ya scare me. Ah trust’im.”

Pedro Rojas went into the shed of the new *saca*.

“Hey Pedro! Well, whar ya been dat ya ain’t come no more?”

“Whassap Ramón? ... Well, been workin’ fer *Ñor* Joaquín.”

“An’ Rosa, an’ Teresa an’ the kids?”

“Healthy. What ‘bout ya?”

“Well, ‘ere with dis darn business dat don’t stretch no furthar. Well, ya knows the Resguardo arrest me?... Bein’ trustin’ is the worse thin’...someone accused me... Wanna drink? It’s the first batch, still warm, stron’ enough ta make the stronges’ man dizzy.”

Pedro took the gourd and emptied it in two gulps.

“How isit?”

“Tasty.”

³¹ A respectful way to address a man.

Two purple doves, flying low, breathed in the fragrance and turned around to smell some more.

The river flowed silently, dressing its afternoon colors.

“*Mbré*³², Ramón...”

Ramón Jiménez continued to kindle the fire.

“*Mbré*, Ramón” ... Pedro whispered again. “It was me who tol’ on ya ta the authorities.”

“Ya? ... No, Pedro, ya wasn’, Ah’d doubt maself firs’.”

“Well, as ya ‘ear...Ah needed money an’ ain’t know whar ta find it.”

The sentences continued to come out of his mouth. Slowly, crude, but leaving no doubt.

Ramón Jiménez blew his nose, and bathed the river with a sad look.

“An’ now...why ya tellin’ me?”

A colorful frog plunged into the water.

“Why ya tellin’ me?”

Pedro bowed his big head, which seemed to be chiseled from granite.

“Ma conscience’s killin’ me.”

³² Short for “hombre.”

THE MOUNTAIN

It was still dark when they started their journey.

Selim Parijare and Celso Coropa were on their way to explore a piece of land that the first wanted to claim. He had invited his life-time friend to come along.

“Let’s go up dis slope.”

Actually they could have gone around the *cornizuelos*³³ trail, but they decided to cross the enormous mountain to get there sooner.

“Watchout fer a snake!”

Both men slid through the thicket made of vines and roots, into a place unknown to the sun light.

“Is yer machete a Colin?”

The metallic voices of the machetes would moan as they cut out a trail and advanced into an even thicker scrubland, which made them crawl under the roots once again.

“We should’av taken the trail.”

They walked for several hours and, to fool their fatigue, they went on whistling in counterpoint to a local theme. Rattling woodpeckers and fluting orioles could be heard accompanying their melody.

“Whattadaya reckon dis is?”

They tripped over the skulls of two deer entangled by their antlers.

³³ Giant beetle (*Dynastes Hercules*).

Unable to get them apart, Selim Parijare y Celso Coropa left them hanging from a trunk fork of a ceiba tree, from which branches a howler monkey was balancing like a pendulum.

“Whatta rough land!”

The sun light entered wherever it could, with its slanted, round, warm rays. The alerted peacocks, the frightened squirrels, and the toucans, with their bright colored feathers and their amazing beaks, jumped from one tree to the other.

“Dat sounds like a *majafierro*.”

They got to the canyon. Down below a creek glittered. Strange scents of wild flowers and poisonous fruits climbed up the walls.

“There’s a stench of sweat ‘ere.”

Selim Parijare and Celso Coropa, hanging from roots, went down the rock wall, and once in the depths of the maddening bush, they satisfied their thirst.

“Let’s not drink it dry!”

High up, howler monkeys would throw bitten fruits, and from all around the place, birds that could not be seen would spill out strange songs.

“Whattadaya think if we eats?”

After eating, both men lay down like oxen and remained silent for a long while.

Celso Coropa held a ray of sun in the palm of his hand and sighed, “Sometimes Ah don’t like life!”...

There was a chaotic formation of roots and vines right in front of him.

“And sometimes Ah likes it,” he added.

Within the chaotic formation of roots and vines there was a flower.

After a brief thought, Celso Coropa dared to say, “*Hombré*, Selim...Ah ‘av thought ‘bout leavin’ town. They offered me a job somewhar else. Dey pay me bettar.”

Selim thought what his advice should be.

“Well, if dey pay ya bettar...” And right after he asked, “When ya leavin’?”

“First thin’ in the mornin’; but...”

There, under the seclusion of such a great cathedral, it was better to confess it, and cut to the chase. If necessary, he would go into details later. Selim would understand. He was so indifferent, so peaceful, so cold...And how little he cared about matters of the heart!

Fearful at first he said, “I ain’t leavin’ alone...”, and then he added firmly, “Jovita, yer wife, is leavin’ wif me.”

A quetzal flew over the canyon leaving behind a rainbow.

Eventually they found them. One next to the other. Nothing but skeletons and knives remained.

The former were white...the latter rusted.

THE HOURS

He had his shack...but he slept in his bongo.

At night he would lower the gaff sail and would lay it down over the spanker boom as if it were a tarp, to cover himself from the night dew and from the wandering stars.

Before falling asleep, at the time of recalling memories, like the white end of a compass needle, he would look at the Southern Cross Constellation.

In the inlet where the fisherman ran his boat aground, there were tormented trees and gnawed rocks. Wood and stone were chiseled by the ocean' jostling waters.

Forty steps away was his shack, gloomy, for having been abandoned for three years.

The fisherman had a wife, but one day, she caught him kissing Laura, a girl from a nearby place, and without inquiring, without a word, without causing a scene, she left him and went to live with her parents.

The fisherman moved to his bongo, because there was nothing left for him to do in his shack.

Three years! ...

The channels, dirty with slime at ebb tide, looked amber like during the rising tide, similar to mother of pearl.

Tana waited three years for Pablo to go looking for her; however, as he never came, it was Tana who came looking for him.

Three years of waiting, of anguish and of jealousy. And now she came in, crying out of shame, of rage and of humiliation for having decided to come looking for him. To look for him, even though he had not asked her to. To forgive him, even though he had

not asked for her forgiveness. To surrender to him, even though his arms would not embrace her.

Pablo had let her go, without asking a single question, without begging, without a single word of explanation...But she was now coming back, determined to settle things.

She was coming to tell him all she had thought about in three years. She wanted an explanation; she wanted to force him to confess, to give excuses and promises...and then, depending on how things went, stay with him conditionally or simply leave him forever, maybe blurting out a mocking laugh...to punish him.

Sometimes she was determined to stay, as long as he begged her, even if it was feebly, or as long as he gave her an excuse, even if it was a lie. But he would have to beg, even if it was with just a pious gaze.

Sometimes she was determined to offend him and to humiliate him, just to ease the spiteful hell imprisoned in her silence...but she did not have the means. The order of things she had planned for when approaching him had gotten all mixed up. She came to him already beaten, for she could not fight her pride any longer. She loved the fisherman so much. She herself did not know what she was chasing, nor did she know what she was running from; the truth was that, even before their encounter, she was defeated. Defeated by twenty six thousand two hundred eighty hours of waiting and loneliness.

From there, far away from the channels or the marshes, came the sonorous waves of the *quijongo*³⁴...

In those brief silences...

³⁴ Typical Costa Rican and Nicaraguan musical instrument of African origin.

When the idle sounds of the sea are pent up in the maze of a pink horse conch.

The memories were sounding the hour.

Tana came into the bongo arrogant and aggressive, and the fisherman looked at her softly, without getting up from his stool.

She did not say a word. She forgot all she planned to say. She fell down to her man's feet, with the most painful humiliation...and she kissed his legs. Then she raised her gaze and smiled at him, pleading, with her eyes drowning in tears. Then, she leaned her head on the fisherman's lap. She was tired, out of strength.

Pablo stroked her forehead with one hand...and she fell asleep.

Just like when we touch one of those extremely sensitive flowers, known around here with by picturesque name of *sleepyhead*.

THE ROAD

Between two thick walls of red soil, squeezed and deep, the road has been lain downhill, it has been dug by a living force right on the spine of the slope.

It is there where the precipices crumble, crying their loneliness.

The rain...

The night...

The rain decided to roll stones down the slope. The night remained quiet to listen to the jolting sound.

Jolts in a night which was cut into pieces by blue streaks of lightning.

The road had turned into a river.

An oxcart was coming down that road.

The ox herder could not stop the oxen from sliding down hill on the slippery slope.

The oxcart was covered by a tarp.

The striking of the cart's axle on the hub made a rattling noise. The echo of the ravines was heard from afar. It was as if the mountains were praying.

A moaning came from underneath the tarp.

As the multicolored flashes of light struck the shoulders of the steep slope, the sky poured heavy rain.

It was the moaning of a woman. An ox fell to its knees. The thrust pushed it onward smearing its snout with mud. The other ox snorted in pain as its neck sank onto the mud. Screeching, the cart tilted over a thick wall.

The ox herder looked under the tarp. The woman was now quiet. It was as if she were sleeping. It was critical to make it to the doctor soon.

A hard poke of the prod put the fallen ox on its legs, and the cart was sent forth to slide again, gravity taking its toll.

The moaning could be heard again.

The wind was entangled in the brambles of a hole; when it broke loose, tearing leaves off, it ran wild throughout the mountain range.

This time both the oxen fell down, and their eyes phosphoresced, as if they were fire flies. The ox herder let out a swearword he had been holding in his teeth.

New pokes of the prod put the oxen back on their feet.

Stones were rolling down from above.

The cart was gaining speed. The ox herder, trotting backwards, took the animals by the horns as they were sliding down the road with their legs stretched out in front, their spines bent, dragging their snouts.

“Hesah!... Hesah!... Hesah!...”

As the oxen were dragged by the slope, their horns were thrust into one of the thick walls. The yoke pressed the ox herder’s lower abdomen. Out of breath, he remained there for a moment, slipping from under the animals’ legs. He began to untwist himself and took a deep breath, with a dead rattle. He stood up and, letting out another swearword, he punished the oxen.

The cart slipped one more time under the shooting stars, falling stars that by then were becoming fewer. The storm had stayed behind. The wind was going away. So was the rain. The night was breaking up. The road was less steep...The ox herder. The oxen. A new dawn!

Night turned into day.

Now, on the broad level road, the cart traced parallel tracks. The gates on the cart bounced along happily. The paintings decorating the wheels were like stars stepping over the road's blessed palm.

In a matter of three or four seconds, a black-face solitaire lavishly wasted away the treasure of its song.

The oxcart got to the door of the town doctor and stopped there. The ox-herder lifted the woman in his arms and took her inside. Outside, one ox lay down after the other. The ox herder lay down too in a corner of the infirmary.

The doctor.

The nurse.

The doctor came into the room rolling up his sleeves. The nurse went to the kitchen to bring hot water.

Everything was compressed into one silent moment.

When the nurse came back with the water, she found the doctor coming out of the infirmary making the sign of the cross.

Distressed, she asked, "Did the poor woman die?"

"No," answered the doctor. "The woman is well. It's the ox herder who died." And spilling the words into the hallway he added, "That man was already dead when he came in! ..."

THE CHILAMATE TREE

This man lived in a land of unyielding heat and the sun would blast its flames against his back yard relentlessly.

The enraged heat would scorch the metallic sand time and again, and made the limed walls creak.

The sparkling glint and burning sensation would stab his eyes.

Even towards the evening, when the sun is blocked by the mountain range peaks, heat reverberations would stir the embers of the damned yard.

But there was a solution.

The man went to a *chilamate*³⁵ grove. He chose a small tree. He planted it right in the yard's center and, while patiently waiting for it to grow, the man got old.

He barely talked to his wife. At the beginning, when he brought her home with him, he was good and affectionate to her; however, as time went by, he came to think of her as an old woman...made of wood. He remained by her side, but he became elusive and harsh.

She did not protest; however, in her depressing silence she felt like hurting him in some way, to get even with him for her suffering.

Well, it turned out, the *chilamate* tree was getting taller and the man needed its branches to spread horizontally, so its shade would cover as much space as possible in the yard. He then pruned the tree and, consequently, from opposite sides of the trunk, two enticing branches sprang out like arms. Moreover, the trunk, no one knows why, had grown looking like two legs, one pressed against the other.

³⁵ Wild fig tree.

That tree was taking feminine forms.

And here is where the man's problem begins. Every afternoon, when he would come back from work, he would sit in the shade of the *chilamate* tree to contemplate the new woman made of wood...and he would end up drinking *vino de coyol*.³⁶

His wife would watch him through the cracks in the kitchen wall, but never said a word.

The man could sense her watching, but did not say anything either.

On one occasion he heard that the shade of the *chilamate* tree was harmful; that it would hurt whoever sat under its freshness, and that its afternoon crying would cause death.

He did not believe it, but started to drink his *vino de coyol* in the kitchen.

The woman moved from the kitchen to the *chilamate* tree shade where she would weave her baskets from the bark of a *burio* tree.

The man contemplated the woman and the tree and, when the fermenting vapors went to his head his confusion would begin, as he could not distinguish the tree from the woman. His mind was confused and, in an effort to sort things out, he continued to drink large quantities of *vino de coyol*.

One night, the man got up and ran his calloused hand over the body of the *chilamate* tree. Then he took it off, scared of having felt some pleasure. He went inside the house and told his wife the next day he would take the train to *San José*.

And the next morning he left.

Two weeks later the man returned home.

³⁶ Palm sap wine.

That short escape from home to a cooler weather had calmed his spirit, and had quenched his thirst for *vino de coyol*. He had also been thinking about his wife with a strange tenderness.

This short time away from her had made him realize he loved her...sweet, sad, quiet, weaving the *burío* bark baskets, under the harmful shade of the *chilamate* tree.

He was bringing her a present, a pretty pair of gold earrings. He was willing to change the way he treated her. He was determined to be the caring and affectionate man he once was, the way he had been at the beginning, when he was young and had taken her home with him.

Sometimes he would also think of his tree, his dear tree! the one he would not allow anyone to touch not even a leaf...despite its harmful shade.

Upon arriving in town, a neighbor told him his wife had been buried four days before.

This news hurt him; he went into the house and ran to the back yard.

He stood still...until the sun started to sink behind the mountain range, determined to avenge his woman, with the gold earrings tighted in his hands, in front of the murderous tree...Staring in awe at the amazing shade of the *chilamate* tree.

Then...he took the ax down.

ONE NIGHT

One Saturday afternoon, under a sky painted with the colors of a ripe mango, Luis Gaitán was walking towards the coast.

He carried a pickax and a shovel on his shoulder, and wore a small dagger on his waist.

'Anyone would think I'm on my way to kill someone, and I'm bringing the pickax and the shovel to bury the body,' he thought to himself.

A shiver of fear ran right through his body.

Oh, Luis Gaitán! ... He suffered from excessive imagination and guitar serenades. He was a simple colorful character, just like any good plainsman and colt tamer. Brave as any other, but he was afraid of the dead.

On his left, there was a lagoon.

On his right, there were tall mango trees; providing shade to the road and dripping clusters of half-ripened fruits all the way to the ground.

A multitude of herons took off; it was as if the lagoon had taken off with them.

Coming out from the bromeliads and the acacia shrubs, the iguanas would get in the man's path, just like unpleasant thoughts would.

Later... the herons plowed the plains with their shadows.

Luis Gaitán shifted the pickax and the shovel from one shoulder to the other, and his mind switched thoughts.

He was on his way to meet Cristóbal Chamorro at the lonely rural police station shed, where both would spend the night, and at the morning's first yawns, they would leave to dig up a Chorotegan tomb.

It was believed the place held precious goblets, jade necklaces, as well as eagles, lizards and frogs made of gold. But, it was also said that disturbing these Indians' tombs would bring bad luck.

They would go on foot, as the trail was too narrow for the horses; besides, they did not want others to know what they were up to, so they had left their horses behind.

As the night spilled over, the shrieking of the howler monkeys sounded as if they were destroying the peninsula.

Just like they had hours ago, strange feelings invaded Luis Gaitán's mind, 'Somethin' bad gonna happen!...'

Orion and the half-moon were sharing the night when the plainsman arrived at the beach.

Here, a raucous channel. There, a shell cemetery whitened by the moon; and very far, barely visible, like a narrow glittering snake lying in the horizon, *Bahía de Culebra*.

Hiding in the shadow of the trees, Luis Gaitán drew closer to the old pier invaded by shellfish. Right in front was the police shed, a lonely place made out of wood and zinc.

Sun bleached wood and salt rusted zinc.

Luis Gaitán pushed the lazy screeching door. Fleeing bats stirred the hot air, and the iguanas' panicky steps could be heard.

A rectangular patch of moonlight went in before the plainsman did. He closed the door deciding not to light the room, so its beams would not escape through the cracks of the walls. They could attract the attention of any night-wanderer.

There was Cristóbal Chamorro, asleep on the ground, in the shed's darkest corner.

“Hey! ... Cristóbal! ...”

Cristóbal Chamorro did not move.

““Hey! ... Cristóbal! ... Cristóbal! ...”

He still did not move.

A moonbeam entered now through a crack, landing on Chamorro's face.

Trying to make sure this was his friend, Gaitán got closer to him, and then he went to lie down in another corner of the shed...But he couldn't sleep.

He could hear the iguanas running and the bats flapping near his face.

Once again, unfounded fear tormented him, 'Somethin' bad gonna happen! ...'

There are nights when millions of wicked spirits flit within the dark caves of our thoughts.

Far away, a stone curlew bird and, very close, a bewitched owl announcing its omens.

All of a sudden Luis Gaitán opened his eyes frightfully wide, feeling the blood of his entire body accumulating in his head.

'No! No! It can't be!...'

He remained still, puzzled, looking straight at the shapeless bulk that the semidarkness allowed him to recognize as his friend.

Luis Gaitán was afraid of the dead!

'Why,' he thought, 'hadn't Cristóbal Chamorro answered? He had called his name repeatedly, aloud!...'...

In his mind he saw his friend's face once again, lit by a moonbeam.

Chamorro was bruised, his mouth open and his dreadful stillness was that of a dead person.

He tried to calm down, scolding himself and then, “Hey! ... Cristóbal! ...”, he yelled with a voice that was not his anymore.

Cristóbal Chamorro remained still.

It was then when the plainsman, gulping breaths of air, got on his feet and approached his friend. A swallowed scream went down his throat and into his guts. Cristóbal’s left arm rested in a puddle of blood.

He dared to touch his hand. It was humid and cold. He realized he had smeared his own fingers with blood.

His fear made him feel like throwing up, and he cleaned his hand with the front of his shirt.

He walked backwards, terror stricken, and with a strange cold in the roots of his hair, he tumbled back to his corner, and started to think what he had to do.

Outside, the coyotes were howling.

‘Call the authorities?’... No! He would be apprehended immediately. His shirt was stained with blood, and he was carrying a dagger.

‘Run away? ... What for? Where to?’... It would be held against him and, at the end, they would find him. Besides *Don* Gaspar Vallejo, his brother-in law Samuel and Gregorio Burgos, all knew that he was with Chamorro looking for the Indian tomb, and some other people had seen him walking towards the beach, trying to pass unnoticed through the shadows.

He looked at the corpse in his corner. Now, in the darkness of the room, he believed he could see the vampires dragging themselves, clumsily, miserably, with the help of their evil membranous wings, sucking the spilled blood. A rather dark blood.

Outside the coyotes continued to pierce the night.

Inside the horrible vampires were having a blood feast. Once satisfied, they continued to flap in the shadow filled silence of that hideous shed.

‘Somethin’ bad had to happen!...’

How right was old *Don* Gaspar when he sententiously told him that stealing from an Indian’s tomb would bring bad luck!

Then he asked himself, ‘Who could have killed Cristóbal Chamorro? ... What for?... Did he have enemies? ... No! Or did he? ... Yes! ... Gregorio Burgos! ... Burgos hated Chamorro to death, because he had accused him of stealing young bulls, and Gregorio knew that Chamorro was going to spend the night in the shed.’

A shiver went down his body every time he thought he was alone, keeping company with a corpse.

He then sank into an abnormal confusion. Later he decided not to blame Gregorio Burgos, but to admit the truth. A terrible truth! It was him! He killed him with his dagger. He killed him as soon as he arrived at the shed; right when he had approached him the first time. He killed him in an unconscious outburst. He killed him because he wanted to get rid of him. He killed him so he could go alone to dig the treasures from the Indian tomb. It was an act of madness! ...

On his way to the shed greed had tempted him several times, he had thought about not having to share the gold. Like a blister beetle, it had flitted around his head in green circles. Horrified, Luis Gaitán would chase it off, but the beetle would return with its obstinate buzzing, and ended up stinging him...making him crazy.

But now he was sorry, not only because the madness was gone, but because a miracle had occurred: he was no longer afraid of the dead...the dead...the dead...

Luis Gaitán was shattered.

‘What to do?...’

He turned around and tripped over his shovel and his pickax.

'That's it! ... Bury him! ...' He had to hide his crime!

There was no time to lose. He had to dig a grave and bury the corpse.

That was why he had brought his tools. He would bury the corpse, tools and all. He would create a new kind of tomb: one filled with metal objects. That same night everything would remain hidden. No one would know anything! ... Mystery would swallow Cristóbal Chamorro. The night could not be any better for burying the dead!

He laid on his stomach. Now he was on all fours, still no courage, still no breath, still no strength to stand up. Like a hurting crab, slowly, he started to drag the shovel and the pickax with him.

"Luis! ..."

With a quick move Luis Gaitán turned around and faced Cristóbal Chamorro, who was standing before him.

"Whassup?" said Chamorro. "What da heck ya doin'?"

Luis Gaitán did not answer. He could not answer. Frightened, he would stare at his friend, not being able to understand anything.

"Git up, man," Chamorro added. "Let's git ta the tomb, morning's breakin'."

Luis Gaitán used the wall to help himself up. He rubbed his eyes. He looked at the early morning through a crack in the wall. He applied pressure to his mind with both his hands. Then he slowly walked to the corner where Cristóbal Chamorro had been sleeping.

There was a somewhat blackish spot.

"What's dat?" He asked foolishly.

“A black coffee stain,” answered Cristóbal. “Ah spilt da bottle las’ nigh’. Ah was so tired Ah slept over the spot an’ ma shir’ got stained.” Then he added, “Ah ain’t ‘ear ya comin’ in. Ah slept like a dead man! ...”

There was an assortment of roses to the East of the sky.

Luis Gaitán let go a laugh as long as the plains.

“Whatya laughin’ ‘bout?”

“Nothin’!...”

A GASP OF AIR

Under a rustic mangrove frame thatched with palm tree leaves, Javier Garita, an exotic coral fisherman, was covering a big, old and filthy canoe with tar.

Some thirty steps away was the shack, the only one in the bay, surrounded by tall wild mango trees. Behind it were the herd of cows and calves.

Here, hanging from the branches of their trees are the round gourds; the eccentric cashews, with their seeds on the outside; and the milky star apples, known as *caimitos*, with a purple color that make them look like a poisonous fruit. All of them sheltered under the fickle shadow of the swaying palm trees.

In the background, large expanses of sand banks, with shell dust and iron particles saturated with shimmering iridescence. Then...the ocean, always the same and always different. A stream of water now draws a figure on the surface; and now the cool wind erases it.

The young brunette came out of the shack covered with a printed material robe and, as she passed by Javier Garita, she stopped and said to him: "Wouldn't ya like ta swim fer a while?"

"Not now. Dis darn canoe's takin' lots av wata an' I got to cover it with tar fer tomorrow. Just yestaday I had ta bail wata the whole time." And in authoritative tone he added, "Hey, Talía, swim only whar the waves break, it's the low tide an' the sea's rough an' pullin' in...more an' more...arrogant an' treacherous."

"Tank ya fer the warnin'," Talía said as she walked toward the sea.

Javier continued to work. A bit later he raised his gaze and looked at the woman's silhouette at the beach; standing still, like a well proportioned nude bronze sculpture in vibrant colors.

“Only whar the waves break!” he shouted, and he went back to applying tar to the boat while humming a song.

At around that time in the evening, the landscape turns into metallic shades; hues of cadmium and cobalt. The ocean, with the phosphorescent green of verdigris; the iron in the sand giving it a rust color, and the sonorous, brittle platinum foam.

Every now and then a single line of pelicans would fly parallel to the horizon; breaking its course to plunge over a silver bank of sardines. As if bragging about their aerial navigation skills, a couple of white chested black frigate birds would slowly describe parabolas in the air, while over here, parrots would fill the palm trees with green conversations.

Once again Javier Garita raised his gaze but...he did not see the woman. Fear made him throw the oakum and the tar and started running towards the beach.

“Talía!... Talía! ...”

He looked to his right, then to his left, then all around.

“Talía! ...” he yelled once again and dove into the water. He swam. With the skills of a dolphin, he swam in different directions, searching the depths apprehensively. Having no more oxygen, he emerged to the surface to take a deep breath and then he dove again. He managed to find the light blue body of the woman rocked to and fro by the ebb; there, near the reef, slightly wounded by the corals and the incredible giant conches.

He took her by an arm but she slipped through his hands because they were greasy from the tar; then he passed his left arm under the young woman’s arm pits and, holding her tightly he emerged to the surface. He swam towards the shore, with the superhuman strength only terror can trigger. He touched bottom and made it out

dragging the woman. Once at the shore, drained by exhaustion and nervous tension, he collapsed.

The breaking waves beat up both bodies, as if they were dead trunks that the sea tosses onto the shore.

But Javier Garita gained his strength back quickly. He sat up. He lifted Talía up. He dug his left knee on the sand and placed her body face down over his right thigh bending her hips; meanwhile, he pressed her abdomen with his tar covered hands. He did not make her vomit.

It was then when he thought of mouth to mouth resuscitation. Not losing a moment, he lifted her in his arms and put her where the foam of the waves would not reach them, and he lay her face up. Javier lay down next to her and opened her tightly shut jaws. He covered her mouth with his lips, inhaling and exhaling, anxious to absorb at least one bubble of air from her lungs, and to give life back to her through his own breathing.

There, standing right next to them, impassive and relentless, the allegory of death waited.

The young man begged for a miracle...and he received it.

Javier perceived a slight stirring in Talía's bronchi, followed by a weak faltering aspiration.

"A gasp of air!... A gasp of air!... I defeated death!...", shouted Javier Garita as he looked towards the sky, almost crying of happiness.

Once again he gently put his lips over the woman's mouth, and tirelessly alternated inhalation and exhalation, ceaselessly and happily he continued to give her life.

Lying down on the beach, both bodies formed an angle whose vortex was on their mouths.

Suddenly, unexpectedly, Juan Pablo Mayorga appeared from under the swaying palm trees. He had been looking for a jaguar, which had been eating his calves. He was carrying his sixteen gauge double barreled shotgun.

A quick superficial look at that angle on the beach set his jealous heart on fire, and made him lose his mind. Alas!...He raised the gun, and a double discharge of pellets left Javier Garita and Talía de Mayorga forever breathless.

THE DUGOUT

Aboard the long and narrow dugout were four men and a woman: Williams, the black man, the one-eyed Felipe, the left handed Miguel, the *Nica*³⁷ Rivas and Julia María, who was about to give birth.

They had left the poverty-stricken settlement known as Golden Grove towards midnight and, paddling and levering, they were cutting through the *Reventazón's* headwaters, on their way to the *Cambo* pier.

The black man was at the bow, because he could see like an owl in the darkness. The other men paddled and the woman, with her pregnancy in the way, was bailing steadily with a hollow gourd.

Now then, as soon as they would get to the pier, they would have to walk across the banana plantation to get to the *Montecristo* platform, and then to the *El Carmen* regional medical center.

The *Reventazón*, approximately three hundred feet wide, has so many twists and turns in the area that the stars seemed to circle the dugout. The chocolate waters drag along big tree branches, making navigation risky. On both riverbanks the cracking bamboos, the jute plants, the ditch reed and the wild lilies could barely be seen.

"Careful, a huge tree's comin' down in the middle av the rivar," shouted left-handed Miguel.

"Ah sees it" said the black man, "Take the righ' curve; ligh's off! Ah sees betta in the dark."

"Juemialma,³⁸ whatta big trunk!," mumbled the *Nica*.

The dead tree passed the larboard side of the canoe as if it were a ghost.

³⁷ Short for Nicaraguan.

³⁸ An expression of surprise.

“Ow,” the woman moaned as she caressed her belly.

The four men looked at each other in the darkness.

“Dis girl gonna give birth in the dugout!” whispered the one-eyed Felipe.

“How lon’ before *Cambo*?”

“Round two hour an’ another ta the midwife.”

The four men rowed with all their strength and the woman, uncomfortable because of her belly and repressing her pain, continued to bail with the hollow gourd.

A new pain made the woman let out a low moan.

All the way from the prow the black man said, “Hold it, hold it!”

And the woman, “Ya shut up, *negro chumeca!*”³⁹

The dugout was then filled with laughter, and the laughter eased the anxiety contained in the vessel. Now, the Seven Little Sisters took refuge behind a cloud, and the evening dew chilled the night. The *Nica* put a cover over the woman.

Shedding tears Julia María asked, “Who know somethin’ ‘bout givin’ birth?”

“Not me.”

“Me neithar.”

“Me eithar.”

No one knew.

“Well, I do,” said the woman. “The midwife an’ me help ma mothar delivar ma little brothar.” And she added, “Ere, in the basket I bring clean clothes, diapers, scissors, some other tings and two bottle of rainwatar.” And with an authoritarian tone, she pointed at the left handed, “Ya, Miguel, yer gonna help me.!”

“Me?,” complained the man putting a hand on his chest.

³⁹ A disdainful expression of Jamaican origin.

“Yes, ya, Miguel Calero. Come ‘ere! Brin’ the lantern. Wash yer hands. ‘Ere is soap. I tell ya what ya ‘av ta do. Hurry!”

Left-handed Miguel obeyed trembling with fear.

“Whatta bunch av cowards men is!” mumbled Julia María, as she did the best she could to turn around and lean towards the back of the dugout.

The *Nica* man, the one-eyed man, and the black man sought refuge at the bow, speechless, rowing with more strength, toward the *Cambo* pier, on the edge of the banana plantation. There was then a long whisper mixed with the splashing sound of the paddles, the river’s monologue, and Julia Maria’s secretly given instructions.

All of a sudden, a miracle! They could hear a baby crying.

“It’s a black baby boy!” blurted out the left-handed Miguel. “A handsome chocolate colored boy, wif tightly coiled hair an’ all.”

“Oh! Ha, ha!” the black man Williams let out his anxiety by bursting into a pride filled paternal laughter.

Then, for about fifteen minutes, as the new mother gave instructions, everything turned into a whisper...and then the cry of the black baby boy.

Someone asked, “Go on ta the pier?”

“No!” the woman shouted, “Tank God, everytin’s fine. Let’s get back ta the shack.”

And the dugout shifted around, and slickly glided at the stream’s mercy.

It was dawn.

The fluting of the song birds and the coarse bellowing of the howler monkeys could be heard all over.

RESEARCH REPORT

THE PLAUSIBILITY OF SUBSTITUTING A FOLK DIALECT WITH A REGIONAL DIALECT

INTRODUCTION

This project consists of the translation of *Cuentos de angustias y paisajes*⁴⁰, a book of short stories written by Costa Rican author Carlos Salazar Herrera, and its corresponding research project. It aims at justifying the recreation of the simplicity of the characters' speech by establishing a systematic procedure to translate the spirit of the dialogues found in the original texts using a United States Vernacular English variation. The purpose of this research is to bring about a response similar to that of the original audience to the original text in regards to the many Costa Rican cultural aspects that these stories contain. Therefore, in order to understand the translation decisions as they were carried out, the audience will have to be familiarized not only with the definition of vernacular, and the main features of the vernacular variation that was chosen, but also with some of the most important aspects of Costa Rican culture.

This research project is comprised by an INTRODUCTION, in which the main objectives of the work are listed; CHAPTER I, titled *Theoretical Background*, will inform the reader in regards to the theories that back up the translation path taken by the researcher regarding the cultural aspects in literary translation, as well as the need to translate the spirit of the original dialogues through the diachronic analysis of an analogous literary dialect. CHAPTER II, titled *Why African American Vernacular English?*, explains the reasons why African American Vernacular English was chosen as a literary dialect to substitute the Costa Rican folk dialect found in the short stories based on its syntactic, phonetic and morphological characteristics. CHAPTER III, titled *Adapting Salazar-Herrera into AAVE*, consists of a systematic comparison analyzing the O.T.

⁴⁰ Salazar Herrera Carlos. *Cuentos de angustias y paisajes*. San José: Editorial El Bongo, 1990.

dialogues and the corresponding translation using the AAVE; CONCLUSIONS is the last chapter; it recollects the results drawn from this process and the plausibility of the techniques used to translate a text which at first seemed untranslatable.

Carlos Salazar Herrera was a great Costa Rican plastic artist who became one of the pillars of the country's art and literature in the second half of the twentieth century. The landscape described in *Cuentos de angustias y paisajes* is enhanced by colorful descriptions and textures, proper of a plastic artist, and the register used by his characters is that of the peasants of his time. The universal feelings these simple-natured characters endure are also transmitted to the reader in detail. Therefore, picturing their environment and the nature of their struggles becomes easy for the reader. His texts are filled with very distinctive words so familiar to the author, but not necessarily to the Spanish speaking/reading audience; that is why, at the end of the book, we find a glossary of terms.

Based on the possibility descriptive grammar offers, by accepting to represent language as it is being used by the speaker, the decision has been made to translate the spirit of the dialogues found in the original texts using Vernacular English of the South of the United States, mostly known as African American Vernacular English. By doing this, the target audience will have a better idea of the speech and social and academic status of the mid twentieth century Costa Rican peasants portrayed in these short stories. Similar translation procedures are found when leafing through Mark Twain's *Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*, David Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, in the case of foreign literature, and Dellita Martin-Ongusolla's translation *The Best Short Stories of Quince Duncan*. These authors use eye dialect to represent the socio-linguistic features of some of the characters of the stories and they accomplished their purpose.

Supporting this writing procedure authors as Ives Summer, in her article *A Theory of Literary Dialect*, states that at the time of depicting a dialect, the authors have to be particularly aware that s/he is describing a character that is different, socially or geographically, from the rest who speak the standard language (146). Salazar Herrera was fully aware of this fact and deliberately made what could be taken by the untrained reader as syntactic and spelling mistakes at the time of portraying the characters of his short stories through their dialogues.

Ives also supports literary dialect when she affirms that “The dialect characters are made to speak a language that has unconventional features of pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary...literary dialect are [then] deliberately incomplete; the author is an artist, not a linguistic or a sociologist, and his purpose is literary rather than scientific” (147). The careful choosing of words might have been the reason why Salazar Herrera’s production is not as vast as that of other authors. However, it is because of the dialogues found in *Cuentos de angustias y paisajes* that those who did not live in the 1940’s have a clear idea of what the reality of the peasants was. The status of artist that the author achieved long before his death in 1980 was the product of a process in which knowing when to introduce the right words in a dialogue, even when they were grammatically wrong, turned into an art.

This work aims then at establishing a precedent in regards to the feasibility of translating Costa Rican folk dialogues maintaining not only the spirit but the form of the original text, by using a dialect that has a similar linguistic background. Hence, this work also aims at encouraging other translators to consider the pros and cons of this type of translation. Whether they find it useful or not, it is meant to be a platform to work on these types of texts; as it is very important to let other cultures know about the rich work

of our brilliant authors. Considering that English is recognized as a universal language, the chance of these types of work being read by many people is rather high.

Additionally, this project is a state-of-the-art in that it proposes a systematic process for the translation of colloquial speech into a target folk dialect. This process resulted from several years of research including both the review of multiple parallel texts, as well as the input of different informants and specialists in the fields of literature and linguistics in both languages. The literary and research contributions of this project are due in large part to the realization of the following general and specific objectives:

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

Demonstrate that a systematic plausible procedure can be established to translate the folk dialect found in Salazar-Herrera's short stories with one with a similar background from the target language; in this case, African American Vernacular English (AAVE) from the Southern region of the United States.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To review the theory of literary translation and previous research projects in order to underscore the innovation of the current work
2. To analyze the impact of the history as well as the sociolinguistic and ethnographic characteristics of the migrations that resulted in the origin of the dialects
3. To compare the syntactic, phonetic and morphological characteristics of the Vernacular English and the Spanish variation used in *Cuentos de angustias y paisajes*.

Considering the context of the words and the non-standard spelling rules of the Spanish dialect found in the dialogues, the methodology here exercised consisted of identifying the best possible equivalents in AAVE to translate the folk dialogues of the

Spanish variance. The translation of the dialogues became more plausible as the list of equivalents began to grow. It is important to mention that proper names as well as other significant nouns of the texts were left in the source language; in doing so the translation aimed at emphasizing the fact that those are lexical words mostly found in the Costa Rican culture. An explanation of these words is provided by a simple footnote or by adding a brief explanation within the text itself.

Several translation research projects were reviewed in order to survey what has been done in the field of literary translation. Susana Starcevic translated extracts from *Limón Blues* by Anacristina Rossi and analyzed the political effects resulting from the highlights of linguistic diversity in an English, Creole and Spanish text. Georgina Alvarado translated an excerpt of *En una silla de ruedas*, by Carmen Lyra and focused on neutralizing cultural differences and vocabulary that might not be understood by the target audience. Ana Vega's translation of Barbara Borntrager's *A Mother Held Hostage* serves to exemplify the reconstruction of the source text and the intertexts present in the book: mother-son dialogues, quotes from a diary, poems, pictures, dialogues, medicine, psychology, biblical quotes, and religious music, among others. Francine Ocampo worked on the translation of short stories written by three American writers and encourages women to learn about the American culture. At the same time, she provides the guidelines a beginner translator would have to follow in order to fully express the characteristics of a literary text, mostly in regards to conveying cultural and stylistic aspects. An interesting proposal is Natalia Robles's translation of Alberto Sibaja's *El ímpetu de las tormentas* where the researcher avoids the use of colloquialisms and idioms from Costa Rica and Latin America in general, as a way to represent how literary translation has been done in Costa Rica, so the phenomena can be understood

from the point of view of the current narrative translation; and, ultimately, to make Costa Rican translators aware about the lack of translation of Costa Rica's literature.

As can be seen, those former research projects have focused on the translation of literature; however, this research project proposes an alternative to the translation of the folk dialect found in the many Costa Rican works of literature of the mid twentieth century. Hence, while following the advise Robles gives in regards to increasing the translation of Costa Rica's literature, the novelty of this work relies in the fact that it is the first attempt made to convey the sociolinguist aspects of the characters of the original stories through the use of a literary dialect of the target language also sharing the sociolinguistic features, in this case AAVE. This process reveals another relevant feature of this translation: the establishment of close cooperation between linguistics and literature. The result is a text that has no predecessor.

This report reunites the empirical knowledge accumulated over many years of interaction with people from the Southern area of United States, and sociolinguistic studies done in the past. The careful study of the main characteristics of the AAVE lay the foundation for a translation that may look audacious to some people, and inspiring to others. Hopefully the former will be in the minority and there will be more translations of the Costa Rican literature of the first half of the twentieth century. Only then will the rest of the world learn about the work of the many authors who, through their creativity contributed to illustrate the roots of our culture. Therefore, this work will encourage other translators to consider the pros and cons of this type of translation. Regardless of whether or not they find it useful, it is meant to be a platform to work on these types of texts. It is very important to let other cultures know about the rich work of our literature, because, just like Salazar-Herrera, there are many other authors in the history of Costa Rican literature who used this same type of folk dialect in the dialogues

So, should anyone else feel motivated to translate other texts that contain dialogues similar to this, this proposal is meant to be a suggested method for dealing with texts commonly believed by many as impossible to translate because of the peculiar form of speech found in the dialogues. Thus, more Costa Rican folk literature, with many of its cultural peculiarities, will be known to the world if translated into English which, at this point in time, is considered a universal language.

Understanding vernacular as the relation to a dialect geographically established and spoken by common people, the following contents are up to to demonstrate the plausibility of translating a folk dialect with a parallel variant that is currently used and geographically established in a region of the target culture, hoping to elicit a response in the target audience that is similar to the one evoked by the source text as a result of the common linguistic background given to the characters.

CHAPTER I

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The main purpose of this graduation project is to establish a systematic procedure to translate the folk dialect found in the stories through the use of an analogous dialect in order to convey the socio-linguistic aspects of the characters found in the original text into the target text. The next chapters develop a detailed explanation of the reasons supporting the decision of choosing African American Vernacular English to translate the Costa Rican folk dialect of *Cuentos de angustias y paisajes*. The present chapter aims to reflect on several theoretical considerations which have led to this decision; these considerations include the analysis of the sender of the source text, the importance of a contrastive study of context and culture, and the requirement of carrying out a thoughtful stylistic review to support selection of the lexical and syntactic structures used in the translated text.

The decision to translate the spirit of the dialogues of the book using Vernacular English of the Southern United States, widely known as AAVE, was based on the possibility descriptive grammar offers to the writer to recreate a speaker's language; in this case in point, to give a better idea of the register and the social and academic status of the Costa Rican peasants depicted in these short stories.

The first consideration in order to translate literature is that the translator has to be well familiarized with the historic context of both the author and his work. It is known that a well written text can give evidence to historians in terms of the evolution of the past. That might be one of the reasons why Christiane Nord affirms in *Text Analysis in Translation*: "The intention of the sender is of special importance to the translator

because it determines the structuring of the text with regard to content...” (48). Zinaida Lvovskaya in *La estilística textual: Visión traductológica del tema*, expresses that this intention is reflected by the sender’s attitude by means of an attitude that marks what is usually known as the emotive tone in the text (45).

Tabakowska, (quoted by Jean Boase-Beier in *Stylistics Approaches to Translation*), calls that tone “the human factor” (10); a factor that Nord describes as follows:

The factors of the communicative situation (which in the narrower sense of the word refers to place and time and occasionally to the motive for communication) [...] comprise not only the features of the given communicative situation of the ST but also the characteristics of the communicative background of sender and recipient... (39).

In translation studies, it is well known that the sender introduces the communicative text, and the recipient receives it. Therefore, it must be born in mind that the translator becomes a recipient of Carlos Salazar Herrera’s book. The fact that both the author and the translator are from the same culture, and the text has been translated into the non-native language of the translator, creates the need to approach the target geographical context and its corresponding regional language variations in depth. In *Investigating English Style*, David Crystal et al. say:

...a feature A may be seen to correlate with the geographical area the speaker came from, and is referred to as a feature of the dimension of regional variation, or regional dialect; feature B may be seen differently as a result of the kind of social relationship existing between the participants...(64).

The translator must become a cross-cultural expert to carry on a socio-linguistic text analysis which leads into a literary interpretation. Guadalupe Acedo et al. assert “this is where translation becomes interpretation, and using an exact word is not as efficient as creating the appropriate whole” (2002). In *Translation into the Second Language*, Nord

supports text analysis as a method to approach translation as it requires “cultural competence both on the source and the target side... (Quoted by Stuart Campbell, 5). In *Stylistics Approaches to Translation* Jean Boase-Beier, quotes Sapir and Whorf, who agree with other theorists in this regard by affirming that “while each language [involves] a unique way of seeing the world, some aspects of language [are] in fact universal; [...] culture-specific...” (22). Thus, creating a good translation requires taking in account “not only the elements present in the text, but also the entire underlying socio-cultural framework...” (Acedo et al. 2002).

Because of all the above, this research project takes pride in being an accurate and faithful translation, by carrying out an in depth study of the socio-cultural context of both the original and target cultures. This decision is based on what Nord asserts:

The situation of the translator can be compared with that of the text producer. Although he has to follow the instructions of the sender or initiator and has to comply with the norms and rules of the target language and culture, he is usually allowed a certain scope in which to give free rein to his own stylistic creativity and preferences, if he so wishes (44).

Given that freedom the translator “may decide to stick to stylistic features of the source text as long as their imitation does not infringe the text norms and conventions for the target culture” (Nord 44). That is why the translation decisions have been carried out trying not to transgress the norms and conventions of the target culture.

Rather frequently translations tend to simplify or universalize the original text. Authors like Acedo et.al support this practice as they affirm that “the main task of the translator is to eliminate from the original text all those textual elements which do not belong to the cultural background of the potential reader...” (2002). Boase-Beier has the same opinion, as she believes:

The translation, therefore, aims neither to represent some English dialect...it does not either domesticate or foreignize, but simply aims to reproduce the

foregrounding effect...In this case the foregrounding of the language merely serves to relegate the character to the background (133).

Contrary to these theorists, this research project illustrates the plausibility of representing an English dialect through a close adherence to the norms and conventions of the style of the original text, since the results demonstrate that it is possible to create a new text where the translator needs neither to facilitate nor to culturalize the content. The stylistic conventions Nord suggests to adopt in that regard required the review of studies previously carried out by both the translator and by many other researchers in the fields of linguistics, socio-linguistics and dialectology, because, as Crystal et al. concluded, "One normally needs assistance to catch all the linguistic nuances in a text that is at all unfamiliar and specialised, and a critical apparatus and terminology to discuss these nuances with others" (90). Additionally, the translator must be aware of knowledge theory, for Boase-Beier emphasizes:

Knowledge of theory suggests that we read for translating in a different way from how we would read if not intending to translateBut knowledge of theory might also allow us to read for translating more effectively, by paying close attention to style and recognizing what is important for its effects, by being open to its cognitive dimension, and by enjoying an enhanced awareness of what is universal and what culture-specific (146).

This enjoyment of the process and the results here obtained would not have been possible if this project would have limited to thinking that 'idiosyncratic features are often less important to the TT recipient than intentional features, although they may cause more comprehension difficulties for the translator" (Nord 39), or if being satisfied with what Venuti warns in Nord: 'But there is a danger in such attempts to situate translations historically, sociologically or ideologically...." (17). The translator of literature must always bear in mind what Brian Mossop says in *Revising and Editing for Translators*:

Some people new to translation think that the structure of the text has already been created by the source-text author, and that there is therefore no work for them to do in this respect. That is not the case. During translation, you may sometimes find that you need to make structural adjustment: change the order of sentence for example to bring out the argument; change the paragraph or sentence division; turn a point-form list into consecutive prose or vice versa (61).

Mossop proposes that, to make these adjustments, the first step is to determine a literary dialect for the translation of the dialogues found in the source text. In this case, it would be African American Vernacular English. To the untrained translator this decision may have meant an unnecessary complication for the target audience. However, as Hamburger establishes when "...a translator will focus on the style of the source text, that aspect of the text which carries the attitude, the world view, and the voice of the original..." (Quoted by Boase-Beier 146). The complexity behind the AAVE allowed the translator not only to recreate the voices of the characters in the stories, but also the reader to amplify his/her cultural vision about our country. In *Sobre la traducibilidad de los marcadores culturales*, Leticia Herrero well advises: "esa manía tan occidental de simplificar las cosas para hacernos la ilusión que las dominamos...For God's Sake, open the universe a little more" (316).

The embracement of this vision of the world –the *universe*, in Herrero's words– has many hues as Boase-Beier points out: "style in literary texts produces poetic effects... which vary from reader to reader" (30). Therefore, there is no doubt about the existence of other visions of the world, and other styles to consider. Approaching the text through the AAVE however resulted in the translator's possibility of being involved in "a great deal of mental work" while experiencing an array of "emotions, affective states or other emotional and cognitive effects" (Boase-Beier, 30), all of which resulted in a well-reasoned version of the original.

The lexical and structural characteristics of AAVE contribute to the foreign context of the text in as much as Schleiermacher says in *Translation and Language: Linguistic Theories Explained*:

...[about] the value of foreignizing translations: readers should have 'the feeling that they are in the presence of the foreign'... a language should have a special linguistic area for translations, and the latter 'must be allowed many things which should not be seen elsewhere' (Fawcett, 116).

It could be thought that the presence of foreign elements, such as Spanish words and AAVE lexemes, could reduce the comprehension of the target text and narrow its domestic audience to cultural elite (Nord 17). However, in *Traducción: literatura y literalidad*, Arthur Waley asserts the following:

Except in the rather rare case of plain concrete statement such as "The cat chases the mouse" there are seldom sentence that have exact word-to word equivalents in another language. It becomes a question of choosing between various approximations...I have always found that it was I, not the texts, that had to do the talking' (quoted by Paz 13).

Another important aspect in regards to the use of foreign elements is acknowledged by Acedo et al. as they agree that "the word has a variety of possible translations depending on the specific context that is necessary to highlight nuances we cannot find in a bilingual dictionary" (2002). However, the decision of leaving such words in Spanish is not based on the fact that they were not found in dictionaries; on the contrary, after having searched in countless sources, it was possible to determine that the connotation Salazar-Herrera wanted to capture through those words required a close adherence to their denotative structure. Just like Victor Hugo chose to use Spanish words in his French texts, the decision as to leaving words in the original language was made also based on what Octavio Paz said in this regard:

En español y en francés el sentido y la emoción son los mismos.... Hugo se limita a repetirlos en español sin tratar siquiera de afrancesarlos. La repetición es eficaz porque esas palabras, despojadas de todo significado preciso y convertidas en cascabeles verbales, verdaderos *mantras*, resuenan en el texto francés con más extrañeza aún que en castellano... (12).

This type of decision may bring about some degree of uncertainty concerning the use of the original language in the target text, given that García Yebra states “a good translator must say all and nothing but what is found in the original paper, and he must do so in the most correct, natural, and elegant way” (quoted by Acedo 2002). But whereas García Yebra makes such statement, Boase-Beier contributes with another point of view that supports our decision when she argues:

The comparative lack of discussion of style in works on translation is only partly the result of the “slippery”, inconsistent and hybrid nature of the phenomenon. It is also partly because it has been seen in literary translation as being intimately tied up with what makes the text literary and thus with the creative element in literary translation; this can lead to the view that it is translated intuitively, and needs no explanation (146-147).

This style may generate sensibility in the reader of literary texts; however, Boase-Beier warns that not all readers may feel the same way (30). Whereas Lvovskaya maintains that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to separate literary from non literary translations (46), Boase-Beier makes a difference between the two when she contends that a non-literary text would mainly be a list of directions, such as a report; meanwhile, “...a literary translation, especially if it is informed by stylistic awareness, will be a more literary text than an untranslated text” (148). Ohmann adds that understanding the style of a piece of literature and getting familiar with its style while reading it is a mental disposition that reveals cognitive predilections (quoted by Boase-Beier, 12), and Carston complements such belief in the same text by designating “those aspects of understanding language which go beyond the strictly linguistic- as ‘a

capacity of the mind” (quoted by Boase-Beier 19). It can be confirmed then that Paz and Boase-Beier definitely agree, as the former declares: “La traducción es una tarea en la que, descontados los indispensables conocimientos lingüísticos, lo decisivo es la iniciativa del traductor...” (13). A similar assertion is made by Acedo et al. when they express that a translator dedicating himself/herself to conveying the sense of the original text “as faithfully as possible” must follow, as García Yebra (1989) says, his/her own intuition which can help him/her to translate the text in an appropriate way” (2002).

Functionalists, such as Reiß & Vermeer, insist that “...the translation process is determined by its purpose...” (Quoted by Boase-Beier 7). This translation and research project demonstrate that, even if the translator agrees with such theory, the final result can be creative, innovative and faithful. In Octavio Paz’s words: “Cada texto es único y, simultáneamente, es la traducción de otro texto.... todos los textos son originales porque cada traducción es distinta. Cada traducción es, hasta cierto punto, una invención y así constituye un texto único” (9).

The following chapters present the study that underlies and supports the uniqueness of this translation and the efforts of conveying the voices of the characters found in *Cuentos de angustias y paisajes*. From now and beyond, it is important for the reader to bear in mind what Octavio Paz points out: “Traducción y creación son operaciones gemelas...la traducción es indistinguible muchas veces de la creación; [ya que] hay un incesante reflujo entre las dos, una continua y mutua fecundación” (16).

CHAPTER II

WHY AFRICAN AMERICAN VERNACULAR ENGLISH?

The main purpose of this chapter is to introduce African American Vernacular English (AAVE) as a literary language chosen intentionally by the translator to maintain the spirit of the dialogues of the OT. Contents include a brief summary of the theories some scholars have in regards to the origins of the AAVE, and a list of the most commonly used characteristics of the AAVE, preceded by a concise overview of the vernacular Spanish used by Salazar-Herrera as the literary dialect that gives life to his characters.

In an effort to transmit the idiosyncrasy of the main characters of his short stories, the Costa Rican peasants of the first half of the twentieth century, Carlos Salazar Herrera used realism in his dialogues, by showing peasants as simple people, not academically trained, attached to religion and even shy. The use of regionalisms, such as: “finquita,” “ñor,” “ni me haga juerza,” and “encariñao”, depict the phonetic aspects of the dialect, as well as its regional vocabulary and syntax of Costa Rican peasants, carefully reproduced in most of the thirty short stories found in the book. On the left hand side of the chart there is an example of the dialogues found in the book; its corresponding translation is on the right. This segment was taken from *La calera*:

<p>“-<i>Hombré</i>, Eliseo... ¿Le compro esta finquita con casa, calera, carreta y yunta? -No, Ñor Rosales, cómo va a <i>crer</i>... -Vea, Eliseo, yo soy hombre de poco platicar. Le doy <i>sesentamil</i> pesos, billete sobre billete. -No, Ñor Rosales. La oferta es buena, pero ni me haga <i>juerza</i> porque no la vendo. (21)</p>	<p>“Say, Eliseo...why don'tya sell me this farm, with the house, limestone quarry, cart and yoke? “ “No, Ñor Rosales...how can ya say dat?” “Eliseo, I'm a man of few words. I'll giveya sixty thousand pesos, cash.” “No, Ñor Rosales. Yer offer's mighty good, but I ain't selling.” (9)</p>
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The dialect used by most characters in the stories is from the Costa Rican Central Valley; however, when Salazar-Herrera wanted to represent the origin of one of his characters, he could be so careful as to include a simple word such as “*pues*,” indicating that the character was from the Costa Rican Northern region (Camacho 19). Silva-Corvalán, in her book *Sociolingüística y pragmática*, describes this phenomenon as the use of a vernacular dialect. Therefore, to understand why the author used this dialect, it is important to know what vernacular means. *The Free Dictionary* online defines vernacular as “Native to or commonly spoken by the members of a particular country or región” (2009). It goes on to say that the word is related to a nonstandard language or dialect of a place, region, or country, or group of people.

Understanding vernacular as the relation to a dialect geographically established and spoken by common people, the goal of this research project, as stated in the general objective, is that of demonstrating the plausibility of translating a folk dialect with a parallel form used by common people geographically established in a region of the target culture with a similar linguistic background to that of characters of the source text.

The first step to understand the decision to use AAVE to translate the colloquial dialect of *Cuentos de angustias y paisajes* is to realize the reason on which such a decision is based. Just like the folk Spanish dialect of the stories, AAVE has unconventional phonetic and grammatical features, reproducing the particular characteristics of the language spoken by common people of the South of the United States, most of them African American. Used as a literary dialect, it would not follow the spelling rules established by prescriptive grammar. Quoted by Mark Canada, Thomas Pyles and John Algeo define a standard language as “...one that is used widely, in many places and for many purposes; ... [it] enjoys high prestige, ... people regard [it] as

'good' language;” hence, the decision to translate the narrative of the short stories using Standard English: a language which obeys the rules set down by prescriptive grammarians. However, the Spanish spoken by the characters is a nonstandard Spanish variance, commonly found in Costa Rican folk literature. The many non-typical grammatical choices were made on purpose by the author to reflect the social status and/or the academic level of education of the peasants. At first glimpse, translating the dialogues of these short stories appeared to be an almost impossible task, for they do not follow the grammatical rules of Standard Spanish. However, failing to connect the reader of the TT to the spirit of the OT would have meant failing Salazar-Herrera’s purpose of introducing the simple nature of the characters as well as the stoicism with which they endure the day to day events of their lives, which is reflected in their way of speaking. Hence, it became necessary to look for a variation in the target language which would convey the idea of the OT to the TT. That was how the idea of using AAVE came about.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF AAVE HISTORY

The vast literature about the origin of AAVE agrees that it began from the minute the first importation of a few African slaves to Virginia at the beginning of the 1600’s, importation that quickly spread slavery to other Southern states. Once the Civil War came to an end, slavery was abolished and the blacks, as well as an important number of white people who were familiar with the variation, began migration movements to all parts of the country. That is why thousands of African-American descendants, living in the United States today, speak some form of AAVE.

AAVE, previously known as Black English, refers to the variety of English originally spoken by African Americans, especially those of the working class in urban neighborhoods or rural communities in the United States. Outside the community of

scholars, it is often referred to as Ebonics, a combination of ebony and phonics (Smitherman 28). This dialect has been at the heart of many debates among sociolinguists for different reasons: many tend to assume that, regardless of their background, only African Americans speak it, that all African Americans speak it, and that it is spoken only in the United States. However, *The Free Dictionary online* refers to Black English as “Any of the nonstandard varieties of English spoken by Black people throughout the world,” (2009). These varieties are spoken by black, white and even people from other ethnicities outside the United States, such as the Caribbean and the United Kingdom. This assertion is accurately exemplified in J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* by “Hagrid,” one of the white main characters, who speaks a language variation with clear presence of a Vernacular dialect with phonological and syntactic features. The following is an excerpt from this book representing a vernacular form of speech.

Hagrid's Sample Speech	Analysis of the Speech
<p>1. “Las' time I saw you, you was only a baby...Yeh look a lot like yer dad, but yeh've got yer mom's eyes” (47).</p>	<p>The final “t” of the word “last” was eliminated due to linking. Instead of writing “last time,” she omits one “t”.</p> <p>The personal pronoun “you” is replaced by “yeh” and the possessive pronoun “your” is changed by “yer”.</p> <p>In addition, the conjugation of the verb “to be” is different: in standard English the past tense form of the verb “to be” for the pronoun “you” is “were” while, in this example, the character uses “was.”</p>
<p>2. “... A very happy birthday to yeh. Got summat fer yeh here – I mighta sat on it at some point” (47).</p>	<p>There is no subject before the verb as in: “got summat fer yeh here.”</p> <p>Also, the preposition “for” is replaced by “fer” due to phonological variation.</p> <p>Then, the auxiliary “have” in the past participle is reduced to “a” and linked to the modal “might,” it then becomes “mighta.” In regards to vocabulary, the word “summat” is substituting “something.”</p>

3. "I'd not say no ter summat stronger if yeh've got it, mind." (48)	The preposition "to" is replaced by "ter." "yeh've" is an abbreviation of "you have."
4. "Yer great puddin' of a son don' need fattenin' anymore, Dursley, don' worry" (49).	Here it is found the reduction of the [ʔ] sound which is substituted by a [n] sound; as in puddin' and fatenin' . The final sound in the negative auxiliary don't is transformed into don' .
5. "A wizard, o' course... an' a thumpin' good'un , I'say, once yeh've been trained up a bit..." (51).	Final sounds are eliminated due to the linking or omission in the speech; for example, " o' course " instead of " of course ," " an' " instead of " and "...the pronunciation of some words change because of linking as it was previously mentioned: in this example good'un means good one .
6. "...I can't tell yeh everythin' , it's a great myst'ry ..." (54).	In this case, the word mystery is reduced to myst'ry . Here, the [ʔ] sound was eliminated because the stress falls on the initial syllable.
7. " Blimey , this is difficult..." (54).	There is an agglutination of vowels in the case of the word " blimey " which means believe me .
8. " Got'em too – some afraid, some just wanted a little bit o' his power, ' cause he was gettin' himself power..." (54).	Linking is the main characteristic in this case. The expression got'em means got them . The "f" is omitted from "of" and then, reduction appears as in the case of " cause " instead of because .

There is much controversy in regards to the how the variance was born, as the scholars think that the variance might have been developed as a result of several types of interaction, three of which are considered here:

1. Speakers of African Languages interacted with speakers of other vernacular English varieties. Plantations in the Southern coasts (Georgia, South Carolina, and others) presented the perfect scenario for a small number of their natives, mainly hired labor, to interact with the West Africans. A process of creolization followed the pidgin which was first developed. As described in *Early American Speech Adoptions from Foreign Tongues*:

The only English many of them [slaves] ever heard from native speakers was that of the illiterate or semiliterate white indentured servants with

whom they worked in the fields or who were set over them as overseers...It is not surprising that their accomplishment fell considerable short of perfect. Their English was sort of jargon or pidgin, which passed into use by their descendants a native language (Pyles 77).

2. Through several processes of language acquisition, the newly arrived West Africans developed a Creole-like form of communication due to the isolation in which they lived. Contrary to what was established previously, the encounters with those who followed the English grammatical rules of the time were so few that the speakers of the West African languages gathered new vocabulary whenever they met, and, with the help of what scholars call universal grammar, followed the grammatical patterns common to the West African languages. That is how Gullah, or Sea Islands Creole, still spoken in the coastal islands of South Carolina and Georgia, was born. This must be why Luedtke affirms:

“While today ‘freedom’ and the inroads of twentieth-century forces, most notably Gullah out-migration and real estate developments, have diminished Gullah land-holdings and isolation, the distinctive culture persists in many ways” (quoted by Pyles 344).

3. To other scholars neither one of the above mentioned theories is acceptable. They argue that the demographic conditions to fully develop a Creole in the United States and the Caribbean were not met. Instead they say that the current characteristics of AAVE have their roots in varieties of the English spoken in Great Britain and the Southern states of the United States. To them, AAVE is the result of a process of acquisition undergone by Africans while interacting with British and other English speaking white people while slavery was taking place. So, on the other hand, Cleanth Brooks affirms that:

...Southern speech traces itself back to England, whether to earlier Standard English or to provincialisms of the south, and southwest

counties, it rapidly becomes apparent that any theory of Negro influence must be abandoned. The Negro learned his speech from the colonist...The Negro has then preserved many of these original forms, even after most of the whites have discarded them (139).

Whatever theory is considered, there is a fact known to those who have studied the history of the South: white children of the Southern aristocracy had black nannies who helped to raise them, and children make no difference of colors at the time of playing; therefore, through a process of acquisition that made their learning more lasting, whites and blacks gradually influenced their respective speech through these forms of interaction. This is especially true to anyone whose parents have English as a second language. Due to the social isolation in which African Americans lived since they were uprooted from their respective countries however the bond created among them was tighter, and their form of speech kept more of their initial features through time.

It would be hard to decide which scholar is correct about the beginnings of this English variation or to establish an exact pattern of pronunciation for each person who speaks it, as each person has his or her own idiolect distinctively. However, the relevance of choosing this variance for this work lies on the fact that it represents a speaker who is usually of humble origins and, most likely, low academic education, just like Costa Ricans peasants were in the midst of the twentieth century.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF AAVE SOCIAL CONTEXT

Called Ebonics by non scholars, and known as Black English or Vernacular Black English by others, African-American Vernacular English is simply an ethnolect of American English:

“While some features of AAVE are apparently unique to this variety, in its structure it also shows many commonalities with other varieties including a

number of standard and nonstandard English varieties spoken in the US and the Caribbean” (Sidnell, 2009).

AAVE is syntactically and phonologically similar to Southern American English, and spoken by many African Americans throughout the United States, not just in the South; this because most of the African Americans of Northern states are the descendants of those who, at some point in their lives, were slaves in the Southern region of the country.

Linguistically speaking, most scholars do not recognize *Ebonics* as an alternative name for this dialect, for it was coined in 1973 by Robert L. Williams, a linguist from Washington University in Saint Louis, Missouri at the conference “Language and the Urban Child,” (Smitherman 2009). Nor is it widely used in linguistic literature; although, in 1996 a controversial debate arose in the Oakland, California, school board when, for pedagogical purposes, it was to be considered as a unique language or dialect (Baugh, 2009).

AAVE shares many features with various pidgin and Creole English dialects spoken around the world, especially in:

- (a) **The Caribbean:** an example is that of the dialect of English spoken in Costa Rica, -Province of Limon-, as there are so many first and second generation descendants of Jamaicans in that Costa Rican province.
- (b) **The South Carolina and Georgia islands,** where Gullah or Geechee is spoken.
- (c) **Hawaii,** in the Central Pacific Ocean, where Hawaiian Creole is spoken.

It is said to have grammatical origins and pronunciation characteristics in common with various West African languages. AAVE can be traced back to the African slave trade when the multicultural populations of captives needed to communicate with one another and with their respective captors. The captives, many of them already

multi-lingual speakers of Wolof, Twi, Hausa, Yoruba, Dogon, Akan, Kimbundu, Bambara and other languages, had the wit to develop a simplistic way of communication by mixing two or more languages –that procedure nowadays is known as pidgin. In time, as new generations of slaves grew in the South, the growth of pidgin developed into creoles, which do have an established set of grammatical rules. Scholars in fields such as sociolinguistics agree that such different languages grew as a form of passive resistance to subjugation, oppression or cultural aggression (Sindell, 2009). Smitherman goes on to make a stronger statement when she says,

It seems clear that these scholars [from the conference] conceived of Ebonics as a superordinate term, covering all the African-European language mixtures developed in *various African-European language contact situations* throughout the world –e.g., Haitian Creole, a West African-French mixture; the Dutch Creole spoken in Suriname; *the English-based Creole spoken in Jamaica*; West African Pidgin English; the West African –English mixtures spoken in the US –all would be dimensions (varieties or dialects) of Ebonics, not of any European language. This superordinate concept thus symbolizes the linguistic–cultural framework. Since December 1996, when the Oakland resolution on Ebonics was passed, the term “Ebonics” has come to be used loosely to refer to “US Ebonics,” and used *interchangeable* with “Black/African American (Vernacular) English,” a practice I also follow. But we should keep in mind that the original conception encompassed more languages than African American Language and was, in fact, a rejection of the term “Black English” and the concomitant subordination of this Africanized language under the categorical heading, “English” (29).

Language turns out to be a means of self-differentiation which helps create group individuality, unity and racial pride. In the specific case of AAVE, the marginalization and segregation resulted in a bonding of the ethnicity of those who created the variance: not only did it survive then, it also thrived through the years. An example of one of these creoles surviving the test of time is the rather significant number of African Americans currently speaking Gullah in the South Carolina islands and Georgia. In our days most speakers of varying degrees of AAVE also have a good

command of Standard American English (SAE). People who speak only AAVE are more likely to be Southerners from rural areas or those who have working class roots. It would be safe to say that the higher the level of formal education or social status of the parent, the less likelihood of his/her children to speak such variance exclusively. Hence, they all would be more likely to relate to SAE speakers on a more day by day basis, and less prone to speak AAVE solely. However, that does not prevent them from knowing, understanding and practicing the variance in informal situations or in intra-ethnic communication. This selection of language by the speaker depending on the social context in which he or she chooses to use the variance is referred as code switching (Coffey, 2009). Speaking AAVE or not within the context of a community could result in the exclusion of “an outsider” since he or she may or may not *sound* as part of that community; hence, the importance of knowing when to switch codes in this specific dialect (Coffey, 2009). Even in our days there are those who, because of cultural prejudices, believe that African slaves spoke in the way they did because their intellect was inferior. As a result, AAVE is perceived by a broad number of Americans as an indicator of inferior intellect or low educational attainment. It has even been considered as lazy or bad English for its phonological reductions, and some other aspects regarding tense. Ironically, such is also the perception in the UK, and other English speaking countries from the old continent, in regards to SAE. Fortunately, none of the above criteria are actually considered by scholars in linguistics; on the contrary, AAVE was recognized as a distinctive dialect at the end of the 1990s, and it is used nowadays as a tool to help African American students become more fluent in Standard English (Coffey, 2009).

Having defined the socio-cultural background of AAVE as the dialect used to translate the dialogues of *Cuentos de angustias y paisajes*, the linguistic characteristics

of AAVE spoken by many people all over the world can now be addressed, so that they can be understood more clearly when compared to SAE.

EXPLORING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF AAVE

The following section introduces a general review of the most relevant AAVE characteristics to this project. As previously established, AAVE shares several important characteristics with Creole English spoken outside the United States, and with English dialects spoken in the Southern region of this country. Therefore, it is worth mentioning that examples of speech here given were taken from Méndez, et al., 2004, and from Jack Sidnell's *Language Varieties, African American Vernacular English: Ebonics*.

Should anyone be interested in finding more details about the variance, in *A Various Language, Perspectives on American Dialects*, Williamson et.al provide examples of the Vernacular English spoken in the Southern region of the United States. Green and Smitherman, among many authors, were thorough in providing an exhaustive list of the AAVE features in their works confirming not only the phonological, syntactic, and morphological characteristics of the dialect, but also the contexts and statistics in reference to their use. However, the chart below is restricted to the description of the most important AAVE features to this project and their corresponding counterparts in Standard English. The AAVE features in the first column are described with a simplified explanation of the technical nomenclature widely found in the theoretical sources; this with the purpose of providing the reader with a more accessible understanding of each. The sample speech in the second column taken from Méndez, et al. and/or Sidnell (S) is accompanied by its corresponding equivalents in Standard American English.

Syntactic Elements

AAVE Feature	AAVE Sample Speech	SAE Equivalent
Verb "to be" is often omitted from the sentences	I \emptyset a <i>studen'</i> (S) <i>Dis</i> \emptyset my son (S) I \emptyset born ' <i>ere</i> (S) I <i>live</i> ' <i>ere</i> when I \emptyset small	I <i>am</i> a student This <i>is</i> my son I <i>was</i> born here I <i>lived</i> here when I <i>was</i> small
Omission of verb "to be" in future tense	I don't care what he <i>say</i> , you \emptyset <i>gonna</i> laugh (S)	I don't care what he <i>says</i> , you <i>are</i> going to laugh
Omission of verb "to be" before verbs with the <i>-ing</i> or <i>-in</i> ending (progressive)	I tell him to be quiet because he <i>don't</i> know what he \emptyset <i>talkin'</i> about (S)	I tell him to be quiet because he <i>doesn't</i> know what he <i>is talking</i> about
Omission of verb "to be" before adjective and expressions of location	He \emptyset all right (S) He \emptyset kind of big, you know? (S) She \emptyset at home (S)	He <i>is</i> all right He <i>is</i> kind of big, you know? She <i>is</i> at home
Omission of verb "to be" before nouns (or phrases with nouns)	He \emptyset the one who had to go try to pick up the peacock (S) I say, you \emptyset the one jumping up to leave, not me (S)	He <i>is</i> the one who had to go try to pick up the peacock I say, you <i>are</i> the one jumping up to leave, not me
Regular or repeated events are marked by the use of "be"	She <i>be</i> working all the time (S)	She <i>is</i> working all the time
Ain't is used as a substitute of haven't and didn't and as the negative form of verb to be	I <i>ain't</i> run the stop sign (S) I <i>ain't</i> seen him (S) I <i>ain't</i> sleepin' (S)	I <i>didn't</i> run the stop sign I <i>haven't</i> seen him I <i>am not</i> sleeping

Omission or Misuse of words

AAVE Feature	AAVE Sample Speech	SAE Equivalent
Personal, possessive and object pronouns are sometimes omitted and/or not always used accordingly	<i>An'</i> \emptyset my children <i>dem</i> (S) \emptyset <i>No</i> like it So when \emptyset you <i>wanna</i> visit <i>we</i> ? How <i>ol'</i> <i>are me</i> ?	And <i>they</i> are my children <i>I</i> don't like it So when do you want to visit <i>us</i> ? How <i>old am I</i> ?
Omission, deletion or misuse of auxiliaries	Where \emptyset money come from? (S) \emptyset Ya like ' <i>er</i> ? Sometimes I \emptyset been bad (S)	Where <i>does</i> money come from? <i>Do</i> you like <i>her</i> ? Sometimes I <i>have</i> been bad

Lack of function words	I \emptyset <i>live 'ere</i> \emptyset 53 years Jus' imagine, I work 'outta' country (S)	I have lived here for 53 years Just imagine, I work out of the country
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Noun Adjective Agreement

AAVE Feature	AAVE Sample Speech	SAE Equivalent
Adjectives and nouns not always agree with the number	The two language : Spanish and English	The two languages : Spanish and English

Morphology and Word Choice

AAVE Feature	AAVE Sample Speech	SAE Equivalent
Intimate ways of treating each other	Brorer, brada, brothar (S) Marer, mada, mara, mothar (S) Farer, fara, fathar (S) Daurer, daughter (S)	Brother Mother Father Daughter
Words are reduced depending on the phonological environment in which the sound occurs	I 'av child (S) Lemme (S) Yer (S) A 'av tree children (S) Sa mara fak Wassaup (S)	I have a child Let me You are or your I have three children As a matter of fact What's up
Deletion of unstressed or reduplicated syllables; initial and medial word position only	'bout (S) 'cause (S) Pro'bly (S) Bar'bra (S)	About Because Probably Barbara
Lack of "s" to indicate possessive or plural	Mom \emptyset car (S) Sister \emptyset car (S)	Mom's car Sister's car

Subject Verb Agreement

AAVE Feature	AAVE Sample Speech	SAE Equivalent
Verbs and nouns do not always agree with the number	Those ting is very nice (S)	Those things are very nice
Lack of agreement, especially the third person singular	She treat me betta Ya wants a glass of wata?	She treats me better Do you want a glass of water?

Use of Double Negation

AAVE Feature	AAVE Sample Speech	SAE Equivalent
Double negation in statements. In so far as the negation must be expressed with the indefinite nouns, this is a form of agreement marking.	I have done nothin' (S) I ain't doing nothin' (S) I don't like no beans (S)	I have not done anything I'm not doing anything I don't like beans

Phonological Changes

AAVE Feature	AAVE Sample Speech	SAE Equivalent
Change of the quality of the consonants and vowels.	Yest ar dey. (S) From 'ere Nambar – numba Jus' imagine, I work outta country (S)	Yest er day From here Number Just imagine, I work out of the country
The "g" in the -ing ending is usually omitted	Everybody 'av 'is own way av speakin' English (S) Somethin' (S)	Everybody has his own way of speaking English Something
The <i>th</i> of words such as <i>mother</i> and <i>father</i> is sometimes pronounced as an Spanish "r" (as in the Spanish <i>aro, oro</i>)	Mara--mare Fara--fare	Mother. Father.
Most words that contain the initial interdental voiceless "th" cluster are pronounced as a "d" or as a "t"	Dey (S) Tins are 'ard (S) I 'av like tree children (S)	They Things are hard I have like three children
The "d" - "t" - "k" ending of some words is usually not pronounced	An' (S) Han' (S) As' Tonigh' (S)	And Hand Ask Tonight
At the end of a word, the interdental voiceless cluster "th" is often pronounced as an "f"	Wif (S) Ruf (S) Mouf (S) Souf (S)	With Ruth Mouth South
Diphthongs are not pronounced by moving the tongue to the front top position.	I separate from ma girlfriend Righ' (S) Ah (S)	I separated from my girlfriend. Right I

The methodology exercised to exemplify the characteristics of the above chart is very similar to the one used by Green in that she collected and transcribed sample

speeches from her community, and its religious leaders, contrasted it with the theory from other authors, to finally establish a feature of the AAVE.

It is important to bear in mind that pronunciation and vocabulary may vary from one speaker to the other, just like it happens with many languages. This is to say that a person who speaks AAVE may use “*with*” in one context and then “*wif*” in another. However, most grammatical features associated with the variety remain constant while alternating with Standard English. Also, the vowel sounds may vary from state to state, says Green in her book, but AAVE is far from being a degraded version of Standard English. This variance has its own set of rules, “So when speakers know AAE [AAVE], they know a system of sounds, word and sentence structure, meaning and structural organization of vocabulary items and other information (Green, 1).” It is worth mentioning that other English variants share characteristics with AAVE, such is the case of the use of “ain’t” instead of “isn’t,” “aren’t,” “didn’t”, or “haven’t”; “don’t” related to third person singular (*it don’t matter, she/he don’t care*); the deletion of the auxiliaries that makes the speaker depend on intonation (*You like him?*); or the common change of vowels in words such as “you” or “to”, which are very often pronounced as “*ya*” and “*ta*” by most speakers of Standard English. However, the use of these characteristics by a speaker does not mean he/she has acquired AAVE.

Having analyzed the background and grammatical characteristics of AAVE, following is the procedure to justify the presence of this dialect in the target text.

CHAPTER III

ADAPTING SALAZAR-HERRERA INTO AAVE

The main purpose of this chapter is to illustrate the use of the AAVE features described in Chapter II. Most of the short stories contain dialogues which allow us to demonstrate the plausibility of using one vernacular speech variety to translate another.

Before going into details about the AAVE features, this is a brief description of the importance of *Cuentos de angustias y paisajes* within Costa Rica's literary context. Salazar-Herrera's work became one of the pillars of Costa Rican art and literature in the second half of the twentieth century. In his biography it is mentioned that he won his first prize when he was only fourteen years old; by the time he was twenty two he was already participating in writing contests organized by the Editorial Costa Rica. His short stories were first published in *Repertorio Latinoamericano*, a cultural magazine founded and administered by Joaquín García Monge. Salazar-Herrera would later gather these short stories to publish them in what is known today as one of the most important books in Costa Rican literature: *Cuentos de angustias y paisajes*. A realism writer, Salazar-Herrera chose to describe in these stories the day to day activities of his characters, instead of following the stylized romanticism.

Detailed colorful descriptions of nature and its textures and colors are used by the author to create a close connection between the reader and the texts. Being an artist in so many fields, it is understandable that his stories are enhanced by lexemes skillfully chosen by the author to portray the social and academic status of his characters through the dialogues. Picturing the peasants, their environment and the nature of their struggles becomes easy to the reader familiarized with the Spanish spoken by the Costa Rican peasants of the first half of the twentieth century. However,

these stories are filled with words which do not follow the grammatical rules of Standard Spanish, nor do they have an entirely common vocabulary, which is why, at the end of the book, there is a glossary that not only explains the meaning of some words, but also clarifies the use of others that are rare even for those who are familiar with Costa Rican terminology.

The universal feelings that his simple-natured characters bear are diluted in a prose that is as poetic as the narrative allows. The reader can recollect details and form in his mind a clear image of the scenarios in which the characters survive or perish. He uses his words as a painter would use his brush or a sculptor his chisel: a sentence here and another carefully chosen there, and before the reader appears an impressionist portrait of each and every event of the story.

Even though this research project is focused on the translation of the dialogues found throughout the entire book, it is important to mention that translating the complex prose the author used to describe the Costa Rican landscape, in which the characters endure life, was also a challenge. As later will be seen, each short story is segmented into prose sections with highly figurative language. There are others that do not have dialogues at all; such is the case of *The Shout*, *The Cricket*, *The Rainstorm*, and *The Drought*, to name some. The characters are not always peasants, but also simple narrators of the events; as the man who gets aboard the vessel in *The Bongo*; the man who first speaks to *The Mestizo*, and then listens to what he has to say while describing the events as they happen in the story; and the doctor and the nurse who help the ox-herder in *The Road*. All of these characters use Standard Spanish in their dialogues, so these were translated using Standard English.

Not much has been written about Salazar-Herrera's *Cuentos de angustias y paisajes*. However, those who have written about him give the highest praise to his

work. J. Andrés Camacho is the only other author who wrote a pocket book about the work of this artist. According to him, Salazar-Herrera was a good scholar in so many fields, but above all he was an artist who used subjectivity in choosing his words to represent the reality of the landscapes he wrote about in his stories (25).

Lilia Ramos, quoted by Camacho, says Costa Rica's presence in the stories is translucent, accurate, and vigorous, in every single page of the book. *The firmament, the ground, the air, the sun and the moon, the mountain, the hill, the prairie, the river, the sea, the shore, the river banks, the gulf, the bay, the beach, the fauna, the flora, the hidden small towns; all of them are present in the stories* (Camacho 15); in all of them is the humble presence of the peasant. Nevertheless, the rain, the jungle, the storm, the cold and the hot weather, the highest peaks, the day and the night are also present.

Given all of the above, and knowing that his work was so valuable to Costa Rican literature, and that his words and punctuation were so specifically chosen, it was important for this translation to remain as faithful as possible to the prose.

Salazar-Herrera's short stories were written during the early days of the twentieth century, when the country offered only poverty to most of its people. A selected few had taken over the coffee oligarchy; there were those who exploited the working class, among them the money lenders, as well as the simple peasants, which included cholos, blacks, and farm workers. All of these characters were defined by artists who, through their pen, chisel, brush, or any other kind of artistic tool, drew the attention of their respective audiences to the simple way of living of our peasants, and the nature that surrounded them. An artistic genre called *Costumbrismo* was then giving its first steps here in Costa Rica.

By the 1940's Costa Rica was a pacific agricultural country. Reforms on the land, taxes, and wages had enlightened Dr. Rafael Ángel Calderón Guardia's

administration. However, the bloodiest civil war this country has ever experience exploded in 1948, when he refused to yield his post after losing the elections. It was just the year before the war when Salazar-Herrera gathered the short stories he published over a period of fifteen years in the *Repertorio Americano* magazine, and published them under the title *Cuentos de angustias y paisajes*. This book was so well received by the public that in 1964, along with the engravings with which he illustrated twenty eight out of his thirty stories, it won for the author the *Premio Nacional de Cultura Magón*, the highest award a person can achieve for his/her contribution to the country's culture. *Cuentos de angustias y paisajes* became a text book, occupying a high place in Costa Rican literature, and it is read by scholars and students, as well as by readers who appreciate Costa Rican folk literature.

Most of the stories contain segments with dialogues which show a simple colloquial register, not necessarily attached to the rules of Spanish grammar; which could be called literary dialect. Other characters do use standard Spanish in their speech, so Standard English served the purpose of translating them. Throughout all the short stories the author uses suspension points, as if the reader is the one who has to form his own opinion of the plot, and decide about the ending of the story. In an effort to be faithful to the original however they were left in the translation even though in some cases they may seem unnecessary. The stories vary in length: from one and a half, to four pages (each page containing an average of thirty five lines per page). There are many one-sentence paragraphs and a double space separation between some of them, as if the reader had to pay special attention to the events, or assume a solemn and mysterious tone in regards to what is being told.

A lot of effort was put into describing the intricate landscape and interpreting the different feelings of the characters in each of the short stories, but American Standard

English served that purpose. However, recreating the simplicity of the speech and narrative thoughts of the peasants in the TT, and plausibly justifying it, is what is undertaken by establishing a systematic procedure.

Having contextualized Salazar-Herrera's work, following is a list comprised of a systematic comparison which portrays the original Costa Rican folk dialect used for the dialogues in the OT, on the left hand side column (the corresponding page number of the book is at the bottom on the right hand side), along with the respective translation using the AAVE, on the right (with the corresponding page number of the translation). Each feature has been exemplified by including several samples from different short stories. The idea then is to show the high frequency this literary dialect has throughout the entire book.

AAVE SYNTACTIC ELEMENTS

1. Deletion or misuse of verb "be"

Probably the most prominent and frequent characteristic of all the vernacular varieties of English is that of deleting the verb BE in simple present tense immediately after the subject in the sentence, and before the subject in the question, and/or using an incorrect conjugation in simple tenses. Thus, the translated version of some of the dialogues of short stories exemplifies such wrong conjugation or deletion:

The Witch

-Aquí tenés jabón mágico. (56)	"Ere, magic soap." (32)
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The Gourd

—... ¿Que tal están sus chiquitos? (36)	"...How <i>is</i> yer children?" (20)
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The Bridge

—¿Acaso es novio mío?. (15)	"But 'e not ma boyfrien'? (6)
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The Dugout

— ¡Qué pendejos son los hombres! — murmuró Julia María—, (191)	“Whatta bunch av cowards men isl ,” mumbled Julia María, (108)
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The Mestizo

—Yo me acordé qu'ese día la vide platicando con Juan Lobo y se me puso que habían andao en enredos mientras yo andaba en Chomes. (92)	“Ah rememba Ah saw 'er dat day talkin' ta Juan Lobo and then Ah thought dey was messin' aroun' while Ah was in <i>Chomes</i> . (53)
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The Still

— ¿Vos?... No, Pedro, no juistes vos, (145)	“Ya? ... No, Pedro, ya wasn' (82)
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As stated by Sidnell, misconjugation or complete lack of conjugation of BE tends to occur in specific syntactic contexts. Following are the corresponding examples of the most representative scenarios in the translated texts:

1.1 OMISSION AND/OR WRONG CONJUGATION IN FUTURE TENSE ENVIRONMENTS

Several forms of the Spanish future tense are represented by the Standard English syntactic combination of *be + going to + simple verb form*. As illustrated below AAVE contexts often omit or misuse BE in present tense:

The Limestone Quarry

Le advierto que ya no tengo tanto interés y diuna vez le digo que ya no le doy los sesentamil pesos que le dije. (26)	I ain't as interested now an' Ah not gonna pay ya sixty thousand pesos for it. (14)
—Bueno, Nor Rosales, y... ¿cuánto me ofrece ahora? (26)	“Well, Nor Rosales, an'...how much ya gonna offer me now?” (14)

The Colors

¡Ahi te dejo con esa... mocosa!... (97)	“Ah gonna leave ya wif dat brat! ...(55)
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The Mestizo

—Se murió. V'hacer dos años. ¿A ver...? ¡Sí!... Dos años. (91)	“She dead. Gonna be two years . Lemme think...Yes! ...Two years. (52)
— “¡Mira, sinvergüenza, vos te vas'ir a juntar con ese hombre!” (92)	“Look scoundrel, ya not gonna live wif dat man!” (53)

The Halfbreed

—¡Sacá tu cruceta, Cholo desgraciao, pa'que nos cortemos! (138)	“Get yer machete out, ya filthy swine, we's gonna fight! ” (78)
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The Bongo

—Por esos días me había dicho que se iba a trabajar a Punta Quepos y desapareció sin decir nada. (43)	“Round then ‘e tol’ me ‘ e gonna go ta Punta Quepos ta work an’ took off wifout a word.” (25)
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The Dulzaina

¡Mira que voy a repartir lo tuyo entre tus hermanos! (85)	“Look, I gonna divide yer inheritance amon’ yer brothers! (49)
—¡Ese muchacho se va’matar! — (86)	“Dat boy gonna kill ‘imself!” (50)

1.2 OMISSION OF VERB BE BEFORE VERBS WITH THE –ING ENDING

Even though speakers of the many dialect varieties of English commonly reduce the articulation of the third person singular and all plural forms of BE in the progressive tense environments, AAVE users are known to delete it almost completely:

The Bongo

—A veces salta el agua, como ahorita, ¿sabe usté? y le pringa a uno la cara, y uno no sabe si está llorando, porque... (43)	“Ya knows, sometimes the water splash ma face, just like now, and Ah don’t knows if Ah cryin’ , ‘cause...(24)
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The Gourd

—Y dígame, ¡por amor de Dios!, ¿por qué no viene?, ¿por qué no me escribe?, ¿por qué nos abandonó?, ¿qué hace?, ¿qué tal s’encuentra? (36)	“An’ tell me, ya mus’ tell me! Why don’t he come? Why don’t he write? Why he leave us? What he doin’? How he doin’? (20)
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The Boatman

-¿Y pa’onde va usted, amigo? (104)	“And where ya headin’ m’a friend?” (59)
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The Halfbreed

—El Cholo no está. ¿Pa’ qué lo querés? (138)	“D’a Halfbreed’s not ‘ere. Why ya lookin’ fer ‘im?” (78)
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One Night

—¿Idiay? —dijo éste—. ¿Qué diablos estás haciendo? (178)	“Whassup?,” said Chamorro. What da heck ya doin’? (100)
—¿Por qué te reís? — ¡Por nada!... (179)	“ Whatya laughin’ ‘bout?” “Nothin’! ...”(101)

The Mountain

—Bueno, si es que te pagan mejor... —Y poco después—. ¿Cuándo pensás irte? (150)	“Well, if dey pay ya better...” and right after, and then he asked, “ When ya leavin’? ” (85)
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1.3 OMISSION OF VERB BE BEFORE ADJECTIVES, EXPRESSIONS OF LOCATION, NOUNS AND NOUN PHRASES

As in the case of 1.2, the fact that SAE speakers commonly reduce the articulation of BE in average scenarios does not equal the AAVE deletion of BE before adjective and/or noun structures:

The Gourd

—Gracias... ¡Qué calor est’haciendo! (36)	“Tank ya” ... It hot out!” (20)
—Dicen que se pega, pero no es cierto. (37)	People them say it contagious , but dat not true... (21)

The Mestizo

—Est’es mi rancho, dentre usté, aquí se acomoda. (91)	“ Dis my house , com’ ‘an, sit ‘ere. (51)
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The Folk Healer

—Son... son mis hijas (128)	“ Dey ma daughtars” (73)
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The Cricket

-¡Allí l’oigo! ¡Allí está! ... (62)	“Ah hears it there! (36)
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A Gasp of Air

...’el mar está picao y como chupando mucho, pa’dentro...pa’dentro... (184)	...’ the sea rough an’ pullin’ in...(102)
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2. Deletion or misuse of function words

Prescriptive grammar classifies lexemes in two main types: *content words* and *function words*. The former category includes *nouns, adjectives, verbs* and *adverbs* while the second one the remaining types of lexemes: prepositions, pronouns, conjunctions, etc. Due to its complementary function in language meaning, many varieties of English, including SAE, do not place stress on them, a situation which makes them seem deleted. AAVE users do increase the frequency of this lack of

rhythm or stress in these words and sometimes delete them completely. Many function lexemes, especially pronouns, are frequently misused in AAVE. Following examples of both phenomena:

The Gourd

— ¿Quiere un vaso de agua? (36)	“Ya wants a glass av water?” (20)
—Pa’servirle. —¡Ah!... Sí... Muy lejos, por onde llaman Curridabá... Se quedó allí... Allí quedó. (36)	“Same ’ere .” “Oh! ... Yes ma’am ...very far, a place call Curridabá...he stay there...there he stay.” (20)

The Mestizo

—Est’es mi rancho, dentre usté, aquí se acomoda. (91)	“Dis my house, com’n in sit ‘ere. (52)
Juan Lobo es un hombre que vivía a media hora de aquí. (92)	Juan Lobo usetá live half hour from ’ere . (53)

The Colors

—¿Por qué, m’hijita, te gusta tanto ver ponerse’l sol? (97)	“ Why ya like lookin’ the sunset m’hija? (55)
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The Rainstorm

-¿Querés café? (118)	“ Want coffee? ” (67)
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The Window

—Dame un vaso de agua de la tinaja. (82)	“ Gimme a glass’ v watar from the clay jar.” (47)
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2.1 OMISSION, DELETION, OR MISUSE OF AUXILIARIES

Auxiliaries, the tense and/or conjugation markers that normally accompany SAE verbs in negative and interrogative contexts, are frequently misconjugated or omitted by AAVE users as we can see as follows:

The Cricket

-¡Este rancho no me quiere! (62)	“Dis shack don’t love me!” (36)
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The Colors

—¡Qué bonita carreta!... ¿Onde te la pintaron? —¿Onde iba’ser?... Onde Gabino Sojo. (98)	“Whatta nice ox cart!... Where dey paint it? “Where else?... At Gabino Sojo’s. (56)
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The Gourd

— ¿De veras? ¿Sabe usted donde está él? (36)	“Really?” Ya knows whar he is? (20)
¡Ah!, y que no les manda nada, porque no tiene nada que mandarles. (37)	Oh! An’ dat he don’t send nothin’, ‘cause he don’t got nothin’ ta send ya. (21)

The Kiss

—¿Te gusto? (68)	“ Ya like me?” (39)
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The Bongo

“Natalia, ya no sos una chiquilla y... yo no soy tan viejo. He pensao, este... he venido pensando que si sos agradecida y... (42)	‘Natalia, yer not a girl no more and...Ah not dat old. Ah thinks , dat...well, Ah been thinkin’ dat if yer grateful and...(23)
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The Mestizo

Ya se jue, quién sabe pa’onde. (92)	He gone , who know whar. (53)
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The Witch

-¿Y que querés de mí? -Un agüizote, pa’ enamoralo. (55)	“ An’ whattaya wan’ from me?” “A talisman, ta make’im love me.” (31)
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The Folk Healer

—Dígame una cosa, Lupe: ¿por qué me mandó recaó a yo pa que viniera a ver a Isaías? (128)	“Tell me somethin’ Lupe, why ya call me ta come see Isaías?” (73)
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The Braid

—¿Por qué no volviste a cantar m’hija? (134)	“ Why ya stop singin’ <i>m’hija</i> ?” (76)
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3. Lack of agreement between nouns and adjectives

In SAE adjectives and nouns do not normally agree except for possessive adjectives and numbers. But in AAVE even this agreement is not observed. This type of agreement tends to fail in statements where the context compensates the structural defect with lexemes, and/or with the environment with which the listener can interpret the message correctly.

The Gourd

—Se llaman Tito y Zoila, como ustedes, ¿verdá?... (36)	“ Their name is Tito and Zoila, like ya...Ain’t dat right? (20)
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The Boatman

¡Hace tantos años!... Tal vez treinta. (104)	“It’s been so lon’! ... Thirty year maybe. (60)
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The Mestizo

Estuve ocho días ajuera. (91)	Ah was away for eight day . (52)
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The Dugout

—Unas dos horas y otra onde la partera. (190)	“Round two hour an’ another ta the midwife.” (107)
Aquí, en esta canasta traigo ropa limpia, mantillas, tijeras, otras cosas y dos botellas de agua llovida... (190)	‘Ere, in the basket I bring clean clothes, diapers, scissors, some other tings and two bottle of rainwater.” (107)

4. Lack of agreement between subject and verb

Once translated, the subject-verb propositions of *Cuentos de angustias y paisajes* are found to include lack of agreement not only in cases including verb BE as in this example from *The Gourd*: “...How **is** yer **children**?” There are three more cases where subjects do not agree with verbs: 1) in cases with third person singular environments, 2) cases where the third person singular conjugation is used in environments which would require SAE second person plural, and 3) cases where first person singular subjects are conjugated using third person singular verbs.

4.1. LACK OF AGREEMENT IN THIRD PERSON SINGULAR ENVIRONMENTS

The Folk Healer

—....Dende que s'enfermó m'está diciendo: “Tráiganme a Constantino. (128)	Evar since he got sick, he tell me: ‘brin’ me Constantino. (73)
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The Boatman

-Bajando m'encandilo y si uno se descuida, el río lo bota'la mar o lo vara en los playones. ¡Este río es muy traicionero! (104)	“Goin’ downstream Ah gets blinded by the light and, if ya ain’t careful, the riva throw ya into the sea or strand ya on d’a bank. Dis riva is a shifty ol’ cuss!” (59)
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The Mestizo

“Pos... Cad’uno es cad’uno” —me dijo. (92)	She tell me , ‘Well...each one's differen’. (53)
—Pos va la maldita y se m'encara y me dice: “Sí, vo’ir a júntame con él. (92)	Well... the dammed woman tell me ta ma face, ‘Yes, Ah gonna live wif ‘im. (53)

The Mountain

—Eso que suena parece majafierro. (150)	“Dat sound like a <i>majafierro</i> .” (84)
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4.2. LACK OF AGREEMENT IN SECOND PERSON PLURAL ENVIRONMENTS

The Limestone Quarry

Usté sabe... Si me hubiera cogido la palabra cuando se la ofrecí... (26)	Ya knows ...if ya'd taken my word when I offered... (14)
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The Dugout

—¿Quién sabe aquí algo de partos? — preguntó Julia María, con los ojos lagrimosos. (190)	Shedding tears Julia María asked, “Who know somethin' 'bout givin' birth?” (107)
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The Gourd

¿No sabe que hace cincuaños m'estoy muriendo por saber algo de Tito? (36)	Don't ya knows I bin dyin' fer five year ta know 'bout Tito?” (20)
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The Still

—Pos aquí siempre con este confisgao negocio que no da pa sustos. ¡Idiay! ¿Pos no supistes que me cayó el Resguardo?... (144)	“Well, 'ere with dis darn business dat don't stretch no further. Well, ya knows the <i>Resguardo</i> arrest me (81)
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4.3. LACK OF AGREEMENT WITH FIRST PERSON SINGULAR SUBJECTS

The Bongo

He pensao, este... he venido pensando que si sos agradecida y... (42)	Ah thinks , dat...well, Ah bin thinkin' dat if yer grateful and...(23)
“¡No quiero!... ¡No puedo, tata! —lo interrumpió ella—. Yo lo quiero a usté... mas de otro modo. Se lo agradezco, pero...” (42-3)	“No, Ah don't want no marriage!...Ah can't, tata!”, she interrupted him. Ah loves ya ...but not like dat. Ah'm grateful, but...”(24)
—No, que yo sepa... A veces la veía con Jacobo, un buen muchacho que me ayudaba a cargar el bongo (43)	“Not dat Ah knows av...Sometimes Ah sees 'er wif Jacabo, a good boy who used ta help me ta load the bongo.” (24)

5. Double negation in statements

Insofar as the negation must be expressed with the indefinite nouns, this is a form of agreement marking.

The Bridge

—¡Cuidao vas a contarle a naide nada! —dijo él. (16)	“ Don’t ya tell no one! ”, he said. (7)
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The Witch

-¡Ya ni pa’ bruja sirvo!... (57)	“Ah can’t even be no witch no more! ...” (33)
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The Mestizo

—Tenía una.. ¡Se murió!... No quiero tener otra. (91)	“Ah had a wife...she dead now! Ah don’t wan’ no other. “ (52)
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The Marsh

—Déjamela, Toño, no seas mal amigo. Vos sos muy suertero con las mujeres... (124)	“Leave ‘er ta me, Toño, don’t be no bad friend. (70)
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The Bongo

“¡No quiero!... ¡No puedo, tata! — (42)	“No, Ah don’t want no marriage!... (24)
¡Ah!..., y no me llames tata. ¿Entendés?” (43)	An’ don’t call me tata no more. Ya ‘ear me?” (24)

The Folk Healer

—Mira, Tino... No te molestes en hacerme medicinas... Yo tal vez me muero esta mesma noche... (129)	“Look Tino...don’t bothar wif no remedies...Ah may die tonight... (74)
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6. Use of negative marker “ain’t”.

The lexeme “*ain’t*” is frequently used in several dialects of English, including AAVE, to replace *haven’t*, *hadn’t*, *didn’t*, or any negative form of the verb “be.”

The Halfbreed

—¡Yo no le tengo miedo a nadie! (137)	“Ah ain’t afraid of nobody!” (77)
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The Gourd

Que no le contó nada a usted, porque usted no lo hubiera dejado irse. (37)	“Dat he ain’t tell ya `cause ya no let ‘im leave. (21)
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The Bongo

—¡Hombre!... ¡No había pensao en eso! (44)	“Hombré!...Ah ain’t thought ‘bout dat!” (25)
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The Boatman

—....ni te di tiempo pa’que te acordaras. (104)Ah ain’t give ya time ta rememba. (60)
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The Still

— ¡Hola Pedro! ¿Idiay, qué t'hicistes que no has venido más antes? (144)	“Hey Pedro! Well, whar ya been that ya ain't come before?” (81)
—Pos como l'oyís... Necesitaba plata, y no hallaba d'ionde cógela. (145)	“Well, as ya 'ear...Ah needed money an' ain't know whar ta find it”. (82)

One Night

No te sentí cuando llegaste. (178)	“I ain't hear ya comin' in. (101)
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AAVE PHONOLOGICAL ELEMENTS

The following section includes examples of the most relevant phonological environments of the many *devoicing* contexts presented in the T.T. Due to the large range of cases found in the T.T., one could affirm this type of change is probably the most representative speech sample of the level of familiarity a translator should have while working with this type of literary dialect. The following are examples of the several changes of the phonetic quality of AAVE consonants and vowels:

1. Syntactic constructions relying on intonation and/or stress

SAE psychological contexts (i.e. question, doubt, surprise, etc.) normally require inverted word order of subject and verb constructions as well as the inclusion of auxiliaries. The following examples show how AAVE relies on intonation and stress to a greater extent when compared to SAE users:

The Bongo

¿Entendés?” (43)	Ya 'ear me?” (24)
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The Kiss

—¿Te gusto? (68)	“Ya like me?” (39)
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The Witch

-¿Y el agüizote, doña? (57)	“An' da talisman, Doña?” (33)
-¡Y como perdí a mi esposo!... (57)	“How Ah lost ma husband!... (33)

The Gourd

— Buenas tardes..¿Es usted la señora Zoila de Sandí? (36)	"Afternoon, ma'am. Ya Zoila de Sandí? " (19)
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The Mestizo

¿Le dije a usted qu'esa noche había tormenta? (93)	Ah tell ya there was a storm dat nigh'? " (54)
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The Colors

—¿Me la querés quitar? (99)	"Wanna tak'er from me?" (57)
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The Boatman

¿Te acordás? (104)	'Member me?" (59)
¿Creyiste que no nos volvíamos'hallar? (104)	Ya think we'd not meet agin? ... (60)

The Braid

—¿Por qué no volviste a cantar m'hija? (134)	"Why ya stop singin' m'hija?" (76)
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The Halfbreed

¿Tenés miedo? (138)	"Ya afraid?" (78)
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The Mountain

—¿Cuándo pensás irte? (150)	"When ya leavin'?" (85)
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One Night

¿Qué diablos estás haciendo? (178)	What da heck ya doin'? (100)
—¿Por qué te reís? — ¡Por nada!... (179)	"Whatya laughin' 'bout?" "Nothin'! ..." (101)

The Dugout

— ¿Seguimos para el desembarcadero? — preguntó alguno. (191)	Someone asked, "Go on ta the pier?" (108)
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2. Deletion of voiceless sound /h/

The Limestone Quarry

¿Qué lo trae por estos lados? (21)	What brings ya 'ere? (9)
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The Dulzaina

— ¡Ese muchacho se va'matar! — (86)	"Dat boy gonna kill 'imself!"; (50)
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The Gourd

Que no le contó nada a ustedé, porque ustedé no lo hubiera dejado irse. Que a la par d'él, siempre hubieran vivido ustedes con miedo... (37)	Dat he ain't tell ya `cause ya no let 'im leave. Dat ya always be afraid near 'im (21)
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The Halfbreed

Se atiene a qu'es un matón, pero me las va'pagar. (137)	Just 'cause he's a bully 'e thinks 'e can, but he's gonna pay." (77)
---	--

The Kiss

—Así, así. Ahí va pa' ustedé el más grande. (68)	"So, so. 'Ere go the biggest fer ya." (39)
--	---

3. Reduction of voiceless /t/ phoneme as /f/ in final position and as consonants /d/ or /t/ in initial position

The Gourd

—...Todos tenemos penas en esta vida. ¿Verdá? (36)	"...All of us got sorrows in dis life. Ain't we?" (20)
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The Bongo

—Por esos días me había dicho que se iba a trabajar a Punta Quepos y desapareció sin decir nada. (43)	"Round then 'e tol' me 'e gonna go ta Punta Quepos ta work an' left wifout a word." (25)
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The Witch

-Que te quités la ropa. (56)	"Take dem clothes off." (32)
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The Colors

—¡Qué bonita carreta!... ¿Onde te la pintaron? (98)	"Whatta nice ox cart!...Where dey paint it? (56)
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One Night

— ¿Idiay? —dijo éste—. ¿Qué diablos estás haciendo? (178)	"Whassup?," said Chamorro. What da heck ya doin'? (100)
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The Dugout

Aquí, en esta canasta traigo ropa limpia, mantillas, tijeras, otras cosas y dos botellas de agua llovida... (190)	'Ere, in the basket I bring clean clothes, diapers, scissors, some other tings and two bottle av rainwatar." (107)
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4. Vowel changes due to the assimilation of sounds in various contexts:

4.1 USE OF LEXEME “YA” INSTEAD LEXEME “YOU” TO REPLACE PERSONAL PRONOUN

The Bridge

— ¡Cuidao vas a contarle a naide nada! —dijo él. —No. — ¿Me lo juras? —Sí. (16)	“Don’t ya tell no one!”, he said. “No.” “ Ya swear?” “Yes.” (7)
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The Bongo

Te he recogido, te he cuidao y te he querido mucho. He pensao, este... he venido pensando que si sos agradecida y... me querés un poquito, bueno, ... (42)	Ah’v provide fer ya , Ah’v taken care of ya , and Ah’v loved ya so much. Ah thinks, dat...well, Ah bin thinkin’ dat if yer grateful and... ya loves me a little, ...(23)
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The Dulzaina

—Mira, Miguel, coge esa montaña junto al río, voltéala y sembrá caña. Si lo haces, te regalo el cañal, la molida y el trapiche. (86)	If ya do that, Ah’ll give ya the plantation, the crushin’ of the cane and the sugar mill.” (50)
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4.2 USE OF LEXEME “YER” INSTEAD OF LEXEME “YOUR” TO REPLACE POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVE OR SUBJECT-VERB CLUSTER “YOU’RE”

The Gourd

—Pa’servirle. —... ¿Que tal están sus chiquitos? Me lo dijo su esposo... ¡Uf!... ¡Qué calor! (36)	“At yer service “... How is yer children?” Yer husband tol’ me. Whew! ...it hot! (20-1)
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The Limestone Quarry

Y... dígame, mi amigo, ¿Por qué se decidió a vendérmela? (26)	An’... tell me my friend, what made ya change yer mind?” (15)
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The Bongo

“Natalia, ya no sos una chiquilla y... yo no soy tan viejo. He pensao, este... he venido pensando que si sos agradecida y... (42)	‘Natalia, yer not a girl no more and... Ah thinks, dat...well, Ah bin thinkin’ dat if yer grateful and...(23)
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The Kiss

—Adiós, Miguelillo. Ahí te dejo con tus barbudos. (68)	“Good bye, Miguelillo. I leave ya ta yer fish.” (39)
--	---

The Mestizo

...“A vos te pasa algo, Manuela, sos otra. ¿Qué tenés? (91-2)	... there sometin' wrong wif ya, Manuela, ya not yerself . Whassup? (52-3)
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The Boatman

-Y perdone usted la pregunta,... ¿Cómo es su nombre? -Juan de Dios Pereira, pa'servile. (104)	“Excuse me fer askin', What's yer name?” “Juan de Dios Pereira, at yer service.” (59)
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4.3 USE OF LEXEME “TA” IN SUBSTITUTION OF PREPOSITION “TO”

The Witch

-Un agüizote, pa` enamoralo. (55)	“A talisman, ta make'im love me.” (31)
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The Cricket

-¡Si al menos tuviera con quien hablar!... (61)	“If Ah jus' had someone ta talk ta! ... (35)
---	--

The Kiss

—Adiós, Miguelillo. Ahí te dejo con tus barbudos. (68)	“Good bye, Miguelillo. I leave ya ta yer fish.” (39)
--	---

The Dulzaina

—Nunca hubiera creído —dijo— que a mis años pudiera descolgarme hast'el fondo del precipicio. (87)	Ah'd climb down ta the bottom 'av the precipice.” (51)
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The Colors

— ¡Note la doy! (99)	“Ah don't giv'er ta ya!” (57)
—...Así no tengo nada que ver con ninguna de las dos (99)	“Then Ah don't 'av anythin' ta do wif either one av ya.” (57)

The Marsh

—Déjame la, Toño, no seas mal amigo. Vos sos muy suertero con las mujeres... (124)	“Leave 'er ta me, Toño, don't be no bad friend. (70)
—Pos aquí estoy pa servirle, Olivita. (124)	“Ah'm 'ere ta serve ya, Olivita.” (71)

4.4 USE OF LEXEME “FER” IN SUBSTITUTION OF PREPOSITION “FOR”

The Gourd

¿No sabe que hace cincuaños m'estoy muriendo por saber algo de Tito? (36)	Don't ya knows I bin dyin' fer five year ta know 'bout Tito?” (20)
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The Bongo

Te he recogido, te he cuidao y te he querido mucho (42)	Ah'v provided fer ya, Ah'v taken care of ya, and Ah'v loved ya so much. (23)
Yo te he cuidao pa mí, y ya lo tengo todo arreglao. (43)	. "Ah's taken care av ya fer maself, an' it's settled. (24)

The Witch

-¿Pa' qué? (56)	"What fer ." (32)
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The Kiss

—Así, así. Ahí va pa' usté el más grande. (68)	"So, so. 'Ere go the biggest fer ya." (39)
--	---

The Mestizo

—Un día jui a Chomes a mercar una mula pa'ir a Orotina a vender peje. Estuve ocho días ajuera. (91)	"One day Ah went to <i>Chomes</i> to buy a mule ta go ta Orotina ta sell fish. Ah was away fer eight days. (52)
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4.5 DEVOICING IN WORDS ENDING WITH SYLLABLE “-er” INTO LEXEMES ENDING WITH SYLLABLE “-ar” REPRESENTING SYLLABLE /-aR/

The Dulzaina

— ¡Maldita sea con este hijo inhábil que me ha salido!... ¡Mira que voy a repartir lo tuyo entre tus hermanos! ¡Botá esa... chirimía y trabaja la tierra! (85)	"Darn good fer nothin' son av mine!...Look, I'm gonna divide yer inheritance amon' yer brothars! Throw dat <i>chirimía</i> away and farm the land!" (49)
—Mira, Miguel, coge esa montaña junto al río, voltéala y sembrá caña. Si lo haces, te regalo el cañal, la molida y el trapiche. (86)	"Look, Miguel, take that mountain next to the rivar , till the soil, and plant sugar cane. (50)

The Mestizo

Yo y ella nos habíamos llevao siempre muy bien. Yo estaba encariñao con ella. (91)	We always get alon' fine tagedar , Ah was attach ta her. (52)
--	--

The Colors

—...Así no tengo nada que ver con ninguna de las dos (99)	"Then Ah don't 'av anythin' ta do wif either one av ya." (57)
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The Boatman

_Juan de Dios Pereira, pa'servile. -¿Juan de Dios Pereira? ... Pos vea usté lo que son las cosas... ¡Yo soy Antonio Guadamuz! ¿Te acordás? (104)	"Juan de Dios Pereira?...Wouldya look at dat!... Ah's Antonio Guadamuz! ' Membar me?' (59)
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The Folk Healer

—Mira, Tino... No te molestes en hacerme medicinas... Yo tal vez me muero esta mesma noche... T'he mandao a llamar pa que te hagas cargo de mi mujer... y de tus dos hijas. (129)	, "Look Tino...don't bothar wif no remedies...Ah may die tonight...Ah sent fer ya ta take care 'v ma wife...and yer two daughtars ." (74)
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The Still

—Pos aquí siempre con este confisgao negocio que no da pa sustos. ¡ldiay! ¿Pos no supistes que me cayó el Resguardo?... (144)	"Well, 'ere with dis darn business dat don't stretch no furthar . Well, ya knows the Resguardo arrest me?... (81)
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4.6 DISSIMILATION OF FUNCTION WORDS

The Bocaracá

—¡Dame esa bocaracá!... (12)	Gimme that <i>bocaracá</i> !"... (4)
—¡No ha pasado nada!... ¡Jenaro!... (12)	Nothin's happened! ... Jenaro!" (5)

The Limestone Quarry

—Hombré, Eliseo... ¿Le compro esta finquita con casa, calera, carreta y yunta? (21)	"Say, Eliseo...why don'tya sell me this farm, with the house, limestone quarry, cart and yoke? "(9)
—¡Quitate de ahí, muchacha, que hay una carga de dinamita! (24)	" Gettaway from there, girl! ¡There's a load av dynamite." (12)

The Gourd

Yo me llamo Juan José Zárate, amigo de su esposo Tito Sandí. —Pase adelante y se sienta, tenga la bondá (36)	M'a name's Juan José Zárate, frien' av yer husband Tito Sandí." " Com'n sit down please" (20)
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The Bongo

¡Viera cómo he sufrido! (42)	Ah'v suffer so much!" (23)
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The Witch

-¿Qué te pasa, muchacha? -Déjeme entrar, doña (55)	" Whatisit , girl?" " Lemme in, <i>Doña</i> ." (31)
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The Cricket

-¡Hora sí! Aquí tiene q'estar, detrás de la botella de canfín. (62)	" Dat's dat! It's gotta be 'ere, behind the kerosene bottle." (36)
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The Window

—¿Qué querés?... —dijo ella cuando pudo hablar. (81)	“ What’d ya like?” (47)
—Dame un vaso de agua de la tinaja. (82)	“ Gimme a glass’v water from the clay jar.” (47)

The Dulzaina

—¡Muy bien, hijo mío! A lo dicho, hecho. Aquí está l’escritura. (87)	“Well done, ma son!, “A promise’s a promise. ‘ Ere’s the deed.” (51)
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The Mestizo

—Se murió. V’hacer dos años. ¿A ver...? ¡Sí!... Dos años. Yo estaba encariñao con ella. Pa qué jue tonta. ¡Mi’alegro que se haiga muerto! (91)	She dead. Gonna be two years. Lemme think...Yes! ...Two years. Ah was attached ta her. It was all’er fault. Ah happy she’s dead! (52)
—Pos un día l’hallé platicando con Juan Lobo. Yo salí a meter la mula que había arrancao a juir ahi p’adentro. Cuando volví hallé a Manuela alistando un motete con su ropa. “¿Idiay... Manuela? ¿Qu’es eso?” (92)	“Well, one day Ah find’er talkin’ ta a man called Juan Lobo. Ah go to get the mule dat run outta control. Then Ah see Manuela packin’er clothes. ‘ Wassup ...Manuela? What’s dat?” (53)

The Rainstorm

“¡Qué modo’e llover!...” (119)	“ Whatta way av rainin’!...” (68)
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The Still

—¡Qué negocio más riata! (143)	“ Whatta good business!” (80)
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4.7 FINAL CONSONANTS “-t” OR “-d” ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE DELETED IF THEY ARE NOT PART OF THE PAST TENSE “-ed”

The Bridge

—¿Acaso es novio mío? (15)	And she would say, “But ‘e not ma boyfrien’ . (6)
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The Limestone Quarry

Y... dígame, mi amigo, ¿Por qué se decidió a vendérmela? (26)	An’ ...tell me my friend, what made ya change yer mind?” (15)
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The Gourd

—Y dígame, ¡por amor de Dios! (36)	“An tell me, ya mus’ tell me! (20)
Me dio las señas d’esta casa, y me pidió que viniera a contárselo todo. (37)	...He tof’ me how ta get ‘ere ta dis house, an’ he asked me ta tell ya all. (21)

The Cricket

-¡Tampoco voy a poder dormir esta noche!... (61)	"Ah can't sleep tonigh' eithar!... (35)
--	--

The Mestizo

—Tenía una... ¡Se murió!... No quiero tener otra. (91)	"Ah had a wife...she dead now! Ah don't wan' no other. "(52)
Cad'uno es cad'uno." —Está bien —le dije—. ¡Ándate ya! ¡Pero ya!... ¡Si es que puedes llegar!... (92)	Each one's differen' ." "Fine, Ah tell 'er. Go now! But rih' now!... (53)

The Halfbreed

Se atiene a qu'es un matón, pero me las va'pagar. (137)	Jus' 'cause he's a bully 'e thinks 'e can, but he's gonna pay." (77)
—Miguel tiene razón. (138)	"Miguel's rih' . (78)
—¡Defendete o te mato'e cualesquier manera! (138)	" Defen' yerself or Ah kill ya anyway!" (78)
—¿Sabés qu'es?... Que mi mujer acaba de tener un güillita (139)	Ya knows what? ... M'a wife jus' had a child"... (79)

One Night

Anoche se me regó la botella. Llegué tan cansado, que me dormí encima del charco y me manché la manga de la camisa. (178)	"Ah spilt da bottle las' nigh' . Ah was so tired, I sleep over the spot an' ma shir' got stained." (101)
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The Dugout

—Mi verlo hace rato —dijo el negro—, agarra por la curva de la derecha; apagar focos. Mi ver más mejor en la oscuridá. (189)	"Ah sees it" said the black man, "Take the rih' curve; ligh's off! Ah sees betta in the dark." (106)
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4.8 DELETION OF UNSTRESSED OR REDUPLICATED SYLLABLES; INITIAL AND MEDIAL WORD POSITION ONLY.

The Gourd

—Buenas tardes... ¿Es usted la señora Zoila de Sandí? ¡Cuénteme algo d'él, pronto, por favor! (36)	" Afternoon , ma'am. Ya Zoila de Sandí?" Tell me ' bout 'im, soon, please? (19)
¡Ah!, y que no les manda nada, porque no tiene nada que mandarles. (37)	Oh! And dat he don't send nothin', ' cause he don't got nothin' ta send ya. (21)

The Bongo

—Por esos días me había dicho que se iba a trabajar a Punta Quepos y desapareció sin decir nada. (43)	' Round then 'e tells me 'e gonna go ta Punta Quepos ta work an' left wifout a word." (25)
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The Boatman

-¿Juan de Dios Pereira? ... Pos vea ustedé lo que son las cosas... ¡Yo soy Antonio Guadamuz! ¿Te acordás? (104)	“Juan de Dios Pereira?...Wouldya look at dat!... Ah’s Antonio Guadamuz! ‘ Membar me?” (59)
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The Still

—¿Y Rosa, y Teresa y los chacalines? —Alentaos. ¿Y vos? —Pos aquí siempre con este confisgao negocio que no da pa sustos. (144)	“An’ Rosa, an’ Teresa an’ the kids?” “Healthy. What ‘ bout ya?” “Well, ‘ere with dis darn business dat don’t stretch no further. (81)
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AAVE MORPHOLOGY AND WORD CHOICE

The use of Intimate ways of addressing each other is being adapted to convey both AAVE features and to preserve the Costa Rican cultural context. Thus, some intimate forms are kept in Spanish:

The Bongo

. “¡Natalia!... ¡Hijita mía!...” (43)	“Natalia!...M’ hijita! ...” (24)
—¡Hombre!... ¡No había pensao en eso! (44)	“ Hombré! ...Ah ain’t thought ‘bout dat!” (25)

The Witch

-¿Qué te pasa, muchacha? -Déjeme dentrar, doña (55)	“Whatisit, girl?” “Lemme in, Doña. ” (31)
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The Kiss

—Adiós, Miguelillo. Ahí te deajo con tus barbudos. (68)	“Good bye, Miguelillo. I leave ya ta yer fish.” (39)
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The Colors

—¿Quién es entonces el tata pa...? (99)	“Who’s’er tata? (57)
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The Braid

—¿Por qué no volviste a cantar m’hija? (134)	“Why ya stop singin’ m’hija? ” (76)
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The Still

—Mbré, Ramón... (145)	“ Mbré Ramón...”(82)
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The Dugout

<p>—¡Aguanta, aguanta! —dijo el negro desde la proa. Y la mujer: —¡Usté se calla, negro chumeca! (190)</p>	<p>All the way from the prow the black man said, “Hold it, hold it!” And the woman, “Ya shut up, negro chumeca!” (107)</p>
<p>—Yo sí —dijo la mujer—. Una vez, junto a la comadrona ayudé a mi madre cuando nació mi hermanito. —(190)</p>	<p>“Well, I do,” said the woman. “The midwife an’ me help ma mothar deliver ma little brothar.” (107)</p>

As suggested by Silva-Corvalán, a rigorous analysis has been conducted in order to support the presence of African American Vernacular English in the translation of the vernacular dialogues of *Cuentos de angustias y paisajes*. Having concluded the translation and analysis stage of this research, the corresponding conclusions follow.

CONCLUSIONS

It is time to reflect on the driving force behind the challenges associated with translating a well known piece of Costa Rican literature into English. As stated in the introduction, our general objective was to demonstrate that it is possible to develop a procedure to translate a folk dialect. As previously discussed, to achieve this, it was essential to conserve the integrity, relevance and coherence of as many of the cultural aspects of the source text as possible. Attention was not given only to Salazar-Herrera's unique prose and figurative language, but also to the voices of the characters of each story.

The comparison of the most outstanding syntactic, phonetic and morphological characteristics of AAVE to the folk dialect led to the creation of a list of equivalents, which would later simplify the systematic procedure used to translate the dialogues to such an extent that, at some point of the project, the difficulty of the translation resided in the prose, not in the dialogues. Therefore, the translation and the research project accompanying this work show the plausibility of the procedure by maintaining the socio-linguistic aspects of the original characters as well as their essence and spirit. The establishment of this systematic procedure is a basis for future translators of regional literature who wish to express the social content and geographical characteristics of the original text in words that will then be integrated into the target text.

Another outcome of this project is the way the fields of linguistics and literature have been interrelated. By creating a literary dialect, the translation has conveyed the socio-linguistic characteristics of the original with an analogous effect in the target reader. Therefore, native speakers of English will find in the target text a better idea of the realities of Costa Rican culture in the mid twentieth century. The translation of this

book has shown that even challenging texts such as these can be recreated and properly placed in the literary context intended by the original author, if there is a search for an analogous linguistic scenario between the source culture and the target culture.

As proposed in one of the specific objectives, before outlining the characteristics of AAVE to be used in the dialogues, a previous analysis of the impact of the history and ethnographic characteristics of those who migrated to the Southern United States and to the Caribbean Islands was necessary. However, as the research went on, new knowledge surfaced and oriented translation decisions were made more accurately. Hence, the selection of AAVE rests upon the existing theoretical studies that support the notion of the relationship between the two vernacular dialects, an approach documented by a thorough study of the source text to best portray its nuances through the target text and into a new culture. As dialects that they both are, they follow particular structural rules governed by standards of social prestige as well as language prejudices in regards to the academic status of the speaker. Given the fact that AAVE and the Costa Rican folk dialect are vernacular variants, both underwent a diachronic evolution. AAVE remains mostly within the socio-linguistic context of the Southern states of the United States, hence the decision to use it as representative of the linguistic status of the Costa Rican folk dialects.

One of the most relevant decisions of this research was the decision to leave untranslated some cultural lexemes that were either explained within the context of the story, or by means of a brief footnote. Considering that the intended audience of these stories is the readers of literary magazines and academic journals, and that a revised version of this translation could be submitted for publication, it is plausible to expect that the academic background of the potential readers will allow them to find the Spanish terms as an acceptable procedure to maintain the cultural value of the stories intact.

Average readers of other types of sources (*Costa Rica: A Traveler's Literary Companion*, a pocket book including a translated version of Salazar-Herrera's *The Bongo*, among others), may not necessarily have enough intercultural competence to deal with cultural markers left in the source language of the original text. In spite of its value for promoting the reading of our literature by a general English-speaking audience, this version of "The Bongo" (included in the Appendix section in this project) fails to convey the sociolinguistic background of the peasants into the target text. The novelty of this translation and its corresponding research project lies in the fact that to the best of our knowledge no other complete work of the Costa Rican literary genre *Costumbrismo* has been translated into English and published. This genre is characterized by the realism used to represent the local folk dialect, hence its uniqueness. The translation efforts behind this project stress the importance of conveying the singularities of those who best represent the Costa Rican sociolinguistic past: the peasants. Conveying the sociolinguistic aspects of the original by using another dialect from the target language was essential to this project.

The overall project required both a significant knowledge of the cultural background of the original text as well as a linguistic competence in the target language. Similarly, it also required acquaintance with the dialect selected and a great deal of resilience in what sometimes appeared to be an endless effort to find the word or sentence that most accurately depicted the true meaning of the original text. Therefore, any translator who wishes to successfully carry out a translation of this nature would need to feel rather comfortable with his/her competences to translate the key cultural elements of the original text into the target text.

A translation of literary works of this nature makes it possible and accessible to other cultures to learn and value works of literature, such as Salazar-Herrera's, written

during the pioneering years of Costa Rica's literary history. Therefore, when assuming a work such as this, it is imperative for any translator to ensure that accuracy and total adherence to the original text are kept intact and faithful to the source text. Exercising such a disciplinary approach to translating a literary piece of art as this would ensure that the integrity of the original text is kept, as per the author's original intentions and wishes. This would have to be done in such a fashion as to create enough interest in the reader to continue pursuing the essence and understanding of key cultural elements of the book. Ignoring this critical part of the translation process would create an unnecessary risk of losing the audience in cultural details, which would most likely trigger a sense of misunderstanding of the true meaning behind the text. The translator would also have to constantly persist and commit to his/her own creative abilities to achieve another important goal throughout his/her translation process, which is to preserve the true meaning of Costa Rica's cultural heritage. Keeping in mind that literature is another way to convey and portray to other cultures how specific historical events have contributed to shaping and defining the core of a community, region or country at a particular point in time. In sum, the driving force behind this project is represented by the following words:

Sin pasión, no hay traducción. Solo se traduce lo que se ama, aquella obra con la que uno se identifica, la obra que a uno le hubiera gustado escribir...

Qué mejor elogio para uno... si terminada la lectura de una novela, reparásemos que la novela original estaba escrita en otra lengua..

...las aduanas lingüísticas casi siempre se pueden traspasar con el relato novelesco bajo el brazo...da la impresión que la semiología concreta de cada lengua queda traspasada por ese semantismo esencial que está arraigado en el ser humano.

No se trata de competir con el novelista, sino de ser digno de él.

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APPENDICES

TABLE OF EQUIVALENTS

Spanish	Standard American English	AAVE
¿Qué querés?	What would/do you want?	What'd ya want?
¿Qué tal están sus chiquitos?	How are your children?	How is yer children?
About	About	'bout
Acaba	Just	Jus'
Algo	Something	Somethin'
Amigo	Friend	Frien'
Aquí	Here	'ere
Buenas tardes	Good evening	Good evenin'
Buenas tardes	Good afternoon	'Afternoon
Como ella	Like her	Like 'er
Dame	Give me	Gimme
De	Of	Av/'v/a
De nuevo	Again	Agin'
Derecha, correcto, exacto	Right	Righ'
Donde--dónde	Where	Wher-Whar
El	The	The --D'a--Da
Eso	That	Dat
Esto	This	Dis
Váyase	Get going	Git goin'
Gracias	Thank you	Thank ya—Tank ya
Hace tres días...se murió Tito Sandí	Tito Sandí died three days ago.	He die three day ago...
Hubiéramos	Should have	Should'av
Mi	My	M'a --- Ma
Nada	Nothing	Nothin'
No diga más	Don't tell me	Don't say no more
No hay	There isn't anything	Ain't nothin'
No puedo hacer nada acerca al respecto	I cannot do anything...	I can't do nothin'...
No sabe que hace cincuaños me estoy muriendo por saber de él	Don't you know that for five years I've been dying hoping to hear from him?	Don'tya knows I bin dyin' fer five year ta know 'bout 'im?"
No sabía	Didn't know	Ain't know
No te ví	I didn't see you	I ain't see ya
No tengo nada	There is nothing wrong	Ain't nothin' wrong

TABLE OF EQUIVALENTS

Para	For	Fer
Para	To	Ta
Porque	Because	'cause
Primero	First	Firs'
Recuerde	Remember	'Memba'
Río	River	Riva--rivar
Se llaman Tito y Zoila...	Their names are Tito and Zoila	Their name is Tito and Zoila
Señor	Mister	Mista'--Mistar
Señora	Madam – lady	Ma' am
Su	Your	Yer
Su posesivo	Her	'er
Tiene – Ha de Pres. Perf.	Have	'av
Traiga	Get	Git
Trajo	Brought	Brung
Usted	You	Ya
Usted	You've been warned	Y'a ben warned El cholo
Usted debió hacerlo	You should have done it	You should've did it
Usted es	You are – You're	Yer
Usted está	You are	Yer
Usted no es más que ...	You are nothing but a...	You ain't nothing but...
Verdád?	Don't we?	Ain't we?
Viejo	Old	Ol'
Yo	I	I--Ah
Yo le digo a él	I tell him	I tell 'im – I tells 'im
Yo no soy/estoy/hice	I am not / I'm not/I did do	I ain't
Yo no he estado bebiendo...	I have not been drinking...	I ain't been drinking..
Yo no quiero nada de nadie	I don't want anything from anybody	I don't want nothing from nobody
Yo no bebí	I didn't drink	I ain't drink

JAMES HOGGARD'S THE BONGO

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