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"Non Fuyades": A Comparative Analysis of the Translation of Culturemes in Don Quixote

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“Non Fuyades:” A Comparative Analysis of the Translation of Culturemes in *Don Quixote*

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April 2024

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requirements of HON 437

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“Non Fuyades:” A Comparative Analysis of the Translation of Culturemes in *Don Quixote*

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Eve Jacobson
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Abstract

A widely debated topic in the field of translation studies is how to accurately preserve the full connotations and denotations of culturemes, which are words or phrases that have no direct equivalent in other languages due to their intrinsic cultural context, when translating them into another language. My project compares Edith Grossman (2003) and Thomas Shelton's (1612) translations of selected culturemes in the first part of Miguel de Cervantes's *Don Quixote* (1605) to analyze how different approaches to translating culturemes affect the tone and style, which also provides additional insights into the themes of class and formality and how the story changes when these culturemes are altered or omitted. I use Thomas Lathrop's 2011 Spanish Legacy edition of *Don Quixote* to juxtapose Shelton and Grossman's translations of Sancho Panza's dialogue and his conversations with Don Quixote. The selected culturemes are categorized using a framework based on Peter Newmark's 1988 *Textbook of Translation* in order to evaluate both translators' approaches to each cultureme and compare them to the original Spanish version. My study shows that because Sancho Panza's characterization is so heavily conveyed and reinforced by Spanish culturemes, both Grossman and Shelton's translations result in his personality becoming less defined and his perspective becoming more detached from his rustic background. The results of my study demonstrate how culturemes fundamentally impede the creation of a translation that is completely faithful to the original text because they force the translator to make decisions that alter the very nature of the text that they are translating.

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Introduction

A heavily debated topic in translation studies is how to faithfully portray cultural references across languages. The translation of words and phrases that are intrinsically attached to a cultural context – also referred to as “culturemes” in translation studies – are especially problematic for translators, as they often lack any equivalent in other languages due to their strong cultural ties. These culturemes force translators to make decisions that ultimately change the nature of the text that they are translating, thus creating new interpretative potential for the text.

There are many factors that influence how a work is translated. Variables such as the time period, available resources, and cultural knowledge affect the translator’s interpretation of a text. These factors are all important to keep in mind when analyzing how a cultureme has been translated. The time period in which a text is translated is related to the translator’s stylistic approach, as their preferences are generally affected by the commonly used translation procedures at the time. Each translation procedure prioritizes different information, which in turn affects how a cultureme is represented. Furthermore, a translator must be familiar with the cultural context in which culturemes are presented in order to minimize the loss of meaning while also making it understandable to their audience.

Miguel de Cervantes’s *Don Quixote* (1605) is the focus of this critical analysis due to it having many culturemes that lack a direct English equivalent. It has been translated numerous times since its publication, with each translation offering its own insights into the many ways that a translator can approach culturemes. This study compares the translation of selected culturemes in Thomas Shelton’s (1612) and Edith Grossman’s (2003) version of *Don Quixote*, while using Tom Lathrop’s 2012 Spanish Legacy edition as a reference. This study identifies the

translation procedures used for each cultureme and compares the decisions both translators made when translating *Don Quixote* for an English-speaking audience. Through a comparative analysis of both translations, this study emphasizes how culturemes fundamentally impede the creation of a translation that is entirely faithful to the original.

Background

1. Defining Culturemes

Before defining culturemes, it must first be understood what is meant by culture. According to Lucía Molina's perception of culture in *El otoño del pingüino*, culture includes "all practices... which possess relative autonomy within the economic, social, and political spheres" (19, my trans). Using this definition, this study views culture as encompassing two broad categories: language and knowledge. Language includes idiomatic expressions, specific words, and language components that are unique to their culture. Knowledge is a large category that includes all values, beliefs, customs, and specialized knowledge within a specific culture. Both of these categories are relevant to the culturemes that are examined in this study.

Being a relatively new term in the field of translation studies, scholars are still working to differentiate it from cultural references, phrasemes, idioms, or other cultural symbols (Nadal 93). Its definition must therefore be provided in order to establish the scope and focus of this study. Lucía Molina provides a clear definition of culturemes in *El otoño del pingüino*. She defines culturemes as "a verbal or paraverbal element that possesses a cultural charge specific to one culture, and that upon entering contact with another culture through translation can provoke a cultural problem between the original and target texts" (79, my trans.). This study largely borrows from Molina's definition in order to create its own working definition of culturemes that

is suitable for this research: a word or phrase whose full definition and connotations are intrinsically attached to one specific culture, which causes it to lose full or partial meaning when translated for an audience of a different culture. In order to be classified as a cultureme, a term must meet the following two criteria: the term possesses an intrinsic and unique cultural background; and the full context and definition of the term has no direct equivalent in the target language, which results in a partial or total loss of context and meaning when translated.

The Spanish verb “tutear,” meaning “to address someone using the second-person pronoun [tú] for manner of confidence or familiarity,” is an example of a cultureme with no direct equivalent in English due to its unique social implications (RAE, my trans.). The word refers to the act of addressing someone with informal pronouns, which represents a social norm that is integral to Spanish culture. When translated for audiences of a different culture – especially those without formal and informal modes of address — the full extent of these social nuances may not be fully captured. The absence of a clear equivalent for “tutear” exemplifies the challenges posed by translating culturemes.

1.1 Selected Versions of Don Quixote

One of the reasons why scholars keep coming back to *Don Quixote* despite the large number of pre-existing translations is the strong prominence of culturemes within the novel. Each translation of *Don Quixote*, regardless of its accuracy, provides valuable insight into the various possible approaches taken to translate culturemes. Culturemes are translated according to the personal interpretation of the translator, which is influenced by factors such as resources available, cultural context, and stylistic approach. There is no one entirely accurate translated

version of *Don Quixote* because of its culturemes, which makes it a useful novel to demonstrate the complexities of translating cultural references.

The first translation of *Don Quixote* was published in 1612 by Thomas Shelton. Shelton claims to have only taken forty days to translate the novel, and explains that his pace was the result of “the importunity of a very dear friend that was desirous to understand the subject” (Shelton). His translation is based on Rutger Velpius’s 1607 Spanish edition of *Don Quixote*, which was printed in Brussels (Fitzmaurice-Kelly, xvii-xviii).

Although Shelton is known for being a pioneer in translating *Don Quixote*, many Cervantes scholars have noted the various discrepancies between his and Cervantes’s versions of *Don Quixote*. Many of these errors can be attributed to his literal style of translation, while others are the result of his tendency to omit words or phrases in translation. Scholar Francisco J. Borges suggests that Shelton’s rationale behind omitting parts of *Don Quixote* is likely either “attributable to the translator’s awareness that attempting to provide an accurate translation into English would be either very difficult or simply irrelevant” or “unconscious and due to interpretive mistakes or coincidences between referents very close in meaning” (375). Regardless of Shelton’s intentions, these omissions create notable differences between both versions.

Don Quixote has been translated numerous times since Shelton’s publication, including Edith Grossman’s 2003 translation. Grossman wrote her translation of *Don Quixote* using Martín de Riquer’s Spanish edition as a reference (Grossman xviii). In her note to the reader, she explains that her goal when translating *Don Quixote* was to “recreate for the reader in English the experience of the reader in Spanish” by translating jokes and proverbs into contemporary English (xix). Grossman’s edition remains one of the more well-received translations of *Don Quixote*. Her work has received awards such as the 2006 Ralph Menheim Medal for Translation, in which

they applaud her ability to “transport the English reader beyond the borders of our language and deep into the realm of the imagination” (PEN).

Despite the critical acclaim for Grossman’s translation, it has received criticism from Cervantes scholars such as Tom Lathrop, whose edition of *Don Quixote* is used in this study. Lathrop attributes many of Grossman’s inaccuracies to her use of Martín de Riquer’s edition, who he believes to be an “editor who think[s] [he is] smarter and more clever than Cervantes” (238). He states his problem with Riquer and similar editors in a critique of Grossman’s work:

Don Quixote, through the ages, has been plagued by editors who ... have felt obliged to “correct” supposed errors and contradictions that are built into the work ... These editors don’t realize, however, that Cervantes put them all in his book to imitate a careless writing style used in the romances of chivalry... So, the unsuspecting translator, putting faith in the edition used, is duped by the falsifications inherent in the base text, then is lulled by the many footnotes that point out how Cervantes has forgotten this and has erred in that, and they unwittingly continue into their translations the misrepresentations of the edition and the attitude of the annotator (238).

While this study is not concerned with proving or disproving the validity of this specific claim, his commitment to maintaining faithfulness to the original text makes his 2011 Legacy edition of *Don Quixote* a strong analog for the original Spanish text. Lathrop describes his edition of *Don Quixote* as “conservative” in the introduction because he wanted the edition as close to the original Cervantes as possible (xxxi). His emphasis on accuracy, in addition to his

many footnotes explaining the cultural references, make his edition a very useful reference for this study.

1.2 Theoretical Framework and Methodology

This study borrows from Peter Newmark's 1988 *Textbook of Translation* to classify the methods used to translate culturemes due to its influence in Molina's concept of culturemes. Newmark lists seventeen distinct types of translation procedures that are used for translating specific sentences and phrases, eight of which are relevant to this study.¹ The definitions for each one use Newmark's original understanding of the terms as a foundation, but have been modified so that they pertain more specifically to the concept of culturemes. A full list of translation procedures, alongside a definition and example for each one, can be found in the Appendix.

This study focuses specifically on culturemes in the dialogue in the first part of *Don Quixote*. The culturemes analyzed in this study pertain to Sancho Panza and his characterization in order to assess the role of culturemes in portraying his character.

The first section of the analysis examines the use of formal language as a cultureme in *Don Quixote* by focusing on selected dialogue between Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. Grossman and Shelton's approach to translating the selected dialogue will then be examined to determine how their approach to translating formal language alters Sancho's portrayal.

The second section of the analysis examines a selected list of identified culturemes found in Sancho's dialogue. The analysis for each cultureme begins by providing its context within the story and its full Spanish definition. Once the full definition of the Spanish cultureme is explained, each English term is individually presented alongside its definition and the translation

¹ The ninth procedure listed, "Literal Translation," is originally defined as a translation method in Newmark's textbook. For the purposes of this study, Literal Translation has been reclassified as a procedure in order to better examine how idioms and proverbs are translated.

procedure used. They are then compared to the original cultureme to determine how faithfully they represent the original version.

Analysis

2. Formality as a Cultureme

The formal language and modes of address in *Don Quixote* operate as a cultureme because they reflect the social hierarchy and norms of respect in a way that is specific to Spanish culture. Its significance in the story is apparent in the dialogue between Sancho and Don Quixote, as the use of formal language reinforces their master-servant relationship.

A notable aspect of formality as a cultureme is Sancho's use of "vuestra merced" to refer to Don Quixote. The term "vuestra merced" originated in the fourteenth century and was used to communicate respect and distinction towards an interlocutor of higher status (León 565). Sancho refers to Don Quixote as "vuestra merced" throughout the novel, as Don Quixote is perceived as being in a higher status than he is. One example of an instance in which he uses "vuestra merced" is the beginning of chapter VIII: "Mire vuestra merced, señor caballero andante, que no se le olvide lo que de la ínsula me tiene prometido, que yo la sabré gobernar por grande que sea" (Lathrop 66). This title, along with the "señor caballero andante," highlights the respect and esteem Sancho holds for Don Quixote. The consistent usage of "vuestra merced" establishes their dynamic as master and squire, while also contextualizing Sancho's high regard for Don Quixote within the roles of social hierarchy.

Because "vuestra merced" carries so much honor and is so prominent throughout the novel, it is worth noting that Shelton uses Reduction to omit any use of the phrase (see appendix). In the example given above, Shelton translates the sentence as "I pray you have care,

good Sir Knight, that you forget not that Government of the Island which you have promised me, for I shall be able to Govern it, were it never so great” (43). His use of Reduction to condense the language results in a significant loss of both formality and context regarding their relationship.

Grossman presents “Vuestra Merced” as “your grace.” In the example from Chapter VIII, Grossman translates the sentence as “Señor Knight Errant, be sure not to forget what your grace promised me about the ínsula; I’ll know how to govern it no matter how big it is” (56). The phrase “your grace” was historically used to address high-ranking members of nobility, which makes it a strong cultural equivalent to “vuestra merced” (Britannica, see appendix). Unlike in Shelton’s translation, which loses the reinforcement of Sancho’s role in the novel, Grossman is able to represent Sancho’s deference to Don Quixote in a similar manner to the original Spanish.

Pronouns and verb conjugations are another example of how formality is used as a cultureme in the novel. Sancho uses the verb conjugations for the pronoun “usted” when addressing Don Quixote, whereas Don Quixote addresses Sancho with “tú” along with the appropriate verb conjugations. Both pronouns demonstrate how they perceive their social status: “usted” and its respective verb conjugations are used to “imply a certain distance, courtesy, and formality,” whereas tú is used in more casual settings (RAE, my trans.). In the example sentence used for “vuestra merced,” Sancho uses the “usted” conjugation of “mirar,” “olvidar,” and “tener” to address Don Quixote with respect (66). Don Quixote’s response uses the “tú” conjugation, such as in the phrase “pero si tú vives,” which reinforces his higher social status (66).

Shelton observes this distinction by having Sancho address Don Quixote as “you,” and having Don Quixote address Sancho as “thou.”² In the above example of Don Quixote’s

² There are some occasions in which Shelton has Don Quixote use “you” instead of “thou.” In the same passage of dialogue that is used to demonstrate Shelton’s usage of “thou,” for example, Shelton translates the beginning — “has de saber” — as “you must know” instead of “thou must know” (Lathrop 66, Shelton 43). Regardless of whether

dialogue, for example, Shelton translates “pero si tú vives” as “but if thou livest” (44). At the time of Shelton’s translation, “you” was used when addressing someone of higher status or authority to connote respect (Merriam Webster). The pronoun “thou,” in contrast, was used for both personal and “superior-to-inferior” relationships (Merriam Webster). Shelton is able to represent the relationship between the two through a Cultural Equivalent that closely mirrors the implications of the original Spanish pronouns (see appendix).

Because “thou” is no longer in use in modern language and lacks the same reinforcement of relationship, Grossman is unable to rely on it like Shelton can to portray the relationship between Sancho and Don Quixote. For this reason, Grossman has Don Quixote and Sancho refer to each other as “you” throughout the novel. In Don Quixote’s sentence above, she transposes “pero si tú vives” into “but if you live” (57, see appendix). The lack of a modern English equivalent to differentiate between formal and informal modes of address results in context regarding the social hierarchy being lost, which affects the portrayal of Sancho’s relationship with Don Quixote.

There are some exceptions to Grossman’s translation practices in which she occasionally has Don Quixote refer to Sancho with “thou,” such as in chapter VIII: “It seems clear to me... that thou art not well-versed in the matter of adventures” (58). Cervantes uses the informal “estás” in the original dialogue, yet the word “thou” no longer carries those implications for modern readers (Lathrop 67). Grossman likely did not use “thou” to connote status, but rather to emphasize Don Quixote’s idiosyncratic perception of reality. This emphasis is not present in the original Spanish version: Don Quixote instead refers to Sancho with the same pronouns that he

this translation was an oversight or a conscious decision on Shelton’s part, this study is more concerned with evaluating Shelton’s general translation approach and notes that this use of “you” does not represent his typical method of translating this cultureme.

uses throughout the novel. By using the nuances of archaic English to amplify the eccentricities of Don Quixote's character, Grossman sacrifices the accuracy of her translation.

The only instance in which Don Quixote does not refer to Sancho as "tú" in the original Spanish is to mock him. This is seen in a passage in chapter XX in which he addresses Sancho using the pronoun "vos," such as by addressing him as in "villano ruín que sois" (Lathrop 166-7). The pronoun "vos" implies an equality of station that is not present in their relationship due to their difference in social status (RAE). By sarcastically employing the use of "vos", Don Quixote is mocking Sancho for being from a lower class.

Even though Shelton could have represented by having Don Quixote use "you," he chose to transpose the grammatical category by translating the phrase as "villain that thou art" (101, see appendix). Shelton's translation is less insulting and lacks the extra level of cruelty that comes from Don Quixote's reference to class, which in turn causes the nuances of their relationship to be lost in translation.

Just as it is demonstrated with Grossman's translations of "tú" and "usted," modern English is unable to portray the implications of "vos" because it only uses one second person pronoun. She acknowledges this limitation at the beginning of the passage with a footnote: "for the next few sentences, Don Quixote uses a more formal mode of address with Sancho (a change that cannot be rendered in modern English) to indicate extreme displeasure and his desire for distance between them" (150). Although this footnote does not explain the allusion to social status – which was likely done in order to provide the readers with a more simple explanation of the original joke– Grossman chooses to preserve the references to class by translating "villano ruín que sois" as "being the lowborn peasant you are" (150). Her modulation of the phrase

sacrifices the literal accuracy of the translation to portray the mockery of Sancho's social status that may have otherwise not been inferred from the context provided in her notes (see appendix).

2.1 Other Culturemes

Table One lists the selected culturemes in their original Spanish alongside the translations of both authors. Further discussion into the accuracy and transference of culture will be provided below.

Table 1
Selected Culturemes in *Don Quixote*

Cervantes	Shelton	Grossman
"Maravedís" (66)	"Dodkin" (43)	"Maravedís" (57)
"Non fuyades" (68)	"Flie not" (44)	"Flee not" (59)
"No quiero perro con cencerro" (197)	"I would not have a dog with a bell" (118)	"I don't want a dog with a bell around its neck" (179)
"De Ceca en Meca (140)	Omitted (86)	"From pillar to post and from bad to worse" (125)
"De zoca en colodra" (140)	"As they say, out of the frying pan and into the fire" (86)	"From bad to worse" (125)
"Catón Zonzorino" (161)	"Caton of the Roman Conrozin" (97)	"Roman Cato Nonsensor" (144-45)

“Orégano sea” (169)	“A purchase of gold and not Fulling-Mills” (102/41)”	“May it please God... that it turns out to be oregano and not fulling hammers (153)
“Puso los pies en polvorosa” (173)	“Laid his feet on the dust” (104)	“Took to his heels” (156)
“Cogió las de Villadiego” (173)	“Made haste” (104)	“Ran like Villadiego” (156)
“Barras derechas” (177)	“That’s it I seek for” (106)	“That’s what I want, honestly” (160)

Maravedís: Found at the end of chapter VII, when Sancho Panza states that his wife “no vale dos maravedís para reina; condesa le caerá mejor, y aun Dios, y ayuda” (Lathrop 66). The RAE defines maravedís as an “old Spanish currency, sometimes functional and other times imaginary, which had multiple values and descriptions” (RAE, my trans.). Sancho uses the term here to joke that his wife is of little value.

Shelton translates the word as “Dodkin,” a British English word for “a coin of little value” (Collins). He translates this word by providing a cultural equivalent in Dutch culture, as a Dodkin was a term for the Dutch coin “doit,” which was also of little value (Merriam Webster, see appendix). Shelton likely used a foreign piece of currency for his translation because he lived in Belgium at the time that he translated this novel (Fitzmaurice-Kelly xviii). Although the meaning behind this translation may be lost on a wider English-speaking audience, Shelton chose a currency that holds a similar lack of value as a *maravedí*.

Grossman presents the word as “maravedís,” choosing to use Transference instead of translating the word (see appendix). Although Grossman provides footnotes for other types of

currency, she chooses to not do so here. This may be because the footnotes for other coins that appear before *maravedís* use that coin to describe their worth. For example, she explains in a footnote that a *real*, for example, is equivalent to “thirty-four *maravedís*” (28). Regardless of the reason behind Grossman’s decision to not use footnotes, her use of transference results in a loss of meaning. Cervantes is making a joke that Sancho believes that his wife is of little value, and this does not carry over without any additional context.

Non fuyades: Found in chapter VIII, when Sancho attacks the windmills: “¡non fuyades, cobardes y viles criaturas, que un solo caballero es el que os acomete!” (68). Sancho uses an archaic conjugation of “no huyáis,” or “don’t flee,” that was long since outdated by the seventeenth century (Howard 16-18). Archaisms are primarily seen in Don Quixote’s dialogue, as he consistently employs them when attempting to take on the role of a knight-errant. These archaisms accentuate his detachment from reality and demonstrate how he perceives himself as living in an era that is bygone to everyone but himself. Sancho may not fully understand the connection to chivalric novels to the extent that Don Quixote does due to his illiteracy, but will occasionally adopt Don Quixote’s elevated language when attempting to play the role of a knight’s servant for him. These archaisms become a running joke throughout the novel that pokes fun at both the characters and the chivalric romance genre itself.³

The phrase “non fuyades” is representative of the many chivalric archaisms that appear throughout *Don Quixote* and the difficulties that they create for translators. Firstly, the average contemporary English or Spanish reader is likely not well-versed in the chivalric romance genre and would not fully understand their implications in the novel. Although a faithful translation

³ A few other archaisms in Sancho’s dialogue include “fermosura” in chapter XVII, “non se me faga” in chapter XX, and “ficeron” in chapter XV. These examples, while not comprehensive by any means, provide further insight into how archaic language appears as a motif throughout the novel.

would show that Don Quixote is using archaic language to appear more like the knight-errants in his novels, the specific reference to Spanish culture is dependent on previous knowledge of the genre. Additionally, both modern translators and readers may struggle to distinguish between phrases that were archaic during the seventeenth century and phrases that have become archaic over time. Both of these factors make “non fuyades” a particularly difficult cultureme to translate.

Grossman and Shelton both use Transposition to adapt the cultureme into a form of English that was modern for their respective time periods: Shelton translates the phrase as “flee not,” and Grossman as “flee not” (Shelton 44, Grossman 59, see appendix). Grossman’s “flee not” is outdated by modern standards, yet lacks the same humor and overtly archaic nature as “non fuyades” and blends in with the rest of the dialogue. The non-archaic conjugation in both translations causes a significant part of both Don Quixote and Sancho’s characterizations to be lost. Both translations also completely lose the reference to the chivalric romance genre, which strongly reinforces the novel’s satirical nature.

No quiero perro con cencerro: Sancho uses this phrase in chapter XXIII to explain why he wanted to leave a valise behind: “Allí la dejé, y allí se queda como se estaba, que no quiero perro con cencerro” (Lathrop 197). The imagery in this metaphor evokes the image of a dog wearing a cowbell, which would easily call attention to itself due to the loud noise and movement. The exact definition of the proverb varies slightly depending on the Spanish reader’s understanding of the phrase. The saying “perro con cencerro” by itself is used “to explain that one does not want certain things that bring with them more harm than comfort” (RAE, my trans.). Another possible interpretation of the saying is that it is a shortened version of “aunque mi suegro sea

bueno, no quiero perro con cencerro,” which the 1541 *Refranes que dizen las viejas tras el fuego* defines as “there is no company so secure that their tongue does not at some time publish our secrets ” (Ctd. in Bizzarri 7, my trans). Although both interpretations carry slightly different implications, they both represent how Sancho does not want to call attention to himself by taking the valise.

Grossman and Shelton both use Literal Translations: Shelton uses “I would not have a dog with a bell,” and Grossman uses “I don’t want a dog with a bell around its neck” (Shelton 117, Grossman 179, see appendix). Both translations maintain the illustrative nature of the original expression, yet their meanings may not be as immediately clear to an English audience. It is also worth noting that both translations use the generic word “bell” instead of “cowbell.” A bell could be any of any size or noise, where the word “cowbell” conjures a specific image of a larger and louder bell that allows for the metaphor to be fully understood. Both translators’ nonspecific choice of wording therefore results in further context being lost.

De ceca en meca: Sancho uses these phrases at the beginning of chapter XVIII when trying to convince Don Quixote to let them go home: “dejándonos de ‘andar de Ceca en Meca’ y ‘de zoca en colodra,’ como dicen” (Lathrop 140). The Real Academia Española defines “de ceca a la meca” as “from one part to another” (RAE, my trans.). Lathrop explains in a footnote that Ceca is the name of a mosque in Córdoba, and Meca refers to the Muslim holy site Mecca (140).⁴ “Ceca en meca” is an expression that is undeniably unique to Spanish culture, as it is specifically tied to the Iberian Peninsula and Spain’s Islamic heritage. Sancho uses this phrase to imply that

⁴ Another common interpretation of “ceca” is that it refers to a minting place instead of a Spanish mosque. Based on Sebastian de Covarubias’s 1611 *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española*, in which he defines “ceca” as a holy site where “the Moors would come on pilgrimage” and walk “from Ceca to Meca,” it can be concluded that “ceca” was primarily understood to be a mosque at the time *Don Quixote* was written (556, my trans.).

he and Don Quixote's travels have no real aim or destination, while also making a direct cultural reference that exemplifies his Spanish identity.

Shelton chooses to omit this part of the sentence entirely (86). His use of Reduction erases Sancho's sense of fatigue and hopelessness from his travels (see appendix). This translation also results in a complete loss of culture: Shelton's use of reduction causes him to lose a significant reference to Spanish history that contextualizes Sancho's place within that culture. Shelton's version of Sancho is removed from his Spanish background as a result.

Grossman translates the idiom as "from pillar to post," using a Cultural Equivalent for the term (125, see appendix). The Cambridge dictionary defines "pillar to post" as an idiom to describe a situation in which someone is "forced to keep moving from one place to another," and "bad to worse" as relating to a situation that is becoming increasingly more difficult or unpleasant (Cambridge). This translation conveys the same sense of movement yet omits the reference to the mosque, thus losing the phrase's original connection to Spanish-Islamic culture. Grossman's translation suffers the same loss of culture as Shelton's: by removing the inherent Spanish nature of the original cultureme, Sancho's perspective shifts away from Spanish culture and becomes more abstract.

De zoca en colodra: Found in the same sentence as "ceca en meca" (Lathrop 140). "Zoca en colodra" is a colloquial term that the RAE defines as "ir de mal en peor; salir de un negocio peligroso y entrar en otro de mayor peligro" (RAE). When coupled with "ceca en meca," both terms emphasize Sancho's sense of fatigue from traveling aimlessly and his fear that their situation will worsen.

Shelton translates the phrase with the Cultural Equivalent “out of the frying pan and into the fire” (86, see appendix). This idiom is a commonly used English cultureme used when “you move from a bad or difficult situation to one that is worse” (Cambridge). His decision to use this phrase allows him to convey the full connotations and denotations of the original idiom, as Sancho uses it to refer to their potentially worsening situation. The translation also maintains the casual and informal tone of Sancho’s original dialogue through the use of a colloquialism.

Grossman also uses a Cultural Equivalent for “zoca en colodra,” translating it as “bad to worse” (125, see appendix). The Cambridge dictionary defines this phrase as relating to a situation that is becoming increasingly more difficult or unpleasant (Cambridge). The phrase “bad to worse” may convey the meaning of “zoca en colodra,” but it lacks the casual element of the original colloquialism.

Catón Zonzorino: Found in chapter XX, when Sancho is telling Don Quixote a quote by “Catón Zonzorino, romano” (Lathrop 161). Lathrop explains in a footnote that Sancho is alluding to Cato the Censor⁵, a Roman writer who is attributed to various “apophrycal sayings” (161). Sancho mistakenly refers to him as “zonzorino,” which Lathrop translates as “stupid rouge” (161). Cervantes’s audience would have been familiar with Cato due to the popularity of humanism at the time, during which Roman authors had a strong influence on Spanish pedagogy (Biersack 1). His readers would have immediately understood that Sancho’s mistake was a joke that reflected his illiteracy. Although this joke certainly makes fun of Sancho, it also pokes fun at humanism by implying that it isn’t necessary to be well-educated in order to be wise. Sancho is still able to impart wisdom onto Don Quixote without having to know who Cato the Censor is.

⁵ Also introduced in the footnote as Catón Censorino, which explains the play on words with “Censorino” and “Zonzorino.”

Sancho further minimizes Cato's importance by mistakenly calling him a "stupid rouge," belittling both Cato and the humanist movement itself.

Shelton translates the name as "Caton of the Roman Conzorin" (97). Here, he uses a Functional Equivalent that partially translates Cervantes's joke (see appendix). Although Shelton shows Sancho confusing Censorino with the made-up word "conrozín," the joke does not have the same play on words as the original version does. The play on words is significant in the original culture because it portrays Sancho as wise despite being uneducated in order to mock Spanish academia. The loss of cultural context takes away from Sancho's wisdom, and presents him simply as being ignorant.

Grossman translates his name as "Roman Cato Nonsensor" (144-45). She uses Modulation to present "zonozrino" as "nonsensor," which combines the word "nonsense" with the suffix "-or" to imply that the quote is attributed to someone who speaks nonsensically (see appendix). Grossman also provides Notes providing context into who Cato the Censor is and explains that Sancho "mispronounces [his] title, calling him *zonzorino*, which suggests 'simpleminded'" (145, see appendix). Even though Grossman modifies Cato's name to reflect the original play on words, the reference by itself is nowhere near as recognizable to a modern audience because he lacks the same relevance in popular culture that he had during the seventeenth century. Grossman – and any other modern translator of *Don Quixote* – therefore needed to explain who Cato was in order for this joke to make sense to modern English readers. Even though she was able to explain the joke in the footnotes, the fact that the reference requires any explanation ultimately means that its original humor is lost on most modern readers.

Orégano sea, y no batanes: In the beginning of chapter XXI, Sancho states “yo me tengo en cuidado el apartarme... mas quiera Dios que orégano sea, y no batanes” (Lathrop 169). Lathrop explains in a footnote that Sancho is referencing the old proverb “quiera Dios que orégano sea y no se nos vuelva alcaravea” (169). The 1726 edition of the *Diccionario de Autoridades* explains that the phrase meant “the just concern that one should live by the inconstancy of fortune, hoping that when an endeavor one undertakes does not go as well as they would have liked, it is the lesser of the evils that one must be weary of” (*Diccionario de Autoridades*, my trans.).

Shelton translates this phrase as “a purchase of gold and not fulling-mills” (102). The first half of the translation uses a Functional Equivalent to substitute “orégano” for gold, and the second half uses a Literal Translation for fulling-mills (see appendix). This substitution compares an entirely distinct category of items: Cervantes’s Sancho shapes his perspective in terms of food, whereas Shelton’s Sancho shapes his perspective around the potential monetary value of his adventures. Shelton’s decision to disregard the original cultural context creates a new frame of reference for Sancho that raises entirely new semantic interpretive possibilities for understanding this character.

Grossman opts for a Literal Translation, presenting the sentence as “may it please God... that it turns out to be oregano and not fulling hammers” (153, see appendix). Although she keeps the original comparison, the proverbial significance of the phrase is lost in translation. Grossman compensates for the loss of meaning by explaining in footnotes that the saying has a similar meaning as “fool’s gold” (153). Grossman’s definition is different from the one in *Diccionario de Autoridades*. The dictionary definition states that the phrase advises one to hope for the best case scenario – or the “menor mal” – in a situation that will not go well (*Diccionario de Autoridades*). Fool’s gold, on the other hand, is used for situations that deceptively appear to be

“pleasant or successful” (Cambridge). Both phrases involve navigating less than favorable outcomes, yet the difference between the two is notable enough to change how the sentence is interpreted. Sancho is more cautious and pragmatic in the original Spanish, while Grossman’s Sancho is skeptical yet slightly more hopeful. This difference, although subtle, alters Sancho’s outlook on the situation.⁶

Puso los pies en polvorosa: In chapter XXI, Sancho says that Mambrino “puso los pies en polvorosa y cogió las de Villadiego” after Don Quixote attacked him (Lathrop 173). The RAE defines the idiom as “flee” or “escape” (RAE, my trans.). Lathrop also notes that the word “polvorosa” is “the underground slang term for ‘road,’” which adds a layer of streetwise connotations (173).

Shelton opts for a Literal Translation of the saying, presenting it as “laid his feet on the dust” (104, see appendix). This translation does not convey the same sense of urgency as the original text, and instead simply presents the saying without adding any other nuance. Perhaps Shelton found it redundant to include the full connotations because it is followed by another idiom with the same meaning, but this decision resulted in his translation lacking the descriptive qualities as the original.

Grossman translates this phrase with “took to his heels,” meaning “to quickly run away” (Grossman 156, Cambridge). This Cultural Equivalent has the same sense of hastiness as the original saying (see appendix). It does lack the contextualized energy that the underground

⁶ It must be noted that the *Real Academia Española* does define “orégano sea” as “para expresar el temor de que un negocio o empresa tenga mal resultado,” which would actually make Grossman’s explanation accurate. However, *Diccionario de Autoridades* does not make any reference to this phrase in its definition of “oregano,” and even ends with “vease alcaravea.” Although the limitations of historical dictionaries are important to take into account, this strongly implies that the other definition of “oregano sea” originated some time after Cervantes. Furthermore, the fact that Sancho, Lathrop, and the *Diccionario de Autoridades* all use the phrase “Dios que orégano sea” further suggests that Cervantes was referencing that specific proverb and not the saying as defined in the RAE’s definition of “orégano sea.”

connotations of “polvorosa” has, but this would have been difficult to include due to there being no underground word for “road” in English. Grossman instead chose to prioritize the meaning of the phrase, which makes her translation more faithful to the original text.

Cogió las de Villadiego: Used in the same sentence as “puso los pies en polvorosa” to emphasize the speed in which Mambrino ran away (Lathrop 173). Both terms have similar meanings; the RAE defines it as “to leave unexpectedly, normally to escape a risk or predicament” (RAE). Lathrop also notes that the significance of the word “Villadiego” is unknown, but the proverb's meaning is universally understood within its culture (173). By referencing the Spanish city Villadiego, Sancho reinforces how his folkloric mode of perception is intrinsically rooted within his village life.

Shelton translates the phrase as “made haste” (104). Here, Shelton uses a Functional Equivalent and a Reduction of “Villadiego” (see appendix). Although both versions denote speed in some regard, their connotations convey two different ideas. The word “haste” does not carry the same implications of fear and cowardice as the RAE definition does, but rather a general sense of punctuality and urgency. Furthermore, by leaving out “Villadiego,” Shelton’s translation completely loses the cultural ties that Sancho originally draws from to frame his rustic worldview.

Grossman translates the phrase as “ran like Villadiego” and clarifies in a footnote that the idiom means “to flee an unexpected danger” (156). Her choice to use Literal Translation and Notes allows her to present the culture in its original descriptive form while providing additional context for readers who would have otherwise had difficulty inferring its meaning (see appendix). The intensity of the phrase is further strengthened by her translation of “puso los pies

en polvorosa,” which conveys a sense of urgency that is notably lacking in Shelton’s translation. Between the two translations, Grossman’s does a better job of preserving the original cultureme.

Barras derechas: Found in chapter XX, when Sancho is expressing his desire and excitement to Don Quixote’s promise that he will marry him to a lady-in-waiting: “¡Eso pido, y barras derechas!...a eso ‘me atengo, porque todo al pie de la letra ha de suceder por vuestra merced” (Lathrop 177). Lathrop explains that the saying means “no doubt about it,” and also notes that it comes from a game (177). Based on the definition of “barras” in Sebastian de Covarubias’s 1611 *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española*, Lathrop was likely referring to a game of ring toss in which the bars have to be straight (268). This specific reference to a game invokes a conceptual field of play and set of rules that Sancho bases his sense of fairness on. Although one could argue that the expression is simply a dead metaphor, the fact that Sancho consistently uses culturemes that reference his cultural background allows for the interpretation of this saying as conveying how much of his worldview is derived from his simple village life.

Shelton and Grossman both translate the phrase with a Functional Equivalent: Shelton uses “that’s it I seek for,” and Grossman uses “that’s what I want, honestly” (Shelton 106; Grossman 160, see appendix). Neither term quite conveys the same meaning of the original cultureme. Furthermore, from a cultural perspective, the use of a Functional Equivalent results in a complete loss of context. Sancho’s original saying has a playful context that comes from it being a reference to a game, and neither translation conveys similar connotations. This loss of cultural context also alters Sancho’s philosophy. Cervantes’s Sancho explains his sense of fairness specifically through the lens of a village game, whereas Sancho’s understanding of

fairness in the English translations is far more abstract. Both translations separate him from his village background, which is a fundamental component of his perspective.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates how Sancho's character is heavily informed by culturemes that provide insight into his personality, educational background, and social status. When these culturemes are modified in the translation process, the cumulative result is a fundamental alteration of Sancho's portrayal.

The manner in which the text is altered is dependent on the translation procedure used: each one preserves some aspect of the original cultureme, yet sacrifices some aspect of either the definition or the implications derived from the cultural context. Transference and Literal Translation both present the cultureme in the original form, yet lack the context that is needed to fully understand its significance. Cultural and Functional Equivalents adapt the text for the target audience by using more familiar terms and expressions, but lose authenticity to the original text by replacing culturally significant elements. Functional Equivalents also alter the original tone and style in a similar manner to Literal Translations when diminishing a cultureme's proverbial aspect. Modulation and Transposition both make the translated text more fluent and natural in the target language, yet may result in inconsistencies and a loss of precision. Reduction has similar benefits as Modulation and Transposition, yet this procedure can result in a drastic oversimplification or loss of significant detail in the text. Notes are a useful translation procedure to clarify complex ideas and compensate for any loss of meaning. However, these notes also place the burden of understanding on the reader instead of conveying the full meaning within the

text itself. Even though each procedure preserves valuable information, they also come with their own drawbacks.

One common risk that all of the translation procedures share is their potential to misrepresent the original cultureme in some manner. This risk arises from the subjective interpretation of the translator, which may deviate from the intended meaning or the way it was understood in Cervantes's culture. This discrepancy is particularly apparent in proverbial expressions, where definitions may be slightly altered, or they may fail to capture the intricacies of the original text. Additionally, nuances and cultural connotations may be lost in translation, leading to a distorted portrayal of the cultureme in the target language.

Many of the translated words examined misrepresent the original cultureme by altering or omitting the cultural element. As a result, both Grossman and Shelton's versions of Sancho become more detached from his cultural background. This presents a significant issue, as Sancho's cultural background is intrinsically tied to his personality and worldview. The culturemes in his dialogue reinforce key parts of his identity, particularly his regional origins and social status. When the cultural element of these culturemes is lost in translation, the inevitable consequence is that Sancho's character loses depth and dimension.

This is not to say that Shelton or Grossman created a poor representation of Sancho by any means. Rather, the discrepancies noted in their translations are representative of the inherent challenges posed by translating culturemes. This is a problem that all translators of *Don Quixote* must face, as the rich presence of culturemes require them to make interpretative decisions that can fundamentally alter the nature of the text.

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Appendix

Table 2
List of Translation Procedures

Procedure	Definition	Example
Transference	The transference of a cultureme into the target language by presenting it as a loan word.	Presenting the word “siesta” as “ <i>siesta</i> ” in an English translation instead of translating it to “nap” or a similar equivalent.
Cultural Equivalent	The use of a term that holds a similar cultural meaning in both languages (Newmark 82).	Translating the idiom “buscando a mi príncipe azul” as “looking for my Prince Charming” or “Mr. Right.”
Functional Equivalent	The translation of a cultureme with a culture-free term (Newmark 83).	Translating the idiom “tomar el pelo” as “to deceive.”
Transposition	Modifying the grammar of a word or phrase between the source and target language (Newmark 85)	Translating the phrase “la gato negro” as “the black cat.”
Modulation	The reshaping or modification of specific words to include the full context or significance of the original text (Newmark 88)	Translating the name “Cinderella,” as “Cenicienta.”
Reduction	The reduction of words or phrases that the translator deems redundant or unnecessary	Translating “Qué tengas un buen día” as “Have a good day” instead of “I hope you have a good day.”
Notes	The use of notes to provide extra context into a term’s definition or full context	The use of footnotes, brackets, or a glossary.
Literal Translation	A word-for-word translation of a cultureme, particularly for an idiom or phrase.	Translating “it’s raining cats and dogs” as “está lloviendo gatos y perros”

