

## Imagining Andalusia: Race, Translation, and the Early Critical Reception of Federico García Lorca in the U.S.

*A través del estudio de las primeras traducciones de la obra de Federico García Lorca al inglés, este artículo analiza la imagen de Andalucía, con su herencia africana y árabe, en los Estados Unidos. Al examinar una selección de reseñas que aparecieron en las revistas literarias americanas entre 1929 y 1936, demuestro que los elementos andaluces de la obra de Lorca llevaron en ocasiones a que el público estadounidense creara estereotipos de la cultura española como racialmente diferente, lo cual afectó la recepción crítica de la obra temprana de Lorca en inglés.*

Palabras clave: *García Lorca, raza, traducción, Andalucía, recepción crítica*

*This article examines the perception of Andalusia, with its African and Arabic past, in the United States by using a case study that analyzes the early English translations of Federico García Lorca's work. Through a selection of reviews appearing in American literary magazines between 1929 and 1936, I show that the Andalusian elements of Lorca's poems and plays at times caused the American public to stereotype Spanish culture as racially different, thus affecting the critical success of his early work in English translation.*

Keywords: *García Lorca, race, translation, Andalusia, critical reception*

Federico García Lorca's tragic death at the start of the Spanish Civil War in 1936 became a symbol of the fight against fascism as his name was splashed across foreign newspapers. The search for answers about his death propelled Lorca's image and work to international fame, and soon thereafter he found a place in literary anthologies alongside luminaries such as W.B. Yeats, Ezra Pound, and T.S. Eliot. Lorca's contemporaries, family, and colleagues in both Spain and the United States pushed to collect, translate, archive, and anthologize his work. Today, the legend of Lorca and his "martyrdom" is ubiquitous.

Less explored, however, is the U.S. critical reception of Lorca before his death. It was not uncommon for Spanish, particularly Andalusian,

writers to be romanticized in line with stereotypes about Spain's cultural distinctiveness.<sup>1</sup> In Lorca's case, how did Americans refract Spain's "gypsy" poet, and, in turn, exoticize Spanish history and identity – its tenuous place at the border between Orient and Occident and multi-racial medieval past? What stereotypes about Spanish people and its customs might have affected the initial reaction of Lorca's work across the Atlantic? If for some Romantic writers like Alexandre Dumas, "Africa begins in the Pyrenees," how racially different did the American public view Spaniards nearly a century later? For some Americans reading Lorca in the 1920s and 1930s, what was lost in translation was symptomatic of the larger and more serious difficulties of translation, both textual and cultural.

This article examines a variety of scholarly journals that promoted Hispanism in the U.S. and brought modern Spanish writers to an American audience.<sup>2</sup> I specifically explore the cultural implications of the first translation of Lorca's work into English, which was published in the journal *Alhambra* in 1929.<sup>3</sup> The creation of organizations such as Columbia University's Instituto de las Españas en los Estados Unidos, the Hispanic Society of America, and the American Association of Teachers of Spanish (Portuguese was added later) were part of a surge in the study of Hispanic culture at the turn of the century (Fernández 124-125). These organizations, their individual members, and the scholarly journals they produced helped to offset the circulation and perpetuation of stereotypes about Spain through their nuanced study of Spanish-language texts. In spite of these efforts, analyzing reviews and translations of Lorca's work reveals lingering stereotypes about the racial identity of Andalusia, and gypsy and Moorish cultures in particular.

Early translators faced the challenge of conveying Lorca's metaphoric language to a public that was relatively unfamiliar with Spanish literature, traditions, and customs. Generally, reaction to his work was positive, but critics expressed concern about the American public's ability to understand Spanish culture, which at times played into stereotypes. Critics blamed not only the translators but also the racial and religious differences of Spanish culture for the difficulties of effectively translating Lorca's work for an American audience.

Scholars and teachers of Spanish at American universities often worked in tandem with modern American writers to create new literary journals and magazines that promoted the understanding of Hispanic authors in the U.S. Writers such as Langston Hughes, William Carlos Williams, Muriel Rukeyser, and Waldo Frank were also critics and translators involved in the study of Spanish and the translation of Spanish literature.<sup>4</sup> Two of Lorca's earliest translators were also professors: Rolfe

Humphries was a poet, translator, and Professor at Amherst College. Hughes taught Lorca's texts when he was a visiting professor at Atlanta University in 1948, during which time he was revising his translations of the *Romancero gitano* (Rampersad 128).

These twentieth-century American translators succeeded the great nineteenth-century travel writers, Washington Irving and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, who spent time in Spain and juggled the professional roles of writer, professor, critic, and translator. For these writers, their acts of travel, reading, studying, and translating infused their literature with a spirit of wandering and transnational experience. Yet their works, particularly Irving's many pieces about the Alhambra, were not without stereotypes and misconceptions regarding the complexity of Spanish culture and its traditions.<sup>5</sup> Cultural, religious, and racial differences existed between Spain and the U.S., and their representations congealed into stereotypes about Spain's exoticism that have carried over into modern American culture. The reactions to the first few pieces of Lorca's work presented in English illustrate such stereotypes about his native Andalusia. In the early twentieth century, American hispanophiles, hispanists, and writers continued to develop their understanding of Spanish culture through travel to Spain and the translation of Spanish literature.

CREATING CULTURAL *CONVIVENCIA*: NEW YORK, TRANSLATION, AND THE HISPANIC WORLD

At the turn of the century, New York was a hub of intellectual activity dedicated to promoting the study of the Spanish language. Many Hispanists used translation to promote cultural awareness about Hispanic culture and the arts. Lawrence Venuti, summarizing José Ortega y Gasset's essay, "The Misery and Splendor of Translation," states that Ortega believed that translation had an indispensable social function because it "challeng[ed] the complacencies of contemporary culture" (*Reader* 74). As Gayle Rogers has meticulously traced in his groundbreaking book, *Incomparable Empires: Modernism and the Translation of Spanish and American Literatures*, several new institutions were founded in New York to educate the American public about Hispanic culture and develop Hispanic studies in American universities. The Hispanic Society of America, founded in 1904 in Washington Heights, New York, was one of the first institutions to create a center for cultural awareness about the Hispanic world. Its building served as a free museum, archive, research library, and educational facility (Rogers 25). In the bulletin announcing its purpose, its members and founders stated their educational mission:

[To promote] the advancement of the study of Spanish and Portuguese languages, literature, and history, and [the] advancement of the study of the countries where Spanish and Portuguese are or have been spoken languages; to promote the public welfare by actively advancing learning, and providing means for encouraging and carrying on the before-mentioned work within the State of New York. (Hispanic Society 3-4)

The scholarly organ of the Society, *Revue Hispanique*, was dedicated to disseminating critical articles, reviews, and news about cultural events. In addition, the Hispanic Society frequently published anthologies and collections designed to increase the number of Spanish and Latin American authors being read and studied at American universities. Anthologies of Hispanic writers in translation were scarce at the time (Henríquez Ureña, *Currents* 205). Rogers notes that the Hispanic Society's founder, Archer Milton Huntington, "saw Spain no longer as an imperial competitor but as something historically grand and forever new" and as a result worked to "bring dozens of Hispanists and Hispanophone writers to New York in the next two decades (Rogers 25). In 1938, the Society published one of the first anthologies of English translations of Spanish and Latin American writers, *Translations from Hispanic Poets*, which included six of Lorca's poems from the *Romancero gitano* (Hispanic Society 155-165). At the time, the collection was considered novel because it introduced some of the most current vanguard poets from both Latin America and Spain to an Anglophone audience (Henríquez Ureña, *Currents* 206).<sup>6</sup>

Similarly, The Association of American Teachers of Spanish (AATS) was founded in 1915 with the aim of fostering transnational dialogue and intercultural awareness between Spain, Latin America, and the U.S., with its headquarters in New York. As scholars Rogers, James Fernández, Richard Kagan, Sebastiaan Faber, José del Pino, and Francisco La Rubia Prado have studied extensively in their work on *hispanismo* in the U.S., the outbreak of World War I and the opening of the Panama Canal was one of the historical causes for the creation of new departments and positions in Spanish language and literature.<sup>7</sup> Both Huntington and the Hispanic Society worked with the AATS to "sponsor the teaching of Spanish in New York City schools and at Columbia University" (Rogers 25). The quarterly journal of the AATS, *Hispania*, was dedicated to fomenting a cultural kinship between Spain, Latin America, and the U.S. through the scholarly study of Hispanic literature and the arts. In the first issue of *Hispania* (1918), the president of the Association, Professor Lawrence Wilkins, indicated that the AATS was designed to counter stereotypes about

Hispanic culture that had kept the study of the Spanish language “on the threshold” of marginalization in American universities. He encouraged members to ride the wave of Pan-Americanism in order to move the study of Spanish to the forefront of educational programs at the high school and college levels:

Many are beginning to realize, though they have been slow to do so, that we Anglo-Saxons may possibly, after all, have underestimated the Iberian and Ibero-American nations, their past glories and their present capabilities – in exploration, in commerce, in art, in literature, in politics. Among the many wrong conceptions of other people which the present war is serving to drive out of the heads of North Americans, so proud in the past of our “splendid isolation,” is the one that we are “superior” to our fellow-Americans in republics to the south of us. ... A knowledge of [Spanish] among North Americans will do more than any other one thing to promote international amity in the Western Hemisphere. (Wilkins 5-10)

Wilkins emphasizes the AATS mission to create “international amity” between the U.S. and the Hispanic world.

The same issue contained an article of support from Ramón Menéndez Pidal, who applauded the AATS’s mission of developing a transatlantic “amity” or *convivencia* between Spain, Latin America, and the U.S. through the study of “la lengua española:”

La Asociación que ustedes han formado tiene sobre sí la parte principal en la propagación del español entre las poblaciones de habla inglesa. ... todas las naciones europeas, por haberse dilatado en territorios que llegarán un día a nutrir habitantes por centenares de millones, son los únicos que podrán tener la ambición de disputar a los ingleses y a los rusos la preponderancia futura en los movimientos étnicos de la humanidad, debemos entrever más bien, que en las venideras sociedades de pueblos, la convivencia del hispano y el sajón que se reparten, con América, uno de los hemisferios del planeta, traerá la asociación fraternal de sus dos idiomas, para mayor difusión de ambos por el resto del mundo. (Menéndez Pidal 13-4)

Menéndez Pidal recognizes the power of a political, linguistic, and cultural solidarity, or *convivencia*, between “el hispano” y “el sajón.”

Menéndez Pidal’s notion of a cross-cultural *convivencia* was echoed more than a decade later in the mission statement of the *Revista Hispánica Moderna*, founded in 1934 as the scholarly journal of Columbia University’s Instituto de las Españas en los Estados Unidos. William Shepherd argued

for the need to develop “la amistad triangular” between these regions on a commercial, cultural, and political level:

Para apreciar a fondo los pueblos de estirpe española, es necesario evidentemente comprenderlos primero. Si la ignorancia engendra animosidad, ¿extirpemos entonces la ignorancia! La amistad de los pueblos hispanos es una riqueza del más alto valor, de la cual deberíamos sacar algún beneficio, porque sin ella, los del Norte, y ellos, los del Sur, no podríamos derivar las grandes ventajas que la cortesía de vecindad y la cooperación de esfuerzos ofrecen. (6-7)

All of these mission statements use a strikingly similar rhetoric to describe this new cross-cultural solidarity between Latin America, Spain, and the U.S. The abundance of terms describing this new friendship – “convivencia,” “cooperación,” “amistad,” “amity” – exemplifies their enthusiasm for the great cultural and political possibilities (“ventajas”) of these scholarly endeavors.

However, these earnest efforts to emphasize the commonalities between American and Hispanic cultures did not completely eradicate the feeling of cultural superiority on the part of some Americans who saw Spain and Hispanics in general as fundamentally different from themselves. This perception at times affected the reception of translations of Lorca’s work in the U.S.

The Spaniards Ángel del Río, Professor of Spanish at Columbia University, along with Federico de Onís, the chair of his department, worked hard to promote Lorca’s work in America. Del Río and Onís broadened the field of scholarship and translation at the Casa Hispánica, founded at the Instituto de las Españas en los Estados Unidos in 1920. Under Onís’s careful guidance, at Columbia and throughout the universities and societies in New York, the interest in studying Hispanic literature and culture boomed, and many publishing houses began looking for Spanish authors to translate into English (Rogers 25). Yet, despite “translations of contemporary Spanish literature and anthologies of Spanish literary history reach[ing] new heights,” these translations were not without their cultural misunderstandings and appropriations (Rogers 25). Del Río, who collected some of his observations about teaching Spanish to Americans at Columbia during this time in his book, *The Clash and Attraction of Two Cultures: The Anglo-Saxon and Hispanic Worlds in America* (1965), lamented that with the exception of Cervantes, a Spanish name rarely appeared on lists of great world literature. Del Río seemed dismayed that despite these efforts to promote Hispanic culture in the U.S., Americans’ knowledge of Spanish literature was limited to stereotypes about the Inquisition and the

exotic terrain of Andalusia. Regarding the average American's knowledge of Hispanic culture, he noted:

The initial or immediate reaction of the average American to something Spanish or Hispanic is, in a majority of cases, one of scorn and bewilderment, be this in the intellectual, social, or moral domain. In other cases the reaction springs from an abysmal ignorance, by no means limited in every instance to the ordinary or uneducated individual. For example, the downgrading of Hispanic values in the academic and intellectual world is a most curious thing. (Del Río 6)

Del Río was disappointed that Hispanic culture was still very much misunderstood by the American public during this period.

FROM GRANADA TO NEW YORK: THE FIRST ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF LORCA'S WORK IN *ALHAMBRA*

Ángel del Río, Federico de Onís, and their friend, the artist Gabriel García Maroto, were waiting for Lorca when he arrived on the dock in New York on June 25, 1929 (Gibson 248).<sup>8</sup> Already celebrated in his native Spain, Lorca was virtually unknown in the U.S. at the time, as his work had yet to be translated into English. At around the same time as Lorca's arrival in New York that summer, Onís began contributing pieces to a new literary magazine, *Alhambra*. Professor, translator, and critic Ángel Flores launched the journal with the Hispano and American Alliance. Lorca's first poems translated into English, "Ballad of Preciosa and the Wind" and "Ballad of the Black Sorrow" (both from the *Romancero gitano*), appeared in the August 1929 issue, accompanied by a short introduction by Daniel Solana.

During the late 1920s, New York City was a "contact zone," to use Mary Louise Pratt's term (7). The cultural politics of interactions between Hispanophone and Anglophone communities inevitably shaped the transmission of Lorca's work in the U.S. As translation theorist Susan Bassnett explains, the "study and practice of translation is inevitably an exploration of power relationships within textual practice that reflect power structures within the wider cultural context" (Bassnett 21). For that reason, the intersections between translation theory and postcolonial theory can enhance the understanding of English translations of Lorca's work as his identity was relocated and reinterpreted into American culture.

Drawing from Edward Said's classic text, *Orientalism*, Álvarez and Vidal maintain that translation has been "one of the most representative paradigms of the clash between two cultures" (Álvarez and Vidal 2). The

translator becomes a transcultural critic who consciously and unconsciously grapples with problems of colonization, racism, and xenophobia between two cultures, as the translator adapts disparate linguistic and cultural histories for the target audience (Álvarez and Vidal 3). Scholars such as Said who have studied translation in colonial and postcolonial contexts generally agree that since African and Asian discourses are perceived as exotic by Western cultures, their identities are often reconstructed in the translation for the target culture with many exotic elements exaggerated (Carbonell 82).<sup>9</sup> Rogers, too, has recently argued that modernist translators and authors “constantly blurred the conventional line between translation and *poesis*, between credentialing oneself as an authority and fashioning a signature authorial style” (2). In discussing the “multifarious practices” of translation, Rogers claims that “translational labors were crucial parts of diverse agendas through which they channeled and spoke through voices of foreign pasts, inserted or removed themselves from national movements or ‘generations,’ and negotiated controversies of language politics. In short, translation aimed to make literature reorganize and transform, rather than simply reflect or express, political history” (Rogers 3). If one were to interpret the “imaginative geographies” – to use Said’s term – of Lorca’s early work in an American context, it is not surprising that the African and gypsy elements of his Andalusian roots are highlighted, transformed, and, at times, embellished (Said ix).

Jonathan Mayhew’s groundbreaking study, *Apocryphal Lorca*, examines the “afterlife” of the poet in American contexts through an analysis of English translations of Lorca’s poetry, primarily from the 1940s onwards, with a focus on the 1950s and 1960s (Mayhew xi). Several key points raised in Mayhew’s study are important to mention here. He acknowledges that misunderstandings of Lorca’s life and work were, and continue to be, commonplace among Hispanists:

Incomplete or misleading views of Lorca have their roots in romantic ideas of poetic genius, and in stereotypes of Andalusian culture left over from European constructions of romantic Spain, often filtered through the popular writings of Ernest Hemingway ... The caricature of an Andalusian Lorca, a poet both defined and limited by his regional identity, has a long history both in Spain and in the United States. Even some Hispanists continue to perpetuate this caricature whether by commission or omission. ... Lorca has traditionally been seen as the poet of the gypsies, the childlike embodiment of Andalusian *gracia*, or else as a poet of the romantic sublime. (2-3)



Mayhew interprets the pervasiveness of “caricature” in representations of the poet as part and parcel of the difficulty in understanding his multifaceted work. The complexity of Lorca’s poetry has led to interpretations of his work that can be reductive. His analysis of an “American Lorca” highlights the plurality and continuous adaptability of Lorca’s poetic vision in contexts beyond the Spanish. The study offers a corrective to a simplistic vision of Lorca’s work, by recognizing the layered cultural history between Spain and the U.S. that has affected Lorca’s international reputation. *Apocryphal Lorca* does not dedicate significant space to studying the pre-1936 history of Lorca’s English translations, nor does Mayhew analyze the first translations that appeared in the U.S. in the literary journal *Alhambra* that are discussed here.

Studying the print history of *Alhambra* offers insight into one of the first literary experiments in putting modernist and avant-garde Hispanic and American authors together and in dialogue with one another. Charles Jean Drossner, an American millionaire, an engineer and hispanophile, founded the Hispano and American Alliance, and its literary magazine *Alhambra*, with his inherited fortune. Located across the street from the New York Public Library on 42nd Street and 5th Avenue, the Alliance was Drossner’s attempt to develop a mutual appreciation and understanding between the cultures of the Hispanophone and Anglophone worlds (Anderson and Maurer 182-183). When Drossner founded the Hispano and American Alliance, he intended the content presented in *Alhambra*, its literary monthly, to be more commercialized and business-oriented than other scholarly journals of this period. An article about the Alliance in the magazine does not hide its intention as a commercial business venture and travel bureau:

The United States of America today more clearly than ever before recognizes the rich and varied possibilities which are to be achieved through the development of a closer commercial intercourse between Spain and Latin America and the great Northern republic ... With the basic idea of promoting this end, as well as in the desire of creating a more sympathetic understanding between the peoples of Anglo-Saxon and the Latin races, the Hispano & American Alliance, Inc., has been established. ... The Alliance will gladly furnish American business men with any information which may be of interest to them relating to any part of Spain or the Latin American countries. (Alliance 63)

*Alhambra* therefore embodied the good faith effort of Drossner, Flores, and many Hispanophone and Anglophone intellectuals to foster a cross-cultural dialogue between Spain, Latin America, the Caribbean, and the

United States. The Alliance even created a library and book fair to promote the circulation and dissemination of Hispanic literature in the U.S. Unfortunately, *Alhambra* lasted only three issues before the stock market crash.

Nevertheless, despite its brief publication period, *Alhambra* merits critical attention for its ability to cultivate a shared readership and artistic relationship between artists, writers, and intellectuals from the U.S., Spain, and Latin America. As editor, Flores's intention was to translate the literature of Hispanic authors into English, and, in turn, translate "unfamiliar names" of English and American modern writers for the Spanish-speaking public. In his introduction to the first issue of *Alhambra*, Flores wrote:

Here opens a new magazine, devoted primarily to Spanish and American letters, – a new roadway between the lands of Cervantes and Whitman. To the English-reading public we bring stories, essays and poems by distinguished Spanish authors of today. To the Spanish reading public we bring unfamiliar names from England and America. Thus we hope to serve as a worthy clearinghouse, under the aegis of the Hispano & American Alliance, for the ideas and emotions of two great peoples. (9)

Flores intended *Alhambra* to differ slightly from the scholarly journals *Hispania* and *Revista Hispánica Moderna*, which primarily served a specialized group of teachers, academics, and hispanophiles. Flores added: "Our first and last interest is literary quality, stimulating material; and that racial and national bonds will not determine our contents exclusively" (9). The journal maintained an impressive commitment to highlighting the work of some of the most talented artists, photographers, and illustrators of Hispanic and American modernist and avant-garde movements, including José Clemente Orozco, Maroto, and Walker Evans (Anderson and Maurer 183). Indeed, many of Lorca's friends and colleagues, such as Maroto, Onís, and León Felipe, contributed to the magazine. Flores recognized that a publication was needed to fuel a meaningful creative collaboration and exchange between artists from diverse linguistic traditions.

As a respected translator, Flores valued the role of translation as central to the journal's strategy to reach audiences in both the English-speaking and Spanish-speaking spheres. The inaugural June, 1929 issue was published bilingually, dividing the content into two sections: the first presented Hispanic writers in English translation, and the second published essays in Spanish authored by notable Hispanists in the New York academic scene, such as Brooklyn College professor M.J. Benardete

and Columbia University's Houston Peterson. The two subsequent issues were published exclusively in English. *Alhambra's* pages showcased the work of some of the most celebrated modernist and avant-garde writers of the period. The majority of the writers whose work found a new home in English translation were Spanish. Influential members of the Generations of 1898 and 1927 debuted selections of their work in English in the journal, including Lorca, Ramón Gómez de la Serna, Concha Espina, Gerardo Diego, José Moreno Villa, Ramón del Valle-Inclán, and Julio Camba. In the August issue, a selection from Mexican author Mariano Azuela's *Los de abajo* was published as "The Under Dogs" (*Alhambra*, August 28-29).

Andrew A. Anderson and Christopher Maurer's meticulous study of the literary and cultural milieu surrounding Lorca's stay in New York provides an important new conjecture regarding the publication history of Lorca's poems in *Alhambra*, one that is useful to the following analysis.<sup>10</sup> Anderson and Maurer claim that the playful biographical piece by Daniel Solana introducing Lorca's work to American readers, an analysis of which will follow, was probably written (originally in Spanish) by Lorca's close friend, Gabriel García Maroto (Anderson and Maurer 183). A celebrated painter and printer, he was one of Lorca's oldest friends, having designed his first book of poetry, *Libro de poemas* (Anderson and Maurer 174).<sup>11</sup> Anderson and Maurer maintain that his hometown of Solana most likely served as the inspiration for his pseudonym (183). Flores appointed him as the art editor for *Alhambra*, announcing his appointment in the July issue and his presence in the journal is ubiquitous. His illustrations appear accompanying most of the critical and creative pieces. In addition to contributing his artwork and design to the journal, Maroto also lent his critical analyses to the publication, writing several essays about the Spanish writers and artists from home. He even penned a piece about Lorca's close friend, the musician Manuel de Falla, which also appeared in anonymous English translation in the August issue. Curiously, Maroto's real name is given as author of the article about Falla, and his drawings and illustrations always bear his signature. Therefore, the motivation behind the use of the pseudonym "Daniel Solana" only for the introduction to Lorca's poetry, and none of his other work, remains a mystery.

Nevertheless, a close reading of Daniel Solana's article, "Federico García Lorca," which appeared in the third issue of the journal, suggests that Lorca's American premiere in the journal played into the romanticized idea of Andalusia as unique and different.<sup>12</sup> What is certain, however, is that the use of a pseudonym adds an element of playfulness and whimsy to an already humorous article about Lorca. The following analysis of

Solana's introduction illustrates the way in which he perhaps unintentionally stereotyped Lorca and his work.

Solana's article introduced two anonymous translations of poems from Lorca's *Gypsy Ballads*, "Ballad of Preciosa and the Wind," and "Ballad of the Black Sorrow." Lorca had given five photographs of himself to the editor, Flores, which were published with Solana's essay and the translations (see Figure 1). Solana clearly intended this light-hearted introduction to capture Lorca's playfulness, a trait that Lorca's family and friends loved dearly about the poet and that Lorca loved about himself. This image of Lorca as a precocious child continued to circulate in later critical biographies after his death.<sup>13</sup>

Using his understanding of Lorca's playfulness as the basis of his story, Solana exaggerates the precocious qualities of this "child-poet" in order to create a myth about Lorca in America. Adopting the voice of Lorca's mentor, Fernando de los Ríos, Solana wrote in a section of the article: "Boy, why don't you cross the sea with me? In order to be perfect, you must learn America's lesson – North America's. We shall go to New York. New York is immense ... Life is adjusted according to laws that you know nothing about. Now that you have realized in your books the Andalusian miracles, why don't you try to capture the American myths?" (24). The introduction blends Lorca's biography, fragments of his poems and songs in English and in Spanish, and creative embellishment to exaggerate Lorca's simple personality. The style and tone, while they certainly play to truths about Lorca's gaiety and liveliness, exceed critical objectivity and hyperbolize the naive qualities of Lorca's character.

Solana's narrative, which is teeming with humor and hyperbole, creates a tale about the Andalusian's crossing of the Atlantic and his New York experience:

Federico García Lorca had come on the "Olympic" ... for a big wind, a "viento-hombrón" had dragged him there. You must hear the enthusiasm which this great child speaks about his gigantic boat, his mighty plaything ... The child poet was playing beneath the friendly trees of the Paseo de la Bomba, in Granada, beneath the discreet vigilance of the protective gods of Andalusia, when Professor de los Ríos, always taking the part of a missionary, excited him with the idea of a voyage ... First, he must sow and harvest grace and sympathy among the people with whom he has elected to live. The students at Columbia University, the negro elevator attendants of Furnald Hall, the telephone operator downstairs, all are familiar with the deep bows, the peculiar walk, the pirouettes, the exaggerations and the charm of Federico Lorca. Naturally, all this is to defend himself against that universally detested enemy, a foreign language. Because, of course, the poet of the "Romancero

Gitano" neither writes nor speaks any other language but Andalusian Spanish, as he possesses at present no other instrument of expressing himself to his astonished and eager American friends than the music of his songs, his laughs and his ridiculous speech of a precocious child, spoiled by mad fairies ... How does this grown-up Andalusian child, who has won eternal laughs with his poetic work, pass his time in New York? Federico García Lorca as if he were in Granada, in Madrid, in Sevilla, in Malaga, in Utrera, as if the vast life about him had already been grasped in his hand, lives a slave to his capriciousness. He laughs in bursts of merriment; he sleeps as long as he pleases, and he studies English beside a pretty Cuban girl ... And he continues to delight his Spanish and American friends, with a great deal of charm and genuine feeling: "En el café de Chinitas – dijo Paquiro a su hermano,/ Soy más valiente que tú – más torero, más Gitano." (24)

Despite a clear affection for the poet, Solana simplifies Lorca's whimsical traits; he appears to be a creature from another universe. Lorca has so much energy that the objects and landscapes around him become props for his dramatic persona. The repeated adjectives and nouns emphasize his larger-than-life personality. The boat he journeyed on is "gigantic," a "mighty plaything"; the "protective gods of Andalusia" watch over him as he "plays" beneath the "friendly trees" in Granada; and his dear friend de los Ríos acts as his "missionary" guide to the unfamiliar world of New York. Solana repeatedly emphasizes Lorca's childishness and precociousness: he is a "great child," a "child poet," a "grown-up Andalusian child," a "slave to his capriciousness," who speaks with the "ridiculous speech of a precocious child, spoiled by mad fairies." Lorca's "exaggerations and charm" delight all who meet him, including Solana himself: he embellishes Lorca's personality to the point of creating a fantasy world where Lorca becomes a character in his own poems. What begins as an effort to describe a simple truth about Lorca's personality – by most historic accounts he was playful and generally carefree – becomes a portrait of his difference, exaggerated by an over-embellished writing style.

The second half of the passage plays on stereotypes about Andalusia as charming and closed off from the real world. Lorca speaks only "Andalusian Spanish" and can only communicate by singing the gypsy songs that formed the basis of some of his poems. Solana explains that Lorca has been appointed the "Director of the Mixed Choruses of the Instituto de Las Españas" at Columbia University: "American men and women, friends of Spain, admirers and lovers of folk music, gather together night after night to follow, with the utmost docility, the song the poet sings. 'Eres como la nieve – del monte, niña,/ No lo digo por blanca – sino por fría'" (24). Thus, like the American travelers to Spain who

experienced *cante jondo* for the first time, those who witnessed Lorca's popular songs in New York were similarly hypnotized.

Solana presents Lorca as a slave to his emotions, an outsider whose charm is only understood by other youth or by those relegated to peripheral roles in society – certain students at Columbia and the black elevator attendants of Furnald Hall. Solana's celebration of Lorca's vitality takes on a romanticized quality while Lorca is presented as a prisoner to his own impulses: "the vast life about him had already been grasped in his hand, [he] lives a slave to his capriciousness. He laughs in bursts of merriment; he sleeps as long as he pleases" (24). Here Solana turns the truth about Lorca into quixotic exaggeration. Blending a selection of biographical truth with hyperbole, Solana weaves some of the narrative subjects of Lorca's poems, children and gypsies, into his description of the poet. Most strikingly, this introductory description of the poet as precocious and carefree clashes with the somber, tragic, and ominous content of Lorca's poems.

Therefore, the translation of Solana's introduction into English from the original Spanish in which it was written further contributes a layer of strangeness and foreignness to Lorca's portrait. To further estrange Lorca from the English-speaking world, the translator of Solana's introduction chose to leave direct quotes from the poet – the few moments when Lorca is allowed to speak for himself and not through Solana – in Spanish. Therefore, Lorca's poetry and personality are shown to be partially untranslatable into English, incapable of cultural assimilation because Lorca does not speak the English language.<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, the addition of five photographs to accompany Solana's introduction and the translations provides visual support for this image of Lorca as a gregarious and exotic child. Ana María Dalí, Lorca's friend and sister of one of his loves, Salvador Dalí, took the photos on the shores of Cadaqués during various excursions to the Costa Brava with the Dalí family. They illustrate Lorca's love for, and collaborative relationship with, Dalí during that time. Lorca had fled to New York following what Gibson calls "an emotional crisis," which resulted from feeling abandoned by two of his great loves, Emilio Aladrén and Dalí (232). One picture shows Lorca and Dalí staring intently at each other at a card table on the shore; the caption reads, "Writing a manifesto with the painter Dalí." Another photo of Lorca with Ana María and two children perfectly supported Solana's image of Lorca as child who loved to improvise (Gibson 187). Two other photos exemplify Lorca's desire to dramatize, dress up, and act out scenarios with children and adults. In one picture, he wears an Arab white hat and *chilaba*, lying on the rocks, sleeping and smiling. In the other, Lorca

crouches in front of a basket playing the role of the Moor on the African coast, also wearing typical Arab dress. Interestingly, the caption for this picture mistakenly reads “On the African coast,” even though the other captions correctly indicate that they were actually taken “At the Cadaques’ Beach” (Solana 25). The inaccurate caption tellingly fails to distinguish between the real Lorca and the Lorca who is a fictionalized character in his own narrative world of gypsies, Moors, and blacks.

Regarding the anonymous translations of Lorca’s two poems from the *Romancero gitano*, they had their limitations and eccentricities as well. Anderson and Maurer posit that perhaps Flores or Lorca’s friend Philip Cummings translated Solana’s introduction from Spanish to English in *Alhambra*, as well as the two poems from *Romancero gitano* (183).<sup>15</sup> A study of the translation styles of each of these intellectuals would be necessary to make a more conclusive determination about the identity of the translator. The decision to translate the two poems into a British-inflected English seems odd given that most of the Hispanic translators (such as the Puerto Rican Flores) were accustomed to using an American idiom and conscious they were translating for a North American readership. Even Solana’s piece, when translated into English, retains a clunky quality that resists smooth assimilation into English, which suggests that his translator may not have been the experienced Flores, as Anderson and Maurer claim. Phrases such as Lorca earning “eternal laurels” for his work, and Americans enjoying Lorca’s musical talents “with the utmost docility” resound with a foreign and archaic tone. What is more, the anonymous translator of the two poems, “Ballad of Preciosa and the Wind,” and “Ballad of the Black Sorrow,” has chosen to use an antiquated British English. For example, in “Ballad of Preciosa and the Wind,” the translation of one stanza reads: “Maiden, let me discover/ Thy garments to see thee,/ Open to my ancient fingers/ The blue rose of thy loins” (Lorca, *Alhambra* 25).<sup>16</sup> The choice to translate Lorca’s verse into such an outdated English register and syntax further “foreignizes” Lorca’s work, making it seem all the more other-worldly and out of place in a modern American milieu.<sup>17</sup>

Lorca’s image in *Alhambra* was a well-intentioned but nevertheless hyperbolic portrait of the poet for an American audience unfamiliar with his work. Solana’s description of Lorca’s puckish charms, his “peculiar walk” and “pirouettes,” “playing beneath the friendly trees of the Paseo de la Bomba, in Granada” (24) played into preconceived notions of Spanish identity as different. Recipes for Spanish food, photos of popular Hispanic stage actresses such as Dolores del Río, and advertisements for tourist travel to Spain surrounded the article about Lorca. Framed among these

other impressionistic glimpses of Spanish culture, Lorca's charm easily melds into a foreign traveler's snapshot of Andalusia as unusual.

As much as *Alhambra* purported to leave issues of racial difference out of its content, the racial mixing of Anglophone and Hispanophone cultures through the literary layout, framing, and paratextual presentation at times generated cross-cultural misunderstandings rather than productive cultural exchanges. *Alhambra* takes American readers on an ethnographic journey through "Moorish" Spain. Carbonell notes that Southern Spain, because of its Arabic and Jewish past, fits into discourses of Orientalism. Representations of Spain's multicultural histories are often romanticized, becoming part of a "stereotyped fiction" that resembles colonial fantasies of African and Far Eastern cultures (84). Through various advertisements, photos, and drawings, American readers "travel" as tourists to the exotic places, to local culture with "imperial eyes," and act as consumers to promote business exchange (Pratt 4). Significantly, Francis Dickie's article, "The Alhambra: Ancient Moorish Grandeur in the Light of Modern Eyes," precedes Solana's piece about Lorca's *Gypsy Ballads*, as if to establish a context for Lorca's work.

Before readers arrive at the sprightly image of Lorca that Solana presents, they encounter Dickie's lyrical portrayal of the Alhambra. Solana's representation of Lorca as charming dovetails with Dickie's travel narrative. He waxes poetic about Granada's Moorish past, the lingering charm of Andalusia's landscape, and the legendary palace of the Alhambra, that romantic pile on the hill in Irving's tale:

I read the *Conquest of Granada* and other volumes wherein Christian and Saracen clashed in glorious affray. I read of the Arabs' conquest of those plains of Spain, and was thrilled and dazzled by the pictured beauty of their palaces ... the Alhambra is not lacking in impressiveness and a faded, awesome grandeur. It is the finest remaining symbol of that strange race of Morisco-Spaniards, that queer mixture of races resultant from the Oriental onrush into Europe. (Dickie 17)

For the contemporary traveler, Dickie highlights the continued allure of Andalusia, its "strange" Oriental past, the "queer mixture of races" that dazzled Irving and the Romantics nearly a century before. He is drawn to the mysterious mythology of Andalusia, those medieval legends that are woven into the fabric of its modern essence:

From this indescribable landscape, imbued with an ineffable, melancholy beauty, rises a varied accompaniment of voices of the night: the wailing of the trees shaking in the wind; the sweet song of a nightingale, the distant barking of a dog, the echo of



a guitar, the splash of water falling from the canal upon the wheel of a mill, the incoherent noises of remote voices, the unintelligible conversation, the purr of motors, the drone of tramways, and, suddenly, surmounting all this accord of life, the sad and thrilling note that a solitary singer, with rhythmic insistence, cries from the top of a ruined wall. ... Torturous and mysterious streets, in whose every turning starts up Tradition wrapped in Moorish mantle, or brandishing the vivid sword of a Castilian adventurer. Yes, these old streets of Moorish origin retain some queer charm: the dust of forgotten days, the aroma of legend lingers in the air. The flowery iron gates, the thick blinds of the wreathed windows, the stones covered with the patina of centuries, are all links with days that are gone. (Dickie 18)

In this rich depiction, Dickie takes the reader back and forth through time and between the real and the imagined, but never away from the constant: Andalusia and its “romance and dreams.” The passage compresses the tone, imagery, and style of Romantic travel writing about Spain into a single exaggerated musing about Granada. He deploys embellished imagery and impressions that constitute four common topoi of Romantic writing about Spain: (i) Spain as a remote, far-off, and dream-like land, (ii) Spain as diminutive and precious, yet ruined and in decay, (iii) Spain as exotic, and (iv) Andalusia as exceptional, vivacious, and full of light and life.<sup>18</sup> The piece describes a Spain that is other-worldly, mysterious, remote, and even unreal: “indescribable landscape,” “ineffable, melancholy beauty,” “incoherent noises of remote voices,” “unintelligible conversation.” Dickie’s characterization of Spain as remote in space parallels his image of Spain as frozen in time. He perceives Granada as darling and diminutive despite its ancient ruin and decay. He affirms that “these old streets of Moorish origin retain some queer charm: the dust of forgotten days, the aroma of legend lingers in the air,” reminding the reader that just like the magic of Andalusia’s present, the myth of its past is indelible.

The creation of a vivid context for Solana’s piece about Lorca’s *Gypsy Ballads* was not limited to Dickie’s travel narrative. *Alhambra* contained photos of Granada, Sevilla, and Málaga throughout its pages as a way of encouraging travel to the region. Many of the advertisements presented stereotyped images and narratives of “romantic Spain.” For example, an ad for the Spanish Royal Mail Line called Spain “the ideal gateway to and from Europe.” It depicts the country as a crossroads between West and East, slightly outside of Europe:

Spain: Most delightful in the fall. Plan to be in romantic Spain during September, October, or any other time this fall and winter. These are months of ideal days,

when the many and diverse charms of Spain are at their best. It is a land unlike any other, unlike all you may have imagined of it! And come while the great expositions at Barcelona and Seville are still open. (*Alhambra*, August 54)

The representation of Spain as a “land unlike any other,” with all of its “diverse charms,” echoed the Romantic portrayals of Andalusia that had been popular since the days of Irving. Another ad for the Spanish Tourist Information Office in New York boasts Málaga as a “fascinating” blend of luxury and simplicity:

You will find it a land of many surprises ... unlike whatever you may have imagined. There is an ancient dignity and rugged grandeur, to be sure ... but travel is easy and comfortable, hotels are good, often luxurious. Whether in the clambering checkerboards of zig-zag streets and red-tiled roofs ... or in the colorful life of teeming market-places and balconied houses ... each traveler finds new riches for himself in Spain. (*Alhambra*, August 53)

A tourist’s paradise, Spain is eclectic, diverse, charming, colorful, and teeming with life. When Solana’s article about Lorca is placed next to these ads, the description of Lorca’s whimsical character further plays into a sentimentalized image of Andalusia. Inserted among these hyper-romanticized representations of Spanish life, history and culture, Lorca and his poetry become part of this mythology of Spain as exotic.

#### TRANSLATIONS OF LORCA AFTER *ALHAMBRA*

The American public at times struggled to understand the complexity of Lorca’s personality without viewing the folkloric subjects of his work – the landscape of Andalusia, gypsy songs, and Arabic heritage – as the core of his own character. Many early critics of Lorca’s work failed to capture how his literature went beyond essentialist representations of gypsy and Arabic culture. Some of Lorca’s American acquaintances who later wrote about their experiences with him in New York further contributed to these generalizations and stereotypes about his exotic character. They misunderstood Lorca’s personality and flare for the dramatic, both in life and in literature.

Mildred Adams and John Crow, for example, became friendly with Lorca during his New York stay, and their reviews of his work and biographies at times mixed fantasy with stereotypes about his Andalusian roots.<sup>19</sup> In her biography of Lorca, Leslie Stainton recalls how Crow knew Lorca at Columbia and enjoyed his “bravado:”

Crow remembered Lorca dropping in at all hours of the day and night to talk about art, artists, American blacks, or the Gypsies and Arabs of Spain. More than once Lorca bragged that he possessed Arab blood himself. He liked to dramatize the most insignificant events of his daily life, and he showed a morbid interest in death – especially violent death. Crow eventually grew tired of Lorca’s spontaneous, late-night visits and his unbearable ego. (230)

Crow’s portrait of Lorca as overly dramatic resurfaced in accounts of the poet’s personality, so much so that del Río attempted to soften this characterization. In the introduction to Ben Belitt’s 1955 translation, *Poet in New York*, Del Río discussed how Crow sometimes misunderstood Lorca’s personality:

Crow, well-meaning, was misled by the overwhelming vitality of Lorca. Federico was, above all, what the Spanish call “simpático” – playful, full of humor, almost histrionic in his gaiety, an extraordinary creature who made friends easily. This was the light in his character; but there was also a shadow which, in his human relationships, he probably only showed to those who knew him intimately. (xvi)

Del Río emphasized that many early descriptions of Lorca stereotyped otherwise truthful aspects of his personality and work – his childishness, his Andalusian background, and his affection for Arabic and gypsy themes in his work. At times, friends and critics of his work failed to penetrate the more elusive aspects of his life and work, the “shadow” described above.

Adams again played into this image of Lorca as histrionic in her piece, “Lorca the Andalusian,” for the New York *Herald Tribune* in 1935. Her description of Lorca’s body warrants attention:

A round faced stocky young man, with black brows and hair and warm brown eyes, he has the coloring and the broad cheek bones of the gypsy in a mobile, sensitive face, changing with every idea, histrionic in its quick ability to mirror a mood; a warm, husky voice; a hand whose short and stubby fingers can hardly stretch an octave. (Adams, qtd. in Smith 52)

Adams lingers over Lorca’s every feature, his “gypsy” coloring, the darkness of his hair and eyes, and his wide facial structure. She portrays Lorca as racially distinct, almost primitive in his husky voice and his passionate, affected moods. Smith argues that Adams’s description of Lorca is a type of “‘racial’ physiognomy” (52). Many early impressions of Lorca’s work focused on the “elemental antiquity” of the Andalusian landscape and the primitive traditions in Lorca’s poems and plays (Smith

52). Smith views this type of description of Lorca as part of the emergence of “the Lorca cult,” or in other words, a mythology surrounding the poet’s popular image (52).

As Smith argues, stereotypes about Andalusia “influenced U.S. audiences then and now” (52). The image of Lorca first created in the magazine *Alhambra* was subsequently recycled in other biographical depictions of the poet. In Stanley Kunitz and Howard Haycraft’s *Twentieth Century Authors: A Biographical Dictionary of Modern Literature* (1942), the entry about Lorca reads:

In 1929-1930 Garcia Lorca lived in John Jay Hall, Columbia University, and his poems appeared for the first time in English in the magazine *Alhambra*. The poet’s favorite hideout was Harlem. He loved Negro spirituals, finding in them a primitive quality not unlike that of the “deep song,” and inspired by them he wrote his splendid “Oda al Rey de Harlem,” published recently in a post-humous collection, the *Poet in New York ...* At the outbreak of the Civil War, García Lorca was staying at Callejones de Garcia, his country home ... Thus Spain was deprived of one of her most authentic poets, the tall, broad lad of the dark, round face all covered with moles, of the black hair smooth and shining, with the body of the Granadan peasant and the hoarse voice so sweetly Andalusian, who played the piano and sang with savage sadness the old delicious, uncouth songs of Andalusia. (514)

This description uses some of the same terms as Adams, focusing on Lorca’s “dark, round face all covered with moles,” “black hair smooth and shining,” “peasant” body and “hoarse voice.” The author of the entry primarily emphasizes the “savage,” “uncouth” elements of Lorca’s use of gypsy folklore in his work, equating the primitiveness of the *cante jondo* with African-American culture in Harlem.

After 1929, the next translation of Lorca’s work to appear in the U.S. was José Weissberger’s 1935 translation of the play *Bodas de sangre*.<sup>20</sup> The Lewisohn sisters, Alice and Irene, commissioned the translation for the 20th anniversary of the Neighborhood Playhouse. It was staged at New York’s Lyceum Theatre with Weissberger’s strange title *Bitter Oleander*, opening on February 11, 1935 to disappointing reviews. Weissberger consulted with Lorca on his translation, but the play was considered a critical flop, in part because of the difficulty in conveying Lorca’s lyrical Spanish into English. It also failed to resonate with the general public because of the play’s emphasis on distinctively Spanish customs. As Paul Julian Smith has noted, critics recognized that Weissberger’s clunky translation did not facilitate the audience’s understanding of Lorca’s work,

and they largely blamed *Bitter Oleander's* lack of appeal to American sensibilities on the racial and cultural distinctiveness of Spanish culture.

I briefly trace some of the critical responses to *Bitter Oleander* because these reviews highlight what was perceived as an untranslatable difference between Spanish and American culture. Theater critic Stark Young at least recognized that Lorca's play was more nuanced than Weissberger's translation could convey. Young wrote in *The New Republic* that the play contained a "deceiving simplicity:"

The fact remains, nevertheless, that such a direction can achieve fruition only through the traditional and the racial. Racially the play is hopelessly far from us. A country like ours, where the chief part of a wedding is the conference between mothers-in-law, the trousseau, the presents and the going-away gown, can scarcely be expected to feel naturally in terms of wedding songs, grave and passionate motivations, rich in improvisations and earthborn devotions. No amount of dance lessons, chantings and drill can remove this portion of "Bitter Oleander" into what is convincing. The whole of it at best is an importation that is against the beat of this country. ... Mr. Lorca's bold and poetic mind expects a flowering toward the splendor and rigor and gravity of the heart. Fundamentally the difficulty of this play for our theatre is that we cannot sufficiently take it for granted, with all its full choric passion, its glowing simplicity and its basis in a Latin tongue, whose deceiving simplicity mocks translation. (78)

Young highlights two key issues with how "convincing" or attractive *Bitter Oleander* appeared to an American public. His first point stresses that Lorca's "bold and poetic mind" could not "flower" in a non-"Latin tongue." His second, more important remark about the "racial removal" of the play pinpoints how many Americans viewed the fundamental difference of Spanish culture. Spain and America were poles apart, both racially and culturally. Spanish culture was a "traditional" land "of the heart," full of "grave and passionate motivations," "improvisation," "choric passion," and "earthborn devotion." As a land of primitive traditionalism, Spain was "against the beat" of America. For Young, "no amount of dance lessons" and "chanting" could make Americans feel completely comfortable with Andalusian culture, but his review urged readers not to take Lorca's "bold and poetic mind" for granted.<sup>21</sup>

The Neighborhood Playhouse clearly felt responsible for New York's tepid response to *Bitter Oleander*. In a letter to Weissberger, Helen Ingersoll consoled the distraught translator, who had retreated to Spain, devastated by the lackluster reviews. On March 7, 1935, the Playhouse stood by Weissberger's work and attributed the truncated run to cultural

differences. They called *Bitter Oleander* “a beautiful production, praised by few. New York as a whole felt it was ‘gloomy’ ... We still think it a beautiful play” (Neighborhood Playhouse Records).<sup>22</sup> A reply from Weissberger to Ingersoll acknowledged the compliment but conveyed his disappointment: “I thank you for your letter of the 7th with cheque for \$230.78 which I will share with García Lorca. You will understand that I feel pretty miserably about having been the cause of such horrific reviews. ... Let us hope that the few who liked it are the most select of the audience — I am glad you still think it’s a good play ... forgive me” (NPR). He lamented his responsibility for the play’s failure to impress the general public. Weissberger’s efforts were a frustrating second attempt to translate Lorca prior to the poet’s death. Smith argues that the critical reaction to *Bitter Oleander* exposed “full-fledged stereotypes of García Lorca and of his theater (of precious lyricism on the one hand and of telluric elementalism on the other) that persist[ed] into our own time” (7).

Rolfe Humphries, one of the most adept translators of Lorca, reiterated the difficulty of translating Spain’s racial distinctiveness when he reviewed Stephen Spender and J. L. Gili’s *Poems of Federico García Lorca* (1939). Humphries claimed that Lorca’s translators have all been dealt a nearly impossible task when wrestling with Lorca’s work:

Of this book, as of any other English translation of Lorca to appear within the next twenty-five or fifty years, it may be said that it leaves much to be desired. It is not only the difference between the Spanish and the Anglo-Saxon; one must recognize in the Andalusian a pronounced strain of the Oriental, so much so that one is at times tempted to wonder what there is Latin about the Latin countries. Moreover, Lorca’s character was so complex, his artistic impulses so manifold, if not extravagant, that it is difficult to present a collection that will indicate his real stature in true proportion. (276)

Like Weissberger, Humphries understood well the difficulties of translating Lorca to an American public. He attributed these difficulties not only to the racial “difference between the Spanish and the Anglo-Saxon” – the “pronounced strain of the Oriental” in Andalusian culture – but also to Lorca’s character. His “complex” and “extravagant” personality, and his even more complicated use of poetic language, challenged even the most skilled translator.

His own complex relationship with gypsy culture shows a perpetual movement to resist one-sided definitions of folklore and primitive art in general, both in his own work and work about gypsy music and culture. After the Spanish public’s embrace of the gypsy motif in *Poema del cante*

*jondo* (1921) and the *Romancero Gitano*, he quietly protested his newly acquired identification as a “gypsy poet” (Gibson 231). In a letter to Jorge Guillén, Lorca complained: “Me va molestando un poco *mi mito* de gitanería. Confunden mi vida y mi carácter. ... Los gitanos son un tema. Y nada más. ... Además el gitanismo me da un tono de incultura, de falta de educación y de poeta salvaje que tú sabes bien no soy. No quiero que me encasillen” (García Lorca, III 940). This oft-quoted passage illustrates that he refused to have his own life and work become reduced to an Orientalist representation of his native Andalusia. In Spain, his own personality had become entangled with the poetic subjects of his poems. If he left Spain in 1929 with the hopes of escaping the myth of “gypsiness” surrounding his character and work – “*mi mito de gitanería*” – then the earnest intentions of his friend Maroto to circulate his work to an American audience in 1929 during his stay in New York did little to help him escape that stigma. As he fled to New York for a new beginning, these myths followed him. The image of him as a gypsy poet – uncultured, even lazy – would have easily fit in with an American public’s consumerist expectations about Spain and Spanish culture, although it was an image that *Alhambra*’s editors had hoped to avoid.

To be certain, the “translation” of Spanish culture in the United States during the first half of the twentieth century was not without its challenges and limitations. As Mayhew notes, Ernest Hemingway’s travel writing about bullfighting and flamenco in Spain in the 1920s and 1930s stemmed from a long history of nineteenth century Romantic travel writing about the country. Much of American travel writing about Spain, although popular, perpetuated romantic myths of Spanish exceptionalism and difference in the U.S. (Mayhew 29-30). During a period when the study of the Spanish language and culture was experiencing a wave of popularity among scholars, writers, and hispanophiles, it is important to study carefully Lorca’s early translations because they illuminate the tricky, even messy nature of importing and exporting national literatures. As Gayle Rogers recognizes in his study of the cross-cultural influences of Spanish and American modernist writers, translation causes a writer’s identity to be “at stake across languages” – part of “unsettled and fluctuating modern creations. As a tool and a rubric, translation inhabited such a dualistic, mediating role, complete with both limits and failures” (4). Examining the translation theories of both Antoine Berman and Lawrence Venuti, Rogers asserts that:

even individual translators might alternatively domesticate or foreignize texts from abroad in order to affirm the naturalness and superiority of their nation’s primary

tradition. This problem – the simultaneous utility, if not necessity, and putative impossibility of translating foreign literatures – stretches beyond the nativist view of imported texts to its treatment of exported ones. (138)

As this study has shown, Lorca's case illustrates that Spain's racial history at times caused cultural misunderstandings about Lorca's identity and character to abound, which affected Lorca's critical reception for years. Tracing the early translations of Lorca in *Alhambra* and the reactions to the first English translation of *Bodas de sangre* exposes a conscious and unconsciously fraught process of domestication and foreignization of the translated author's identity. Lorca's specific translation history illustrates how translating a writer's native, national, and ethnic identity into a foreign culture negotiates and highlights complicated political and cultural histories between the U.S. and Spain.

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#### NOTES

- 1 I employ Sander Gilman's definition of the term stereotype: a "crude set of mental representations of the world," one that "buffers us against our most urgent fears by extending them, making it possible for us to act as though their source were beyond our control" (16).
- 2 I define "Hispanism" according to Richard Kagan's and Sebastiaan Faber's discussion of the term. Kagan maintains that it "refers to studies in Spanish art, music, and folklore" (2). Faber further elaborates, acknowledging the slippery meanings of "Hispanism" and "Hispanist." Spaniards created the term *hispanismo* to describe foreign interest in their country, and, as Faber explains, it has evolved (as "Hispanism") to encompass not only hispanophiles (who have an amateur interest in and love for Spain) but also the "professionalized, interdisciplinary academic field devoted to studying Spanish language, culture, and history" (9).
- 3 Soon after Lorca was killed in 1936, there was a major push to memorialize him through translating his work for an international audience. For two studies that trace the publication history of English translations of Lorca's work, see Howard Young and Pardo-Balmonte.
- 4 Critics have begun to analyze the work of modern American writers who traveled to Spain during the 1920s and 1930s. See Suárez-Galbán; DeGuzmán. Like Hughes, Frank, Rukeyser, and Williams contributed to American Hispanism because they were active translators of Hispanic authors during



this period. Frank's book *Virgin Spain* was published in 1926, and his role in promoting translation of Hispanic writers in the U.S. is well studied. On Frank, see Ogorzaly; Faber. Rukeyser was in Spain when the Civil War broke out, and her long poem, "Mediterranean," chronicles the conflict. She translated Octavio Paz and Gabriela Mistral. On Rukeyser, see Nelson. Williams translated a wide range of Hispanic poets from Jorge Guillén to Pablo Neruda. On Williams, see Marzán; Sánchez González. Additionally, Williams and Rukeyser offered sensitive critical reviews of Lorca's work in the *Kenyon Review* in 1939 and 1941, respectively.

- 5 María DeGuzmán argues that Anglo-American Romantics who wrote extensively about Spain – Ticknor, Irving, Longfellow, and Prescott – showed an "admiring exoticization of Spanish types." But she goes too far in saying that this led to a "warmongering demonization of [Spaniards] as too hot-blooded, primitive, and racially tainted to govern any part of the Americas" (DeGuzmán 78). Certainly, racial stereotypes about Spain's African and Arabic past persisted in American culture, but I do not agree that this stereotyping was indicative of a larger cultural project of "U.S. orientalizing of the Spaniard" (DeGuzmán 80).
- 6 This collection followed the publication of Thomas Walsh's massive anthology for the Hispanic Society, *Poems Translated from the Spanish by English and North American Poets* (1920).
- 7 As Spanish enrollment in courses at the secondary school and university level surged, German enrollment dropped dramatically. For more on the historical factors that led to an interest in Spanish language and Hispanic culture in the U.S., see Rogers; Faber; Fernández; Kagan; Pike; Epps and Fernández Cifuentes; Del Pino and La Rubia Prado.
- 8 Del Río became an expert on Lorca's work and the biographical details of his visit to New York. He wrote the introduction to Ben Belitt's translation of Lorca's *Poet in New York*, the second translation of this work after Humphries's 1940 version.
- 9 Said's *Orientalism* was groundbreaking in its critical analysis of Western cultural biases about the Eastern world that were implicit in nineteenth century French translations of Arabic literature (Carbonell 82). See Said; Carbonell; Bassnett and Trivedi.
- 10 Anderson and Maurer's brief discussion of Lorca's work in *Alhambra* is the only criticism that has studied the history of the journal, as well as the role of the Hispano American Alliance as a site of Anglophone and Hispanophone contact in New York.
- 11 A fierce advocate for "el arte nuevo" and avant-garde art, Maroto contributed artwork and criticism to many prominent Hispanic literary journals, such as *La Gaceta Literaria* and *Social*. He first exhibited his work to American

audiences in New York in November of 1929 with the exhibition “Magic Spain” at Delphic Studies, along with the work of José Clemente Orozco (Anderson and Maurer 179). For more on the friendship and working relationship between Maroto and Lorca, and well as Maroto’s artistic merits, see Anderson and Maurer.

- 12 For the purpose of my analysis, I use the printed pseudonym of Daniel Solana to refer to the author of the introduction to Lorca’s poems, since Maroto’s authorship, while highly likely, still remains theoretical.
- 13 Not only was Lorca fascinated by the innocence of children, using them frequently as topics in his poetry, but also many of his close friends and family discussed his playfulness as central to understanding his personality.
- 14 For more information about the way in which “paratextual commentary” frames translations, and how lexical choices affect the assimilation of the original into the target culture, see Maria Tymoczko’s discussion of translation in post-colonial contexts. Within the text, translators are faced with choices as to whether to pick lexical equivalents when there are no equivalents (Tymoczko 25). In this case, I argue that both the paratextual framing and the internal lexical choices made by the translator make the Andalusian Lorca appear doubly foreign, as his words are not able to be assimilated into an American host culture. The last line of Solana’s introduction – “En el café de Chinitas” – quotes Lorca singing a popular flamenco song about a bullfighter, Paquiro. Lorca eventually collected, transcribed, and harmonized this folklore song as a part of his *Colección de canciones populares antiguas*, which were sung by La Argentinita and accompanied by Lorca on piano.
- 15 It is also possible that other translators who were hispanophiles and friendly with the poet in New York could have completed the translations. Mildred Adams, whom Lorca tasked with translating two of his plays, may have undertaken the translations. Another possibility is Harriet de Onís, the wife of Federico de Onís, then director of Columbia University’s Spanish Department when Lorca visited New York. For more on Harriet de Onís, see Allen. On Mildred Adams, see Anderson and Maurer.
- 16 Lorca’s original stanza in Spanish reads: “– Niña, deja que levante / tu vestido para verte. / Abre en mis dedos antiguos / la rosa azul de tu vientre” (García Lorca, *Collected* 548). To provide a contrast to the stilted nature of the *Alhambra* translation, I offer Christopher Maurer’s translation: “Let me see you, child; / let me lift your dress. / Open in my old fingers / the blue rose of your womb” (García Lorca, *Collected* 549).
- 17 I borrow this term from Lawrence Venuti. Venuti claims that the tone and style that a translator adopts may either foreignize or domesticate the original source text. A domesticated original requires the “invisible” presence of a translator, who offers a smooth and fluent the translation into the target

- culture. By contrast, translations that foreignize the original work are done in a style, structure, tone, and syntax that estrange a source text from its target culture. See Venuti, *Invisibility*.
- 18 For further analysis of these types of topoi in Romantic travel writing about Spain, see DeGuzmán; Adorno.
- 19 Adams and Crow both wrote personal memoirs about Lorca. Adams published a lengthy article, "Lorca, the Andalusian" in the New York *Herald Tribune* in 1935. Over forty years later, she published the biography *García Lorca: Playwright and Poet* in 1977. Crow, Lorca's hall mate at Columbia, became a Professor of Spanish at the University of California, Los Angeles. He published the study, *Federico García Lorca*, in 1945. Gibson points out, as does Del Río, that Lorca's friends often presented naive, if sometimes accurate, interpretations of Lorca's character (270-271).
- 20 Weissberger's translation, *Bitter Oleander*, remains unpublished.
- 21 Young's review was not the only one that stressed the remote, peasant aspects of Lorca's play as difficult to translate to American audiences. Brooks Atkinson's review of *Bitter Oleander* blamed the translator for the inability of Lorca's original to "bloom" in the English language. See Atkinson.
- 22 The Neighborhood Playhouse Records (NPR), The New York Public Library, Humanities and Social Sciences Library, Manuscripts and Archives Division.

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## APPENDIX

Figure 1. Lorca's first poems in English translation appeared in August 1929 the literary journal *Alhambra: A Literary Monthly*, edited by Ángel Flores. Courtesy of Tulane University Library.

*At the beach*

*In his Granada Patio*

*Writing a Manifesto with the painter Dali*

**F**EDERICO GARCÍA LORCA had to come on the "Olympic"; he had to come to New York, for a big wind, a "viento-hombrón," had dragged him there. You must hear the enthusiasm with which this great child speaks about his gigantic boat, his mighty plaything. "We came," he says, "conquering the sea, without any fear of the sea, enslaving it in the grand manner. The "Olympic" . . . It is nothing! Not a ship, not a name! Just a bit of a voyage!"

The child poet was playing beneath the friendly trees of the Paseo de la Bomba, in Granada, beneath the discreet vigilance of the protective gods of Andalusia, when Professor de los Ríos, always taking the part of a missionary, excited him with the idea of the voyage:

"Boy, why don't you cross the sea with me? In order to be perfect, you must learn America's lesson—North America's. We shall go to New York. New York is immense. Your poet's imagination has never dreamed of a city of its magnitude. There are silver houses and golden ones . . . Life is adjusted according to laws that you know nothing about. Now that you have realized in your books the Andalusian miracles, why don't you try to capture the American myths?"

Friendly hands took him and showed him around the large city. Old voices, cordial and loyal, knew how to repeat with him, amid the city's mad tumult, the simple but eternal:

"Arroyo claro—fuente serena."

**F**IRST, he must sow and harvest grace and sympathy among the people with whom he has elected to live. The students at Columbia University, the negro elevator attendants of Fernald Hall, the telephone operator downstairs, all are familiar with the deep bows, the peculiar walk, the pirouettes, the exaggerations and the charm of Federico Lorca. Naturally, all this is to defend himself against that universally detested enemy, a foreign language. Because, of course, the poet of the "Romancero Gitano" neither writes nor speaks any other language but Andalusian Spanish; and he possesses at present no other instrument of expressing himself to his astonished and eager American friends than the music of his songs, his laughs and his ridiculous speech of a precocious child, spoiled by mad fairies.

Hardly had he arrived in New York, when he adopted a title, and one moreover neither short nor humble: "Director of the Mixed Chorus of the Instituto de Las Españas in the United States of America." Other Spaniards, less fortunate, have been known to achieve, after much effort, a professor's chair. While his hour of full recognition has not yet arrived, the poet has received the most flattering of honors, the most sonorous of titles. American men and women, friends of Spain, admirers and lovers of folk music, gather together night after night to follow, with the utmost docility, the song the poet sings.

"Eres como la nieve—del monte, niña,  
No lo digo por blanca—sino por fría."

How does this grown-up Andalusian child, who has won eternal laurels with his poetic work, pass his time in New York?

**F**EDERICO García Lorca, as if he were in Granada, in Madrid, in Sevilla, in Málaga, in Utrera, as if the vast life about him had already been grasped in his hand, lives a slave to his capriciousness. He laughs in bursts of merriment; he sleeps as long as he pleases, and he studies English beside a pretty Cuban girl whose name is Ofelia Lizardi Maravito.

At the time—and outside the time—when poets communicate with the Muses, Federico García Lorca captures surprising images, weaves new rhythms, constructs new angles from which we can observe a lyric world more ephemeral, more transparent than that we knew before. And he continues to delight his Spanish and American friends, with a great deal of charm and genuine feeling:

"En el café de Chinitas—dijo Paquiro a su hermano  
Soy más valiente que tú—más torero, más gitano."

24

Figure 1A

# BALLADS

By Federico Garcia Lorca

## *Ballad of Preciosa and the Wind*

Playing her parchment moon,  
The maid Preciosa goes  
Along an amphibious path  
Of crystal and laurel.

Fleeing the sing-song notes,  
The starless silence drops  
Where the sea beats and sings,  
Its night filled with fishes.

On the sierra hill-tops  
Rest the slumbering soldiers,  
Watching the white towers  
In which live the English.

The gypsies by the sea  
While their hours building  
Pavilions of snail-shells  
And boughs of green pine branches.

Playing her parchment moon,  
The maid Preciosa goes;  
And the wind that sleeps not  
Rises as she passes.

Naked Saint Cristabalon,  
Filled with celestial tongues,  
Watches the maiden play  
As on a sweet bag-pipe.

Maiden, let me discover  
Thy garments to see thee,  
Open to my ancient fingers  
The blue rose of thy loins.

The tambour wide she flings  
And flees fast, without pause;  
Behind runs the man-wind,  
Armed with a burning sword.

The sea ruffles its noise,  
The olive-trees turn pale,  
The flutes of darkness sing  
With the snow's even gong.

Preciosa, run, Preciosa,  
The green wind will catch you!  
Preciosa, run, Preciosa,  
See him, there he comes,  
Satyr of the low stars  
With their bright sparkling tongues!

Preciosa, filled with fear  
Rushes into the house  
Where, high above the pines,  
Lives the English consul.



*At the Cadaques' Beach*



*On the African coast*

Her cries have aroused  
Three guards of the mountains,  
Black capes close-wrapped, they  
come,

Low on their brows their caps.  
The English give the gypsy  
A glass of soothing milk,  
A wine-glass of absinthe,  
Which Preciosa does not drink.

And while, in tears, she tells  
Those people of her fright,  
The wind, in fury, gnaws  
The slate tiles of the roof.

## *Ballad of the Black Sorrow*

The picks of the cocks  
Dig in search of the dawn,  
As down the dark hill-side  
Comes Soledad Montoya.  
Yellow copper, her flesh,  
With odor of horses and shadows;  
Smoky anvils, her breasts  
Moan round songs.  
Soledad, whom do you seek  
Alone and at this hour?  
And I seek for whom I seek,  
Say: what is it to you?  
I seek what I am seeking,  
My happiness and my beauty.  
Soledad of my griefs,  
Wild horse that runs away,  
At the end you find the sea,  
And the waves swallow you up.

Recall not the sea to me,  
For the black sorrow roots  
In the land of the olive,  
Under the rustle of the leaves.  
Soledad, how great is your sorrow,  
What a pitiful sorrow!  
We weep tears of lemon juice,  
Bitter with waiting and longing.  
How great is my sorrow! I run  
Through my house like a mad-  
woman,

My two braids trail on the floor  
From the kitchen to the chamber.  
What a sorrow! I am turning  
To jet, clothes and flesh.  
Alas, my shifts of linen!  
Alas, my limbs like poppies!  
Soledad, wash thy body  
With the water of the larks,  
And leave thy heart in peace,  
Soledad Montoya.

Below the river sings,  
A ruffle of sky and leaves.  
With pumpkin flowers  
The new light crowns itself.  
Oh, sorrow of the gypsies!  
A clean sorrow, always alone,  
Oh, sorrow of hidden channel,  
And distant dawn.

Figure 1B