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Translating for Children:
Using Alfredo Gómez Cerdá's *El árbol solitario* as a case study

by

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ABSTRACT

The study of translation of children's literature is a recent phenomenon. The goal of this study is to explore the extent to which a translator needs to accommodate a child reader by making the text conform to the target culture. I examine two mainstream dual theories: "domestication", which gives preference to the cultural and linguistic values of the target culture and "foreignization", which leaves traces of the source culture and takes the readers out of their "comfort zone". As a case study, I translated Alfredo Gómez Cerdá's book, *El árbol solitario* from Spanish to English and compared my strategies with another translation of the book done in French. Following a panoramic overview of the history and translation of children's literature in Spain as well as in Quebec, I introduce the translation theories which I have explored during the translation process and compare them to the French translation of the text.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

In a multicultural Canadian society, how much ‘foreignness’ can a child handle and still enjoy a great book? To a translator, the intermediary, the source culture of a text is of great importance, so it should be no surprise if some translators choose to push the limits of the target culture and let the foreignness reign in their translations. This amounts to inviting the reader into another world, outside of his/her comfort zone and show a different perspective. This concept has been explored by many practicing translators in history such as the German philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher who first called the act ‘foreignization’ (Yilmaz, “Berman and Venuti’s Views”). He classified its opponent as ‘domestication’, which favours conformism to the target culture and aims for fluidity of text. These two strategies have been analyzed by a well-known American translator and translation theorist, Lawrence Venuti, who feels that ‘domestication’ is detrimental to equivalence because much from the original can be lost in the process. I side with Venuti in this respect and wish to explore this idea in more depth.

When it comes to children’s literature, domestication has prevailed for a long time “because of the system’s tendency to accept only the conventional and the well-known” assuming that children are not very accepting of foreign elements nor can they recognize and appreciate them (Shavit, 115). If this is indeed the case, then perhaps it is only because not enough ‘foreignization’ has been implemented in the translation of

children's literature. As John Locke put it, a child's mind is a *tabula rasa*, or a clean slate, that needs to be nourished with tolerance which will teach it to unequivocally accept differences. I do not fully agree with John Locke's opinion that a child is unable to distinguish between concepts without being shown how, but I do agree that it a child needs to be exposed to as much diversity as possible. For this reason, I try to find a medium between the opposing theories of 'domestication' and 'foreignization' and incorporate the best of both worlds in my own translation. It is through my translation process that I improve my linguistic competence and foster "a common understanding with and of the foreign culture" (Venuti, 2000, 473).

In the pages to come, I will present three major parts: I) the historical background of children's literature in the Spanish, French and English-speaking worlds; II) children's literature in translation, which will address recent discoveries in the field as well as the importance and translatability of orality and III) this will be followed by an extensive breakdown of a translation comparison between the Spanish source text into French and accompanied by my own English translation of the Spanish text with commentary. Finally, I will end this study with my translation from Spanish to English of the work that started it all, *El árbol solitario* by Alfredo Gómez Cerdá.

In my commentary on translation, I scrutinize what a well-known Spanish-to-English translator and theorist, Suzanne Jill Levine, describes

as “Hispanic expressiveness”: I discuss the methods used to best articulate the “presumably untranslatable Spanish text”, in this case *El árbol solitario*, and how to bring it “the other side” (Levine, viii). Some of the translation strategies I explore include addition, omission, paraphrase, and I discuss in more detail the strategies related to dealing with character names as proposed by Jan Van Coillie. I also address the cultural collocations which are often untranslatable and propose possible solutions to dealing with them. Since I am translating into a language that is not my mother tongue, I bring a different perspective to the study and discuss some of the disadvantages of my translation such as lacking fluidity and sensitivity that only a native speaker could provide along with the advantages such as mastering a new language and culture. Addressing the background of children’s history and the views associated with it enables me to build my own stance in the way children’s literature needs to be translated. Exposing children to the unknown is an enriching experience that nourishes their minds and helps shape opinions, which is the motivation behind my choosing to ‘foreignize’ my translation.

CHILDREN’S LITERATURE IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

Children’s literature has been a rich part of the Western literary tradition for centuries. It is a diverse area of study that generally gets classified into four types: literature written for children by adults; literature written for children by children themselves; literature chosen by adults and literature

chosen by children (“Children’s Literature”, FAQS, 2008). Given these ambiguous boundaries, identifying general features of children’s literature is problematic, but the obvious characteristics distinguishing children’s literature from any adult literature are simple: limited “vocabulary, simplified sentence structure, and setting, as well as the child image” (Oittinen, 2006, 36). Nevertheless, children’s literature is an exciting and rich genre now more popular and diverse than ever.

Although children’s literature is very much enjoyed by adults, the real audience is made up of children. Michel Tournier, a highly respected French writer, holds children as the ultimate critics of books, and considers “any work that does not meet with their approval to be a failure” (Beckett, 33). In Tournier’s mind, the value of a book is determined by the size of its audience and, according to him, if it can be read by everyone including children, then it is a success.

Historically speaking, children in the Western Hemisphere were treated as “creatures to be trained for adult life”, so books were not written with children in mind (“To Instruct and Delight…”, 2008). Unfortunately, most children’s literature was “not considered part of the cultural heritage” for a long time (Shavit, 35). Therefore, it is safe to say that “children’s literature as a formal category would go back only as far as the eighteenth century when the concept of ‘childhood’ was philosophically created (“To instruct and Delight...”, 2008). Up until then, children most likely enjoyed adult literature and made sense of it in their own way. Those texts were

not meant to be entertaining but didactic in essence, which is how folk tales came into play and became favourites among children.

During the Middle Ages, the high classes recognized the importance of transmitting knowledge to the new generations and ensured that education began as early as possible. The commoners' children were receiving orally transmitted knowledge through "priests and parents because instruction in the letters was too expensive" so they must have "listened to sermons or liturgical chants" that summarized Christian precepts (Alexandre-Bidon and Lett, 40).

The general concept of childhood was challenged in the 17th century with John Locke's ideology of children as a tabula rasa, innocent and uncorrupt, awaiting inscription. He argued that children "are innately equipped to become persons capable of freely following their own reason's pronouncements, that is, to become autonomous beings" ("John Locke", 2008). He proposed lighter, more pleasurable readings. A century later, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a French philosopher, had an opposite theory of a child's mind, claiming that children develop at their own pace, instead of developing as they are told. Regardless of the two opposing ideologies, both philosophers made a significant contribution to the overall view of children's literature emphasizing its importance. I do not exactly agree with Locke that all children are born 'pure' and I believe that without experience one cannot have knowledge. However, I do believe that

children need to be exposed to as much diversity as possible in order to nourish their minds and to help them formulate their own opinions.

During the Renaissance, when printing machines were invented, there was an “experimentation with different kinds of literature” (Zipes, xix), and larger quantities of books were being printed, contributing significantly to increased literacy and general knowledge. More people were able to pursue an education and educate their children as well. Slowly, books were being written for children.

Following the change in philosophical perception of childhood, children’s literature blossomed soon after. A shift from orality to the written word was made possible through the genre of fairy tale, which children had been listening to from their parents and grandparents. Even though, many people may have been familiar with fairy tales for millennia, this literary genre truly became defined in the 17th century. The name, fairy tale or *conte de fée*, originated amongst French writers who referred to its basic elements of magic and fairies. In Italy, the high cultural activity in court and foreign influence encouraged story-telling, which slowly made its way to paper. *Le piacevoli notti* (The Delectable Nights) (1550-53) by Giovanni Straparola were “fairy-tales […] first published in the vernacular and for a mixed audience of (upper-class) men and women” (Zipes, xvii). In France, by the middle of the 17th century, fairy tales “gradually became more accepted at literary salons and at the court” (Zipes, xix), which led to their publication towards the end of the century. One of the most prolific

authors of the time, Marie-Catherine D'Aulnoy, helped cultivate this literary tradition with the publication of *L'Histoire d'Hippolyte* (1690) (Zipes, xix).

In England, John Newberry's *Newberry's Pretty Pocket Book* (1744), which pays homage to Locke, "was the first significant publication for children that sought both edification and enjoyment. It was also one of the first commercial, mixed-media texts that contained pictures, rhymes, and games" ("To instruct and Delight...", 2008). While didacticism and intense moralising were still present in children's literature, these were only secondary, and more attention was paid to the expansion of creativity and imagination. The 19th century witnessed a significant growth in the number of children's writers: Lewis Carroll, the Brothers Grimm, Mark Twain, and Hans Christian Anderson are amongst the most prominent.

The evolution of children's literature reached its peak as the 20th and 21st centuries saw "a great increase in the diversity in children's books, from picture books to flap books to online multimedia texts" ("To instruct and Delight...", 2008). Topics varied from faraway places and mythical creatures of fantasy, to sex, drugs, and violence in real life. Due to the competitive nature of other media, children's books are becoming ever more vibrant and dynamic. In the pages to come, I will provide an overview of the evolution of children's literature in Spain. Since this is the source culture of *El árbol solitario*, it will provide background information about the field, foster understanding of the role translation played in the development of the genre. In terms of theory, the historical overview of

children's literature in the Western hemisphere will help me determine how to approach the target text and whether English-speaking children are ready to be introduced to the 'foreign'.

HISTORY OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN SPAIN

The Middle Ages

Just as in the countries previously discussed, children in Spain were not treated as a separate social group for a very long time and literature was shared and enjoyed by both children and adults. Young children in Spain, just like elsewhere in Europe, "occupied a special place in Christian thinking" (Alexandre-Bidon and Lett, 23), unlike adolescents who were considered undisciplined, difficult and keen on pleasure. Aside from this, "most educators were clerics, sub-deacons, or parish priests" (Alexandre-Bidon and Lett, 121)

It is then obvious that primary and religious education went hand-in-hand and that books for children were heavily based on religion. In the 12th century, Spanish children read religious books such as *Los Milagros de Nuestra Señora* [The Miracles of Our Lady] by Gonzalo de Berceo and Medieval poems called *Cantigas* written by Alfonso X (el Sabio).

Greco-Roman prose on mythological heroes was very popular, whereas the exploits of *Mio Cid* (1140) was a story based on a historical figure (Bravo-Villasante, 11). The *Romancero* was a rich collection of children's literature, containing historical romances based on true events

(Bravo-Villasante, 11). Most of these poems were preserved through the oral tradition and were now being written down for the first time. They are similar to epic poetry, and the themes are often political, about war and honour and based on historical events, thus teaching the audience about the history of the motherland as well as the rest of the world (Bravo-Villasante, 12). Essentially these were ballads to be sung to a tune ("Romancero", 2012).

An expert in the history of Spanish children's literature, Carmen Bravo-Villasante, takes a controversial stance in choosing *infantilism* as a reason behind placing much of previously considered adult literature in children's sections. The reason these manuscripts are nowadays referred to as literature for children and the fact that children and adults were sharing the same readings can be explained by *infantilism*, described as a psychological underdevelopment, possibly due to lack of education (Bravo-Villasante, 12). Although potentially problematic, Bravo-Villasante argues that, at the time these texts were written, an adult commoner was not psychologically as developed as the present day adult, due to lack of education and as such the commoners enjoyed a prose with a simple and easy rhyme (Bravo-Villasante, 12). This would explain why today these writings are re-categorized as children's literature, but were most likely originally written for adults. This though may not always be the case as it depends on the work in question. For example, the older versions of *Little Red Riding Hood*, reveal that many characteristics such as the presence

of sexual implications and vulgar language were shared by an adult audience, most likely not in the presence of children. These were later addressed by Perrault, who also wrote for adults and eliminated “vulgarities, coarse turn of phrase, and unmotivated plot elements” (Tatar, 4) previously contained in *Little Red Riding Hood*. There were also versions of the story with “references to bodily functions”, “racy double entendres” and “gaps in narrative logic”, (Tatar, 4) which would have shocked the higher classes in Perrault’s epoch. These characteristics would suggest that tales such as this one originated among common people “not yet tainted by the corrupting influences of civilization” (Tatar, xi), which is why they were later edited and filtered. The lower classes were certainly capable of creating art but in their own way.

The presence of heavy didacticism would suggest that authors were aware that their stories were being read to children as well as the power these books had over the reader, so slowly romances came to feature animals as protagonists, such as *Libro de los enxemplos, Libro de los gatos* (1335). In the 13th century, keeping children in mind, Raimundo Lulio wrote *Llibre de les besties,*(1288-89) stories with morals from the oriental court, which meant to educate children about life.

In 1335 Juan Manuel, Prince of Villena, wrote *Conde Lucanor o Libro de Patronio*, where the great preoccupation with spiritual life was the focus of his stories and he wrote almost exclusively for the nobility. Adored by Spanish children, the book was a collection of fifty short stories

containing narrations that were parables, satiric and adventurous (Bravo-Villasante, 16). Aware that stories were read aloud to a mixed audience including children, he always finished with a moral in order to instruct the audience (“Juan Manuel”, 2012)

The focus on pedagogy and morality was the norm for centuries to come. Royalty and the middle classes would hire writers and poets to write for their children as is the case of *Proverbios de gloriosa doctrina y fructuosa enseñanza* (1437) by Iñigo López de Mendoza. Given that Latin was still the official language of education and religion in Spain, Mendoza wrote in elegant and vernacular Castilian, wanting to reach out to a larger audience, making his work one of the first children’s books written in Castilian (Bravo-Villasante, 17).

The Renaissance

With the invention of the printing machine, children were now able to hold in their hands the stories previously read to them. So when the famous *Isopete historiado* (1489) was printed in Zaragoza, it was the first book edited in Spain, at the command of Infante Enrique de Aragon, Duke of Segorbe (Bravo-Villasante, 19). The book was a Castilian translation of Aesop’s fables with exemplary illustrations. Aside from books for entertainment, academic manuscripts were being printed and distributed throughout the land. An example would be a *catechism*, a small reader or a doctrinal manual, which at the time usually contained the alphabet, followed by *Our Father, Hail Holy Queen* to be sung*,* and *Responsio misse*

in Latin for recitation, the *Ten Commandments* and finally *The Seven Deadly Sins.* These catechisms were the Spanish equivalent of the English *hornbook* used during the same time period. It is very likely that, after class, a child would secretly enjoy the stories of lower classes such as fairy tales and songs, all orally transmitted (Bravo-Villasante, 22). Religious manuscripts were being printed to educate the children of high culture on social etiquette; such is the case with *La crianza y virtuosa doctrina* (1488) by Pedro Garcia Dei, followed by *Doctrina coz los pares deven criar los fils* (1498) by Jaume de Erla.

The Spanish Golden Age

The beginning of the 16th century saw an emergence of folklore in literature read by children. A famous scholar Ridrigo Caro published a collection of children's games and rhymes in *Días geniales o lúdicros* (1626). He traces the origin of these games back to the Ancient times of Romans and Greeks, and showcases how famous songs and a thousand-year-old *nanas*, or lullabies, came about. Children of the Golden Age had a lot more in common with the children of today in that they spent more time playing than reading in their spare time (Bravo-Villasante, 38), and they would make up rhymes to go along with their games. Music was soon written specifically for children, meant to be sung in choirs during Christmas time, and a great deal of poetry was directed towards the little ones. Lope de Vega, a prolific playwright and one of the most influential

Spanish writers, wrote *Los Pastores de Belén* (1612) originally for his son, divine prose and verses which children loved to memorize.

Meanwhile in France, Charles Perrault published his *Contes de fées ou Histoires du temps passé avec des moralités* subtitled *Contes de ma mère l'Oye* (1697), which was not written for children but for the court ladies and gentlemen; they became extremely successful among the young audience as well and slowly translations of foreign literature were making their way into the hands of Spanish children.

Influence of Foreign Literature on Spanish Children's Literature

Translations of foreign literature had a tremendous impact on the recognition of children as a separate social group deserving of its own literature. With the arrival of the first children's newspapers printed in England, Germany, and France, Spain felt the need to catch up and soon afterwards the first Spanish children's newspaper was created; it was called *Gaceta de los niños* (1798) and was exclusively for children. These newspapers also carried translations of foreign texts such as *Robinson Crusoe* and Europe saw the emergence of authors writing for children such as Goethe and Berquin (Bravo-Villasante, 79). The *Gaceta* lasted only two years and the next children's magazine did not appear until 1841, it was called *El amigo de la niñez,* followed by *El eco de la juventud* (1842), *El museo de los niños* and countless other ones. Very much like the initial magazine, they contained didactic stories with an element of folklore.

Famous translations would be *Historia de los niños célebres* (1800) by Andrés Miñano, which was very popular (Bravo-Villasante, 97). After the publication of Carlo Lorenzini's *Pinocchio* (1883), the book became so successful in Spain that soon afterwards, a large series of Pinocchio's adventures became edited and printed. Foreign literature was translated and adapted extensively (Bravo-Villasante, 187). Spanish children became acquainted with foreign stories like *Heidi* (Johanna Spiri), *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils* (Selma Legerlöf), *Bambi* (Felix Salten), (Bravo-Villasante, 205). Later on the convenience of television in homes also helped spread the cinematic adaptation of world-famous classics created by Walt Disney and writers from Latin America such as Horacio Quiroga and José Martí who were becoming well known in schools in Spain. Many translators such as M. Manent, A. Nadal and M. Ras also wrote adaptations of stories and versions of other well-known tales (Bravo-Villasante, 207). In general, Spanish children now had more literature to choose from than ever before. There were also more genres than ever: biographies of children, illustrated books, travel adventures, history, and culture.

19th and 20th Centuries

Cecilia Böhl de Faber, inspired by Grecian mythology, published in magazines under the pseudonym Fernán Caballero. Her book *Mitología* (1926) is still widely read in scholarly circles. Fascinated by national culture, de Faber collected oral folk tales just like the Brothers Grimm were

doing in Germany around the same time such as *Cuentos, oraciones y adivinas y refranes populares e infanties* (1874). Many of her works were first written in either German or French: her greatest work, *La Gaviota* (1849), was first written in French and later translated into Spanish by someone else (Bravo-Villasante, 95).

Among the most established names of the period are Trueba, Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, Campoamor and José Zorrilla. Trueba wrote popular folk stories, de Avellaneda wrote religious poems, Campoamor wrote compositions dedicated to children, and Zorrilla wrote romantic poetry appropriate for children (Bravo-Villasante, 99).

Traditional Spanish culture became a literary trend during the 19th century. *Cantos populares españoles* (1882) by Francisco Rodríguez Marín was an example of oral children's literature collected by the author as he listened to children. Another significant figure of the period is reverend-author Sixto Córdova, who also collected popular children's songs. He started in 1885 and was able to track down works dating back to the 17th century. His work was accomplished by listening to the elderly population retelling songs that their parents had told them and which were probably taught to the same parents at a very young age. His final product, *Canconiero infantil español* (1948), is a collection of 423 songs, a tremendous contribution to Spanish folk and literary tradition and the most complete collection of children's songs in all of Spain (Bravo-Villasante, 136).

Regional stories were becoming the norm as is the case with C. Cabal's *Los cuentos tradicionales asturianos* (1900) where a local version of Cinderella was brought to light. This collection was further completed by Aurelio Llano y Rosa de Ampudia (*Los cuentos asturianos),* which included riddles, tongue twisters, and plenty of tales with animal protagonists (Bravo-Villasante, 212). Victor Balaguer's *Cuentos de mi tierra* (1865) was written in Catalan and it revived Catalan legends and traditions. Balaguer's works contained superstitious stories with witches, spells, marvels and ghosts, entertaining children while maintaining the local folklore (Bravo-Villasante, 212).

Poetry constituted a large part of the canon of children's literature. A famous Spanish poet, Juan Ramón Jiménez wrote a book, *Platero y yo* (1917) that soon after its publication became mandatory in Spanish and Latin American schools. His homage to childhood was awarded a Nobel Prize in 1957. Francisco Villaesposa, a modernist poet used characters from classic fairy tales such as *Little Red Riding Hood* and *Cinderella* in his poems (Bravo-Villasante, 164). However it was Frederico García Lorca who truly captured the essence of children's poetry. In his book *Canciones* (1921), he dedicated a section to the child reader containing humorous yet lyrical verses.

In the second half of the 20th century the illustrators of children's books became of great importance as illustrated books were more in demand. The children's weekly newspaper *Bazar* was where many

illustrators made their breakthroughs. Some of the famous names are José Picó who won the Premio Lazarillo, for his great drawings in 1962, and J. Narro winning the same prize for his portrayal of *Robinson Crusoe* (1961) and his student Lorenzo Goñi who first started out as an editor in *Bazar* but later went on to illustrate numerous fantastical tales. In 1959 a publishing house called Editorial Doncel was founded and it had a special interest in illustrated children's books. It made it its mission to bring together some of the nation's best illustrators and get them to collaborate on *La Ballena Alegre* where more advanced techniques of current artists could be showcased (Bravo-Villasante, 228). In 1981 the Instituto Nacional del Libro Español published a catalogue of Spain's most celebrated illustrators called *Ilustradores españoles de libros infantiles y juveniles.* There were ninety of them (Bravo-Villasante, 229).

During recent years, the demand for children's books has grown. Some of the most famous names in Spain are Ana María Matute, María Luisa Gafaell, Jaime Ferrán, Bonifacio Gil, Carmen Perez Avelló and of course Alfredo Gomez Cerdá who has won some of the most prestigious literary awards for children's books ranging in themes from post-war to fantasy, travel, poetry, and humour. It is without a doubt that children have and will continue to have an ever-expanding literary selection filled with rich stories from all walks of life, be it for entertainment or for learning. Seeing the evolution of children's literature in Spain, I am now able to better contextualize Cerda's work. The role that translation played in the

development and recognition of children's literature is undeniable. There is now more versatility than ever from wich the young readers can choose. And just like the previously mentioned translations made their way into the hands of Spanish children, I hope that one day *El árbol solitario* will do the same for Canadian children.

HISTORY OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN QUEBEC

The European tradition of writing for children certainly continued in the New World. Even though children have been reading books for centuries, it should be noted that, much like in Europe, "not until the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries did a body of children's literature in the form that we know it really begin to take shape" (Andrews and Cayley, 6). It is most practical to assume that an earlier child reader would be satisfied with the retelling of fables and other European stories. Even well into the 20th century in Canada "there were only thirty to forty children's books being published annually in English and an even smaller number in French" and with very limited subjects (Andrews and Cayley, 6). In any case, it may have taken more time for children's literature to establish itself, but once it took off at the beginning of the century it has been ever so steady.

The Beginning

At the beginning of the 19th century, adult books deemed 'appropriate' made their way into the hands of Quebec's younger population, also

securing a spot within children's collections, never having been intended for them in the first place (Madore,17). In 1876, the province of Quebec began to distribute books as prizes in schools and within a decade, 175,000 copies had been distributed (Madore, 17). At the beginning of the 20th century the oral tradition made its way into books. Most of these tales and legends were of European descent and young French readers of Quebec would soon discover their ancestry through books such as *Les Légendes canadiennes* by Abbot Casgrain, and *Les anciens Canadiens* by Phillippe Aubert de Gaspé (Madore, 17).

A body of literature intended for children finally emerged in the 1920s and in the shape of a series in the youth magazine called *L'oiseau bleu*. The text's title was *Les aventures de Perrine et de Charlot* by Marie-Claire Daveluy. It was such a success that the magazine editor, Arthur Saint-Pierre, asked Daveluy to write a book where the protagonists would be children (Madore, 18). *L'oiseau bleu*, founded in 1921 and published by the Saint-Jean-Baptiste Society of Montréal until 1940, was a key player in founding French-Canadian children's literature by encouraging authors to write for a young audience. The magazine published poems, fables, columns, biographies and school-related topics and served as an inspiration to the youth magazines that were soon to follow such as *L'abeille* (1925-1964), *la Ruche écolière* (1927-1934) and *l'Annuaire Granger pour la jeunesse* (1926-1929) (Madore, 19). In order to promote children's literature, various book prizes emerged, which definitely helped

the industry; *la loi Choquette* was passed to ensure that books distributed in schools were Canadian only, and the first children's library was founded in Montreal in 1937 (Madore, 19-21). Overall the future of children's literature was looking bright with 125 works produced during the 1930's alone, totalling a number of 200 works within a twenty year period (Madore, 21).

The 1940s

The events of World War II made it difficult to supply European books to Canada, which worked in favour of local publishing companies as they no longer had to compete with the popular European market, as was the case previously. Given the powerful nature of *La loi Choquette*, literature in French had to be produced, which had positive results on the Canadian market as more books were printed than ever during this time. Quebec saw an emergence of numerous periodicals for youth such as *Stella Maris* (1938-1947), *JEC des Jeune*s (1939-1942), *Sais-tu* (1945), *Hérauts* (1944-1965), *François* (1943-1965), to name a few (Madore, 22). The beginning of the 1940s' era also marked an inauguration of Canadian illustrated books. Andrée Maillet's *Ristontac* (1945) remains one of the most beloved thanks to its remarkable illustrations, immediately followed by Albert Bolduc's *La famille Grenouille* (1945) (Madore, 23). This flourishing period lasted until the end of World War II, when the resurgence of European publishing took place and Canada could once again trade with its old partner.

The Quiet Revolution

The 1960s Quiet Revolution[1] quickly helped evolve societal standards in Quebec. Many restrictions were imposed on the school system, which made it difficult for the book industry to continue its work. In efforts to preserve its French heritage, the Quebec provincial government passed Bill 101 *(La loi 101)*, which defines French as the official language of the state, courts, workplace, and schools (Hudon, 2012). Education in French became mandatory and so it had to be enforced. A committee was created to investigate the book trade and a state-controlled central book institution was created, which meant that bookshops had to be accredited and textbooks had to be approved by the Quebec Ministry of Education. The custom of handing out books to students at the end of the school year started in 1876, but when in (Madore, 28 1965), the province ceased to continue this tradition it severely injured the publishing industry and threatened the future of children's literature in Quebec (Madore, 30).

The 1970s

The 1970's was a much more successful decade for literature. During this time, an organization for the promotion of Quebec children's literature was created: it was called *Communication Jeunesse* and its goal was to give rise to children's literature and stimulate publishing. *Communication Jeunesse* enabled communication between editors, writers, illustrators, critics, librarians and others (Madore, 33). The organisation published

[1] A period marked by nationalization of previously church-run institutions such as health care and education.

memoirs defining problems and solutions for youth literature and forwarding them to ministers in hopes of reviving the industry. Through the Council for the Arts, the federal government found ways to subsidize literature, making books more easily accessible . The 1970s became the era of the *albums*, or illustrated books with literary content, giving rise to *Le Tamanoir* editions (1975) (Madore, 36). The publishing house Fides produced collections such as *Goéland* (1974) which contained novels by Félix Leclerc (2012) and Suzanne Martel (2012). Collections such as Leméac contained a number of high-quality *albums*, the most successful being *Les Merveilleux Oiseaux de la forêt de nulle part*, and *La Famille Citrouillard* by Rita Scalabrini. *Pour lire avec toi* was published by Héritage and destined for children between the ages of 7 and 10 (Madore, 37). It contained works by Marie-Jeanne Robin (Robin, 14) and Cecile Gagnon (Aubrey, 2012). It was very successful, evolving to cater to an older age group. Science-fiction and fantasy novels can be found in *Jeunesse-Pop* collection. Le Tamanoir became the first publishing company to specialize in albums exclusively for children (Madore, 37).

In order to inspire the love of reading among children Bayard Montreal, founded in 1977, published the *J'aime lire* magazine. Their first issue was *Le secret de la chambre au coucou* (1977) ("J'aime lire", 2011). Bayard widely published novels, comic strips, and games, and some of the stories were later animated for television broadcast ("J'aime lire", 2011).

The *J'aime lire* series has been a special part of Quebec's children's literature and is still going strong.

The 1980s

Within a short time children's books became profitable material, more so than adult novels. During the 1980's more publishing houses were investing time and money into the production of children's literature, some even specializing only in this genre. Audiovisual sources helped promote books, which is how *Livre ouvert* came to be adapted for television (Madore, 43). Novels as cinematographic adaptations became more frequent: many Quebeckers may still remember *Contes pour tous* produced as a family and children's television series (Madore, 48). Another new genre within children's literature became books for toddlers. Some examples would be *Bébé-livres: Les saisons*, *Je deviens grand*, *Drôle d'école*, and other collections such as *Plumage, Enfantaisie, Méli-Mélo* (Madore, 45). Novels soon became a trend with collections such as *Roman Plus* focusing on teen literature and topics from everyday life and sexuality. Detective novels such as *Alexis* and *Edgar Allan détective* were being written for children of ages from 10 to 14 (Madore, 47).

The 1990's

During the 1990's the substantial expansion of production in children's literature called for greater competition among publishing houses. Suddenly universities were offering courses and certificates in children's literature, libraries had a designated area dedicated to the field and in the

media this genre was acknowledged. This solid, successful era of children's literature in Quebec was marked by an enormous expansion in authors, writing on the widest range of topics to date: the environment, broken families, suicide, drugs, sexuality, multiculturalism (Madore, 103). With such a rich selection, children's literature acquired a more realist tone and a creative side. Children could find themselves in these stories which spoke of daily events of Quebec society. The majority of these works were told from a child's point of view and narrated in the first person, therefore replacing the exterior adult perspective of childhood (Madore, 104).

Only a century ago, Quebec's children's literature was non-existent and has gone through some rough times preventing it from getting on its feet, however its progress for the past ninety years has been remarkable and has resulted in the creation of a national literature. Reader's interest in children's literature has helped to gradually expand and solidify this literary institution. It is also important to acknowledge the acceptance of translated books among the collections of children's literature, as with the case of *El árbol solitario.* This revolutionary step for the translation field gives rise to more research within the field while making foreign children's literature more accessible.

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN TRANSLATION

As the Western world has been enjoying children's literature for centuries, it is important to mention that translation has played a significant role in

the distribution of children's literature, contributing to it the ancient tales of Aesop, fairy tales of Charles Perrault, Straparola, and the Brothers Grimm among many others.

It was in the 17th century that Europe saw translation becoming a recognizable profession. It became quite significant when, in the 18th century enlightenment period, known for ideas, sciences and technological advancements, the world saw an emergence of great encyclopedias (Delisle and Woodsworth, 258). Translation also played an important role in the production of encyclopedias as was the case with Ephraim Chambers' *Cyclopedia* (1728), which was published in England. Jean le Rond d'Alembert and Denis Diderot translated it as part of their larger project of *Encyclopédie* (Delisle, Woodsworth, 258). These great developments called for knowledge of foreign languages amongst people of all classes so multilingual dictionaries were more in demand. Suddenly languages were being taught more frequently. The French Revolution also played a role in the development of translation as a profession. The arrival of industrialization introduced better road systems which facilitated traveling. Very quickly, the need to master foreign languages became "eminently clear to the rising middle classes" (Dollerup, 20) and material became translated for the education and entertainment of children.

Translation schools and professional institutions were founded in order to nurture the study of the field. One of the most prominent of the period was in France; *l'Académie française* (1635) which made a

significant contribution to language studies including translation (Delisle and Woodsworth, 147). Another example of such a significant institution is Real Academia Española, modeled after the French Académie, and founded in Madrid in 1713 (“Breve historia”, 2012).

In the midst of this boom, there was suddenly room in the market for children’s literature and the enormous success of it was due to its dual audience: because the books “are often illustrated and often meant to be read aloud” (Oittinen, 2000, 5), they are simultaneously enjoyed by both children and adults. An established translator, Barbara Wall, says that “if books are to be published, marketed and bought, adults first must be attracted, persuaded and convinced” because they are the ones buying the books (Oittinen, 2006, 36). Rapidly translators were in even greater demand because of the sudden increase of children’s writers and this type of literature spread quickly worldwide.

Writing for children was now regarded as a more prestigious career. Well-known authors such as Michel Tournier took notice that a simple ‘*livre d’enfant*’ was not exclusively a children’s book but that it touched adults as well. Tournier considered children as ultimate critics and believed that Shakespeare, Goethe, Balzac are defective because they cannot be read by children. He praised Jacques Perrault’s *Le chat botté (Puss in Boots)*, calling it a masterpiece. In his mind, a book is valued by the size of its audience since it must be readable by everyone because excluding children imposes restrictions. He must have recognized the

difficulty of writing for a multitude of social groups because he would sometimes rewrite his novels for a younger audience. His novel *Vendredi ou les limbes du Pacifique* (1967), was rewritten for a younger audience and retitled *Vendredi ou la vie sauvage*, becoming “one of the bestselling children’s books in France, surpassed only by *Le Petit Prince*” (Beckett, 38).

As writers depended on translators to communicate their work to different cultures, the art of translation became more sophisticated and complex in theory and in practice. In simple terms, the task of a translator was seen as having to “recreate the idea of the book […] in the target language” (Oittinen, 2006, 35). The field of children’s literature in translation has taken advantage of the theoretical developments performed over the last few decades.

Theory has helped identify strategies to make a text conform more or less to the target culture. The two main streams of approaching the text became “domestication” and “foreignization”. These are only some of the dual theories which strive to obtain equivalence in their own way. In “domestication” the focus is getting the text “accommodated to the reader” by assimilating it to the target linguistic and cultural values (qtd.in Oittinen, 2006, 42). This technique may possibly involve loss of information from the original text. The other possibility is “foreignization” where traces of the original text are retained, so “the reader is taken to the text” (qtd.in Oittinen, 2006, 42). “Foreignization” celebrates origin and can be a key

player in pushing boundaries of target language conventions. It can also be extremely useful when wanting children to recognize differences and learn to tolerate them. An American translation theorist and a practicing translator, Lawrence Venuti is strictly against domestication, feeling it is ethnocentric because it is “oriented toward conformity with target-language cultural values” (Venuti, 1995, 113) and he prefers “foreignization” or resistance over domestication because it “challenges the cultural forms of domination” (Venuti, 1995, 147). In his opinion, it is the cultural norms that impose restrictions on translation practices. Foreignizing a translation comes with many risks in the English language because “canons of accuracy are quite strict in contemporary Anglo-American culture, enforced by copyeditors and legally binding contracts” (Venuti, 1995, 310). Translators must therefore “force a revision of codes – cultural, economic, legal – that marginalize and exploit them” (Venuti, 1995, 311). Only by doing so, according to Venuti, will translators revise the “concept of authorship” and elevate the status of their profession because no translation should ever be seen as a “transparent representation of [a] text” (Venuti, 1995, 312-313). He states that “the more fluent the translation, the more invisible the translator and, presumably, the more visible the writer” (Venuti, 1995, 2), but transparency should not be the “authoritative discourse for translation” (Venuti, 1995, 6) because translation will always take second place and be seen as false copy.

In the context of children's literature, most translators "found it self-evident that the source text should be adapted to the target culture" based on the theory that a child's linguistic and literary formation "was too restricted to guarantee a sufficient degree of recognizability and empathy" (Van Coillie and Verschueren, viii). However, since the 1980s translators have been moving away from domestication, "out of respect for the original text", wanting to open the minds of children to other cultures (Van Coillie and Verschueren, viii). I concur with this approach and feel that children need to be taught to tolerate differences from an early age. I feel confident that it is possible for a translator to find a balance and successfully incorporate foreignization and domestication in a children's text.

Some of the challenges presented by children's literature are not always present in adult books. It is through the translated children's books that the "translational norms expose more clearly the constraints imposed on a text that enters the children's system" (Shavit, 112). Unlike adult books, translating children's literature allows the translator to take certain liberties where some manipulation of text is possible through "changing, enlarging or abridging it or by deleting or adding to it" (Shavit, 112). These modifications are only permitted if the translator adheres to the following two principles that form the basis of children's literature and determine every step of the translation process: "adjustment of text" and "adjustment of plot, characterization and language". The first one is used when it is

necessary to make the text “appropriate and useful to the child, in accordance with what society regards [as educational]” (Shavit, 112). The second one is used to yield to prevailing society’s perceptions of the child’s ability to read and comprehend. Both principles are complementary to one another and amount to “domestication” as they make the text more accessible to the reader. Given the common didactic tendency in children’s literature, the first principle tended to dominate for a long time, but nowadays the second principle of adjusting the text to facilitate comprehension can sometimes lead the translation process. With the supposition that children are incapable of reading lengthy texts or that their vocabulary is not highly developed, the second principle becomes effective as translators make the decision to shorten and simplify the text. The two can be contradictory at times. For example, if a text deals with death, a translator may assume that a child can handle it, but “at the same time the text may be regarded as harmful to his mental welfare” (Shavit, 113). In a situation like this, a translator can choose to delete one aspect in favour of another. When it comes to *El árbol solitario*, I feel that there are much bigger challenges for a translator due to the big time gap since the publication and my current translation. The apparent level of formality used by the children of the source language seems strange and pretentious to an English speaker like me if translated the same way in the target language, so finding a believable tone used today among North American English-speaking children is a challenge. There are other

countless challenges that I had to undertake such as incorporating elements of foreignization into a domesticated translation while accommodating the child reader. I am positive that combining the best of both methodologies can produce a very successful and faithful translation.

ALFREDO GÓMEZ CERDÁ

As his personal home page indicates, Alfredo Gómez Cerdá, who was born in Madrid, Spain, in 1951 and has been writing since the age of 11. During his high school years in *Colegio Hermanos Amorós*, he discovered theatre and dedicated years to writing theatrical works, which later inspired him to write even more serious literature. After graduating from the Facultad de Filología Española, Cerdá collaborated with a movie producer and became a script writer. By the time he was 30, Cerdá had written only two books for children: *Las palabras mágicas* (1983) and *El árbol solitario* (1987). Despite insecurities about his writing, he decided to enter a writing competition, "*El Barco de Vapor*", submitting *Las palabras mágicas.* He won second place, getting his book published and thus beginning his career as a children's author.

Cerdá's audience is very diverse thanks to his varied writing style; he writes mostly children's literature but has written for all ages and genders, on various topics. Cerdá's literature is very extensive, from adventure stories to children and juvenile fiction, from criticism of the real world to fantasy and magic. His books have been published in various

countries like France, Italy, Portugal, Germany, Canada, U.S.A., Mexico, Columbia, Brazil, Korea, China and some of the translations include Arabic, Italian, Korean, Portuguese, Japanese and Chinese, to name a few. Cerdá is the recipient of the most prestigious writing awards like "*Altea*", "*White Raven*", "*Il Paese dei Bambini*", and "*Cervantes Chico*" ("Biografía", 2011).

ORALITY IN-BETWEEN TWO WORLDS: From Fictional Characters to Life-like Speech

Mimicry of spoken language is best depicted through fictional dialogue, which also lends authenticity to characters and brings them to life ("Translating Fictional...", 2011). The translation of fictional dialogue is one of the more recent issues associated with the translation of children's literature. In December 2011 in Barcelona, Spain, a translation conference was held dedicated specifically to this issue. World-renowned translation experts such as Riitta Oittinen and Zohar Shavit gave presentations regarding dialogue in literature. In order to achieve the closest possible imitation of orality, the author selects distinct characteristics which depict the colloquial language and the translator must do the same in the target language. It is important to acknowledge that children's literature may sometimes be simplified; it is nevertheless, still a representation of authentic everyday speech. Linguistic features such as colloquialism are very helpful in spoken language and they must "comply with the linguistic

norms and textual conventions" of the language (Pascua-Fables, 120). Through dialogue a reader is informed of the cultural norms such as register, relationship between people, the language spoken on the street to name a few. In Cerdá's *El árbol solitario*, the Spanish text is credible and natural despite the formal tone used by all the characters. This tone is evident in the proper composition of sentences, uses of titles and formal variants of the pronoun 'you'. Unfortunately, everyday North-American English is much more informal and liberal, with constant contractions and no marking of distinct authoritative or honourable figures by uses of different pronouns or even titles. Since my objective is to imitate a young English-speaking Canadian child, I take the liberty to make the text informal when required. Children's speech is very representative of colloquialism and it is important that the translator imitate this as much as possible or otherwise risk sounding fake or contrived. Short, simple phrases and lack of formality are credible methods used to represent fictional dialogue of children who are probably aware of some socially imposed language conventions and test them through language.

Due to the fact that children's literature is very often written to be read aloud, a translator must be very aware of variations in intonation, tempo, pauses, stress, rhythm, and duration of text. However, when it comes to orality, a translator has more freedom to play with the language as he/she moves from the conventions of literary language to the reality of every-day speech. It can be a stimulating experience to translate fictional

dialogue because the meaning takes priority over syntax. Therefore, a translator can take liberties with expression, using the language creatively not having to worry about the accuracy of grammar. In my opinion, it is like a breath of fresh air, because I can use the language that truly represents everyday speech and I can include characteristics that would normally violate and disturb the strict grammar structure that is necessary when translating a text that is not a dialogue. In the case of fictional dialogue, one should “concentrate on the differences in culture, [the] future readers in the target language” (Oittinen, 2006, 39) and not make the orality fictional but turn it into a credible depiction of human relations.

Walter J. Ong, an expert in the contrasting relation between orality and literacy, claims that writing “can never dispense with orality” because a written text is always somehow “related to the world of sound, aloud or in the imagination” (Ong, 8). He explains that cultures manage knowledge and verbalization through oral and literal ways. There are people that belong to either oral cultures because they have “no knowledge at all of writing” and those who are “deeply affected by the use of writing” and belong to a literate culture (Ong, 1). Literacy began with writing and later expanded to print and even “electronic processing of the word and of thought” (Ong, 2).

The relationship between orality and literacy is mutual and harmonizing. In the case of children’s books, which are written to be read aloud, it can be said that literacy helps keep orality alive. It is through a

writing system that spoken language and human thought get recorded. It is because of literacy that language expands, shapes itself by elaborating grammar and structure. It also helps restore memory and reconstruct “the pristine human consciousness which was not literate at all” (Ong, 15). One should not forget that oral cultures produce “powerful and beautiful verbal performances of high artistic and human worth”, and that writing is crucial to helping human consciousness achieve its fullest potential, so in this case “orality produces writing” (Ong, 14). According to Ong, scholars would often assume that “oral verbalization was essentially the same as written verbalization they normally dealt with” and that oral forms were essentially all texts that have not been written down yet (Ong, 10). This ideology originates from a human tendency to associate language with tangible decoders on paper, because writing makes us think of words as visible. Orality is extremely important in children’s literature because while the narration provides the reader with “conspicuous help for situating himself imaginatively”, the fictional dialogue gives voice to characters, bringing them to life and have the reader “imagine an oral disputation” which brings him/her closer to the story (Ong, 101). This way, the reader becomes involved and is submerged in the reality of the tale.

Children’s literature is mostly oral literature, as opposed to ‘written’ literature, because it refers to oral tradition. Literacy is not absent because the narrator’s voice, for example, can present a blend between the two. In *El árbol solitario*, the narrator is the voice representing the ‘written

language', which is more conservative due to strict language conventions, syntactical and semantic rules etc., whereas the children characters represent the oral 'language', the 'freedom' of speaking as they please. In my translation I also play with the voice of the narrator by making it a lot freer by not having to strictly comply with the rules of the written language. I do this by using contractions, simplified vocabulary, additional humorous remarks and often omitting complex sentence structure.

WHY A COMPARISON WITH THE FRENCH TRANSLATION?

Alfredo Gómez Cerdá's *El árbol solitaro* is one of the two existing works of this renowned Spanish children's author to be translated into French. His European translations consist mostly of various Romance languages; however he is most popular among speakers of languages of the Iberian Peninsula. In Asia, he is read by Japanese, Korean and Chinese speakers. To date though, there have regrettably been no English translations of his works, for an unknown reason. Only four years after the original Spanish book was published in 1987, the French-Canadian translation emerged: it was called *Sauvons notre parc* by Marie-Claude Favreau, and published by *Les Éditions Héritage*, Québec. The translation was made available in the Québécois children's magazine called *J'aime lire* mentioned earlier.

The fascinating experience of investigating the linguistic proximity of Spanish and French gave me insight into their historical and cultural

background, which facilitated my understanding of language conventions and communicative differences. In a nutshell, regardless of what the two languages are, they communicate in different ways and social norms shape everyday speech. In the long run I acquired a new perspective on culture.

ORALITY in *El árbol solitario* and *Sauvons notre parc*:

Comparing Spanish and French

El árbol solitario, is Cerdá's first literary work, written for children from ages seven and higher. The story is about a vibrant square, full of beautiful trees, and very much cherished by the children and the elderly of the neighbourhood because it is the only one in the area. It is of utmost significance to the children because this is where they play after school, listen to stories by *don* Amadeus, the old chemistry and sciences teacher, and where they hang out. The characters seem to be leading a very content life until one day, a group of three architects arrives to remodel the square and their construction site drives the children away and forces them to play in some unpleasant corner. Once the new "square" is revealed the children quickly realize that it is really a parking lot, which makes parents happy because now they will no longer have to park far from their homes. To make things worse, the construction workers ripped out all of the trees in the square, leaving only one in the centre, looking sad, dusty, and withered. The horrified children quickly come to the realization that the new square will break their friendship apart, because

they will have nowhere to play. Fearing the loss of their friendship, the children work with don Amadeus to get their old square back. The old chemistry teacher invents a magic formula, which makes trees grow miraculously fast, and using the chopped up remains of the sole remaining tree, they are able to produce many other new trees. When the three engineers return, they are shocked to find the whole parking lot destroyed because of the new and massive tree population. The final confrontation between the children and don Amadeus and the construction workers takes place when the children express their discontent with the "new square" and threaten to keep destroying it. The construction workers become so afraid of don Amadeus' magic formula that they promise to rebuild the old square if he promises never to share or use his magic formula again, to which he replies "I will only break my promise if you break yours". Finally the children get their square back, which is even bigger and has even more trees than the first one. Everyone is once again happy and life is back to normal.

I first read Cerdá in order to get acquainted with his writing prior to attending a conference he held in Edmonton's Spanish Resource Centre as part of his Canadian tour. The excerpt was from one of his recent books *El barro de Medellín* (2008). I found his writing to be very descriptive, imaginative yet poetic: he maintains fluidity between sentences making the text easily readable. The story focuses on the lives of children living in an impoverished environment. I was overall very

impressed and keen on hearing more from this author. Having the opportunity to meet him in person and hearing him talk about his craft was definitely the biggest motivator for me in choosing his work for this project. He often stressed that children's literature must be written with simplicity and imagination so I tried to apply the same rule to my translation in order to stay true to the spirit of the genre.

To my good fortune, I discovered that one of his books, *El árbol solitario,* was also available in French and easily accessible. As a matter of fact, I had first read the story in French. Soon afterwards, I obtained the original Spanish publication along with a few other ones written for the same age category in order to get a better idea of Cerdá's writing style. I wanted to get started with the translation as quickly as possible.

What attracted me to *El árbol solitario* was the fact that it was a contemporary children's work, very well written, simple and with a sense of humour. It also emphasized important issues: a strong sense of community, activism and love and protection of the environment. I felt that the work was also ahead of its time: given that it was written in the 1980's when not as much attention was being paid to the importance of ecological preservation as today. *El árbol solitario* is not so much didactic as it is inspirational to children. To my pleasant surprise, it had never before been translated into English, which made it even more special because I had the privilege of presenting it to a whole new generation, while the issue of environmentalism is very current.

Fictional dialogue is an important part of *El árbol solitario* because it evokes the authenticity of the story. The continuous conversations show to the reader that the characters could potentially represent an everyday child, regardless of the fact that they deal with fantastical elements. Especially with dialogues, translators must be able to always see the bigger picture and contextualize the situation for the reader, and not solely translate literally word by word. They must be acquainted with the cultural norms and language conventions of both cultures and they must also bring their reading experience to the translated work as when it comes to children's literature, a translator's imagination and inspiration should come from their perception of childhood and that of a child. By incorporating all of these features, translators "enter into a dialogic relationship that ultimately involves readers, the author, the illustrator, the translator" (Oittinen, 2000, 3)

In what follows, I will provide a comparative analysis focusing on the target text (TT) which in this case is the French translation, and the original Spanish version, or the source text (ST), as my constant point of reference. Rather than using the defective tool of *back translation*, which can be described as translating word for word an already translated text back to the original language, to provide the meaning of the French TT and the Spanish ST, I will use my English translation for the reader. My aim is to analyze the different strategies and procedures used by the French translator, Marie-Claude Favreau, in order to determine different

possible methods and their effectiveness. I will also pay close attention to the linguistic proximity of Spanish and French and see whether there are language characteristics that pose a problem to the translator. Favreau, the French translator, appears to be in favour of domestication, a translation strategy discussed previously, and I would like to see whether domestication is always the best method when it comes to children's literature and how much domestication is necessary to enhance the readability of a text. It is possible that extreme domestication may lead to too much simplification which can spoil the text. I will pay special attention to the way the fictional dialogue is handled, as spoken by characters, and the literary language.

Semantic Strategies: Verb Tense and Aspect

The author's style is modified through translation. The mode of expression, the author's arrangement of words and paragraphs, his/her choice of vocabulary, all define his/her style. Depending on the target language (TL), the degree to which the author's style is modified can range from minor to drastic. On the basis of the analysis of verb tense and cultural expression, the French translator, Marie-Claude Favreau, favours the approach of "domestication". She takes liberties with the translation by playing around with the text to make it as transparent to the child reader as possible. She modifies verbal markers, in particular mood, to simplify the readability of the text, therefore affecting the aspectual difference,

which is “the temporal distribution of an event”, for example the completion, continuation or non-completion of an event (Baker, 98).

In the ST the children express their sadness that don Amadeus cannot be their teacher by saying.

— *Es una pena que usted no pueda darnos clase en el colegio – le decía Félix.¡Sería fenomenal!* (Cerdá,7 : my emphasis).

— *Ce serait fantastique que vous soyez notre professeur, lui dit toujours Félix* (Cerdá, trans. Favreau, 6).

“Too bad you can’t be our teacher” – said Felix—. “That would be the best!”

The underlined parts are to be examined. Due to its composition, the French translation does not contain the features in question. The sentence is stated in the present tense with the use of subjunctive (*pueda*) and it is also a negative statement. However, in the French translation, Favreau changes the mood to the conditional (‘*serait*) and turns the negative statement into an affirmative one. This is a very interesting choice given that French favours negation (Vinay and Darbelnet, 153). The sentence in the ST is broken up by a descriptive label: “said Felix”. Favreau combines the two into a single sentence. The use of the conditional clearly states the hypothetical, desired state of the event. While the condensing of the two sentences is effective, simple and short, it is not completely necessary and the sentence would have worked broken up. The Spanish use of the imperfect in the descriptive label is recreated in

French by adding the word '*toujours'*, which would explain the frequency of an action, but the verb is in the present, due to the preference of the present tense for storytelling in French (Vinay and Darbelnet, 153).

The tone, better explained as the way the author describes emotion in his characters, also shifts with the arrangement of words. The Spanish text switches from a more solemn tone expressing the disappointment of the children that don Amadeus cannot be their teacher to the enthusiastic tone at the possibility of it becoming true, adorned with an exclamation mark. The shortened French text remains joyful throughout without showing the contrast and the lack of an exclamation mark does not depict the excitement of children and the reason why don Amadeus prefers to hang out with them as opposed to being with the rest of the retirees.

When it came to my English translation, I felt that staying as close as possible to the ST worked well in English with some modifications. The use of contractions ('*can't'*) made the text sound more colloquial, as did my choice of cliché terms which I expect young children to be using, such as 'the best'. Much like Favreau, I chose to omit the part about the school, feeling it would sound over explanatory because teachers teach in schools: I chose to use the noun as opposed to the action, as shown in the ST, as there is no need to mention the institution. Since English uses the imperfect in different ways, it would not apply to this case, so keeping the story in the preterite works well when telling stories. Also, instead of

writing ‘It’s too bad’, it is just as easy to simply say something like ‘Too bad’.

When it comes to verb tense, it is there to “locate an event in the time” (Baker, 98) and even though in French, the tense system is highly developed, Favreau chooses to tell the story mostly in the present tense. The following excerpt is when Hugo and Grego are chosen by their school friends to destroy the big yellow machine by dumping a bucket of mud in its engine:

> — *Grego y Hugo resultaron elegidos por mayoría para realizar el plan, que consistía en volcar un cubo lleno de barro sobre el motor de la maquina* (Cerdá, 21).
>
> — *Grégoire et Hugo sont choisis pour mettre à execution le plan qui consiste à verser de la boue sur le moteur da la machine* (Cerdá, trans. Favreau, 21)
>
> Grego and Hugo were voted to carry out the plan, which consisted in dumping a bucket-full of mud over the machine’s engine”.

In the ST, the author uses a very frequent blend of tenses, that of [..] preterit (‘*resultaron’*), and the imperfect (‘*consistía’*) together. Whether in oral or literary storytelling, these two tenses are very common occurrences in Spanish. The imperfect serves as background information to the main event which interrupts the continuity of the background. Using the two events provides the reader with information regarding the aspect of an event, meaning that a reader knows the temporal distribution of the

event. To clarify, a reader knows that because one verb is used in the preterit tense, that verb is completed and therefore more important, while the verb in the imperfect is a continuous event, it is incomplete, not important and therefore takes second place.

This slightly complex combination of tenses does not appear to need simplification by the author who chooses to use it throughout the story. Keeping this in mind, he/she most likely trusts that a child reader as young as seven years old should be able to utilize and understand this complex verb structure. In the target text, however, it appears that Favreau does not find this aspect important because the preferred tense in the target text is the present indicative. By telling the story in the present, the reader gets the impression that the story is told like an outline, with no dimensions and is not informed by the story's timeline. The aspectual identification of the verb is lost when telling the story as well and no event appears to be more significant than any other. There is the possibility that Favreau thought that the present tense would be the simplest form of storytelling. French uses the complex tense structure of Spanish, so putting one verb in the *passé composé* and the other in the imperfect would have been possible. Contrary to Spanish, the difficulty in telling stories in the *passé composé* is that it is formed using an auxiliary verb and the past participle of the verb, therefore a constant use of it "would become rather heavy if it were repeated too often" (Vinay and Darbelnet, 153). This could make the readability more difficult, but it is not to say that

a seven-year old French speaker is not able to use and understand it, but it would make the text lengthier.

Syntactic Changes: Omissions and Additions

Omission

When translating children's books, translators often face the decision to adjust the text in order to facilitate the child's comprehension. This can come in many forms such as simplifying the sentences and the punctuation, omitting and adding of text, choosing different vocabulary, etc. It is easy to believe that just because the book being translated is intended for children, the author must have already considered all this but depending on society's perception of a child's ability to comprehend, the translator needs to make careful choices. For example, when it comes to omission, there are plenty of examples in Favreau's French translation:

> *— ¡Oh no! – protestaba el viejo profesor, mientras se llevaba las manos a la cabeza. Y sonriendo, explicaba —: Me limito a conservar mi pequeño laboratorio. En él investigo constantemente, eso sí.* (Cerdá, 8)
>
> *— Oh non! proteste le vieux professeur. Il explique alors en souriant : — Je me contente de faire des recherches dans mon petit laboratoire.* (Cerdá, trans.Favreau, 8)
>
> "Oh no!" – protested the old teacher shaking his head. Smiling, he explained: "I just keep a little lab where I do research all the time."

The Spanish text describes don Amadeus' action as he prepares for the conversation with the inquisitive children. His actions seem relevant to the story as he puts his hands to his head and smiles, giving the impression of being a good-humored old man who can handle any question and who enjoys being questioned as well. The French translation omits the part about him getting comfortable, which changes the reader's perception of don Amadeus slightly and it certainly does not provide the information on his overall mood. His smile could have many definitions: he could be uncomfortable or annoyed and just playing nice, but not necessarily prepared to take on many more questions.

This simplifying approach is advantageous when trying to correlate the text with the illustrations to make sure that everything is in the right place; however, in the context of domestication, or facilitating access to the text to by a younger audience, this method is unnecessary because the text does not surpass the child reader's ability to understand. My solution is to attempt to retain as much detail as possible, feeling it is essential to paint a better picture of the characters through body language and descriptions of their emotions.

Working with omission as a frequent tool can have a significant impact on the reader's perception of the character as touched upon earlier. In the following example, Favreau takes away a whole sentence regarding the children's lively, inquisitive and even slightly irritating

personalities which result in don Amadeus' exhausted, yet playful response:

— *Todo el que investiga, busca algo.*

— *¿Y que intenta descubrir usted?*

El corro de niños se apretaba, ansioso, en torno al paciente profesor.

— *¡Qué chiquillos! –suspiraba don Amadeo*. (Cerdá, 9)

— *Quand on fait des recherches, on trouve toujours quelque chose.*

— *Et vous, qu'essayez-vous de découvrir?*

— *Je ne sais pas encore.* [I don't know yet] (Cerdá, trans. Favreau, 9)

Anyone who's doing research is always looking for something.'

'And what do YOU wanna find?'

The children asked as they surrounded the patient teacher, eagerly awaiting his secret.

'What a bunch of rascals!' – don Amadeus sighed.

The omission of the one sentence changes the persona of don Amadeus and of the children. The author's attempt is to provide the reader with an image of how curious and excited the children are to find out about don Amadeus' research, which justifies their actions, because they are children after all and it is expected behaviour. The omission of the sentence also has a bearing on the end of the story because don Amadeus *does* have a secret discovery that the children will appreciate later on. They become

almost annoying with the never-ending questions, but the old professor does not seem to mind. In response to the children's behaviour, he sighs and humorously calls them 'brats', but means no harm. The French translation, however, produces a different character of don Amadeus. By omitting this sentence, the children's actions are not justified in any way and don Amadeus' response may seem neutral, which risks making the story boring because much description of the children's personalities is excluded.

Vocabulary

The word '*chiquillos'* is an interesting one because of its numerous meanings such as 'kids', 'youngsters', but in this context it could be interpreted as 'brats', or 'little rascals', which would reflect don Amadeus' perception of the children at this point in time. One can only speculate that the reason Favreau chose not to translate the word '*chiquillos'* is because calling the children names would not reflect on don Amadeus and may make him seem bad-tempered. As a solution, she chose to give an explanation (*"Je ne sais pas encore"* [I don't know yet]) which is not provided in the ST. It is also possible that the translator felt that calling children names, even as a joke, was not acceptable. Or it could have just been the translator's interpretation of don Amadeus' character.

This word also gave me a lot of difficulty as I tried to make sense of the reason behind using it as opposed to '*mocosos'* which means 'brats'. I came to the conclusion that '*mocosos'* would be slightly derogatory and

imply that the children are spoiled and badly-raised, but it is not the case here, and '*chiquillos'* has a lighter side to it, more humorous and shows that don Amadeus is not disrespecting the children, and he is also referring to them in the third person, thus not making it personal. This led me to decide on 'rascals' as the best translation because it does not reflect negatively on don Amadeus, rather he is perceived as being well-humoured and the word choice is suitable in this context.

Addition

Translators are constantly struggling to achieve equivalency and often this means that additional information may be necessary in order to best express the source text's intention. The following example describes the time when the neighbourhood children are questioning don Amadeus:

> *—El corro de niños se apretaba, ansioso, en torno al paciente profesor.* (Cerdá, 9)
>
> The children asked as they surrounded the patient teacher, eagerly awaiting his secret.

This sentence was omitted in the French translation, but I chose to keep it and add to it in order to make the story clearer. The word '*ansioso'* describes the children, and is usually translated as 'eager' but leaving it as is would sound unnatural because one has to be eager to do something, which in this case would be to find out (the secret). Adding 'the secret' can be seen as foreshadowing the story and the magic potion that don Amadeus is about to discover.

Should a translator deem it necessary, it is also possible to sometimes 'fluff up' the TT. Since *El árbol solitario* is craftily written with humour, I felt that I could use my poetic licence and reproduce some of it in the narrator's voice, which will be discussed in more detail later. In the description of don Amadeus, I use similes to mimic Cerdá's cheerful writing style:

> — *A pesar de sus muchos años, todo el mundo comenta que camina más tieso que el palo de una escoba.* (Cerdá, 6).
>
> — *Malgré son grand âge, tout le monde dit qu'il se tient droit comme un manche à balai.* (Cerdá trans. Favreau, 6)
>
> "Despite being as old as a dinosaur, everyone says that he walks straighter than a broom stick."

The French translation stays relatively faithful to the text, but, given that there is humour elsewhere in the text and the characters joke among themselves, I felt that a simile such as the one used would really animate the narrator's part and make the text even more fun to read. Humour is a prevalent characteristic of children's literature, so incorporating it into the translation makes the process so much more enjoyable for both the translator and the reader. It is important that a translator recognize his/her limits and not get carried away: in the end, the translator is there to convey the message and should not take advantage of the opportunity and assume complete authorship of the work. Addition in some cases is necessary and in others, it is a mere exploration of the translator's

creativity. Since the translator is the ultimate ruler of his/her work, he/she must be sensible and always maintain respect for the source text.

Idioms and Fixed Expressions

An idiom can best be described as “a phrase that is understood to have a meaning different from its literal meaning” (“Amusing Spanish Idioms”, 2012). Idioms are a big part of the culture usually with “frozen patterns of language which allow little or no variation in form and [...] often carry meanings which cannot be deducted from their individual components” (Baker, 63). They are usually difficult to translate especially if the author wishes to be playful with the language by pushing its boundaries and creating new ones.

— *Os advierto que yo tenía fama de “hueso.* (Cerdá, p.7)

— *J’avais la réputation d’être un professeur terrible.* (Cerdá, trans. Favreau, p.7)

“I warn you all, they used to say I was ‘as tough as nails’”.

Achieving the same sensitivity that a native speaker gets from an idiom is difficult or impossible for a translator to do. Regardless of the fact that two languages from the same linguistic group are in question, this idiom (*ser hueso/ tener fama de hueso*) does not have a counterpart in French. In Spanish, to describe a person as ‘*hueso’* (lit. ‘bone’), would mean that he/she is very demanding, hard to please and to deal with. The translator needs to first see whether the equivalent is available in the target language and in case it is not, there are many strategies: using an

idiom similar in meaning and form, paraphrasing, and translation by omission being some of them (Baker, 72-78). Favreau appears to have chosen something of a paraphrase. While she chooses to describe the professor's reputation as that of a terrible one, she bears the risk of misinterpretation of character by the reader, because the word '*terrible'* in French could mean 'frightening' and 'frightful' but also 'awful' and 'painful'. In other words, the children could have found the professor to be scary because he was very strict or they could have thought that his teaching skills were awful and he was just painful to listen to. A possible solution to this confusion is to provide the reader with a clear and simple explanation of the idiomatic expression, which in this case would be 'to be very tough' or '*avoir caractère dur'*. The translation would not have contained the playfulness and creativity that these expressions usually provide but it would have ensured that the reader clearly understood the story.

Another interesting expression follows after the neighbours come out to see all the trees that have taken over "their square":

— *A media mañana había tanta gente en la plaza que ya no cabía un alfiler* (Cerdá, 42).

— *Au milieu de la matinée, il y a un monde fou dans le parc* (41-42, Cerdá, trans. Farvreau).

"At mid-morning the square was so packed with people, it could burst."

The Spanish expression ‘no caber un alfiler’ literally means ‘to not have room for a single pin’ which the author uses to emphasize the impact of the event, because the place was so packed with people. The French translation slightly touches upon this stylistic feature, by saying that there was ‘a huge crowd’ (‘*un monde fou’*) but still omitting the part describing the enormity of the crowd. Omitting an idiom altogether is a possibility when there is absolutely no equivalent in the target text, when it is difficult to paraphrase or simply for stylistic reasons (Baker, 77). A possible translation of the expression ‘*no caber un alfiler’* in French could be ‘*plein à craquer’* which, as a matter of fact, appears to be very close to the English expression, meaning that something is ‘so packed it could burst’. Assuming that Favreau gave the work a lot of careful thought, it is possible that she chose not to use this expression for stylistic reasons or maybe she did not find it significant.

It is interesting to see that, even though the author refers to the place as ‘square’ (‘plaza’), Favreau calls it a park (‘parc’), possibly due to the fact that now there is a large quantity of trees there and she makes correlations with illustrations. In any case, the translation is simplified a great deal by paraphrasing and Favreau uses the typical phraseology of the target language, which enhances the readability of the work, though it is not always a close translation.

A translator needs to be careful not to misinterpret an idiom because sometimes they “offer a reasonable literal interpretation and their

idiomatic meanings are not necessarily signalled in the surrounding text" (Baker, 66). As is the case below, they can be very difficult to interpret. The following extract describes don Amadeus after he sensed that the three engineers were up to no good:

> — *El profesor, con cara de pocos amigos, se levantó para marcharse, a pesar de que aún era temprano* (Cerdá, 13).
>
> — *Le professeur a l'air soucieux; il se lève pour partir plus tôt que d'habitude* (Cerdá, trans. Favreau,12).
>
> "With a worried expression, the teacher got up to leave, even though it was still early."

The ST idiom, '*tener la cara de pocos amigos'* can have many interpretations: to have a sour look, to have an uneasy, unpleasant look, to have a menacing look, be worried or to be displeased. When it comes to interpreting the idiom, the person in question could be in a very bad mood and angry or they can just appear to be angry but not really feel it or they could just generally be a "spoilsport" in life. Unfortunately this idiom does not have its counterpart in French, but there are possible ways to paraphrase it as '*avoir une mine patibulaire*' ('to have a sinister expression'), '*avoir l'air renfrogné*' ('to have a disgruntled look'), '*être peu avenant'* and '*être désagréable'* ('to be unpleasant'). Any of these would have been a good choice for the TT but it appears that Favreau may have misinterpreted the idiom. Her translation ("*Le professeur a l'air soucieux*") simply means that the teacher is worried, which does not fall under any of

the possible interpretations of the idiom. Looking at the context, it is very likely that she interpreted the sentence by judging the overall mood of the situation and that she tried to create foreshadowing for the reader. She makes a correlation with the second half of the sentence and, judging by her punctuation, uses it to explain her choice, but it may not necessarily be the best interpretation.

Onomatopoeia

Onomatopoeia is best described as a word describing or imitating a certain sound and can be drastically different from language to language. When it comes to creating equivalences of onomatopoeic expressions, it can be a lot of fun to investigate and translate but “it is advisable to use traditional forms of expression” (Vinay and Darbelnet, 38). Transcriptions of sounds also vary greatly, sometimes even within the same language. For example, the English spelling for the sound of a frog can be either “ribbit” or “ribbet” and, depending on the type of frog, the onomatopoeic transcription can be “guaap” or even “kneedeep” (“What sound...”, 2012). Given this difference, it is best that translators utilize the most common, recognizable form in order to avoid confusion, especially when translating for a younger audience. Some examples of Spanish onomatopoeic expressions can be found in the following excerpt when Hugo and Grego pour mud over the machine’s engine in hopes of destroying it:

> — *‘¡Agarra de aquí’*
>
> *‘¡Cómo pesa!’*

— ‘¡¡¡Chisss!!!’

‘¡Cuidado, Hugo!’

‘¡Ahora! Arriba!’

¡¡¡Zas!!! (Cerdá, 22)

— Attrape le seau par ici!

“Plof!”

---------- (Cerdá, trans. Favreau, 22)

“Grab here!”

“It’s so heavy!”

“Shhh!”

“Careful, Hugo!”

“Now! Come on!”

Splash!

In Spanish, the way to tell a person to be quiet is to say “chis” or “chist”. Unfortunately, this expression was omitted in the French text, but a possible translation could have been “chut”. The second onomatopoeic expression shown is “zas” which has two uses in Spanish: “smack” when imitating a slap on the face, for example, or “splash” when describing an item falling in water or the sound that water makes when it falls. The latter interpretation is needed in the context of this story and Favreau has dealt with it appropriately by translating it as “plof” (also possible “plouf”). The

TT has been very simplified in comparison to the ST: omitting parts of the conversation between the two friends affects the intensity of the situation, making it appear much quicker and easier. The reader is not informed of Grego being nervous, complaining about the bucket's weight and not being able to 'keep it low' because of the panic. Simplifying the text by omitting parts of the dialogue as well as the onomatopoeic expression is not necessary: it takes away from the author's style and does not keep the reader engaged. Given that a seven-year old child reader, as indicated by the author, is capable of understanding onomatopoeia, the translator appears to have an even younger audience in mind, possibly those who cannot read by themselves. For this reason, much detail is lost in the French target text.

Sometimes onomatopoeic expressions can be very difficult to translate, especially when the author uses them in innovative ways. The following excerpt describes the liveliness of the square in the afternoon when all the children are out of school and have come to play. The author uses the onomatopoeic expression stylistically to break up the flow of the narrative by incorporating verbal language and therefore "breathing life" into the sentence by imitating the sounds children make with their stomping.

— *Sin embargo, por las tardes…¡Buff! ¡Por las tardes[…]!* (Cerdá, 5)

— *Mais l'après-midi…Ah! L'après-midi!* (Cerdá, trans Favreau, 5)

“But when the afternoon comes… It’s game time! In the afternoon [...]”

The Spanish term “buff” is best translated in English as “pff” imitating puffing or a short burst of breath. The source text resembles a puffing sound someone would make when nothing can compare to what it is that they are describing. It gives an impression that no words can describe what a short onomatopoeic expression can do. The way the author uses it changes the voice of the narrator as he/she moves from a very tranquil mood describing the quiet atmosphere of the square to an excited one with raised voice and exclamation marks. The French text produces a different voice in narration because the translator used a different onomatopoeic expression. For example, had Favreau translated the Spanish “buff” as “pouf”, the effect would have resembled that of the ST and the voice of the narrator would not have been changed. Instead, she chose the exclamation “Ah!” which has many interpretations: it could imply excitement, but also a much more relaxed tone of narrating. The mood does change, however not as drastically as it does in the SL.

In my English translation, I had to search for a different expression altogether. When addressing onomatopoeia, translators “are more likely to follow the textual conventions and linguistic norms of the target language” (Pascua-Fables, 117). In this respect “Spanish culture is more expressive” than English (Pascua-Fables, 117). By replacing ‘*buff*’ with the phrase ‘It’s game time!’, it is possible to transfer the implied meaning and more: the

use of the exclamation will change the tone of the sentence that is not even in the ST. The reader gets an impression that something big happens in the afternoon and that is it very exciting as well.

Plural vs. Singular

The English language tends to use the collective noun in a way "which at first is disconcerting to the French intellect" (Vinay and Darbelnet, 118). This could also apply to Spanish. Often, in the collective sense, when English uses the singular form (eg. 'fruit'), French and Spanish are more likely to use plural (eg. 'des fruits/ las frutas'). Other times, French and Spanish will use a singular form (eg. le pantalon/ el pantalón) whereas English will prefer the plural (eg. trousers). Then there are special cases, such as the example below describing the three engineers:

> — *Un día llegaron a la plaza tres señores con camisa blanca y corbata de rayas, un bigotito debajo de la nariz, una barriguita camuflada tras la chaqueta cruzada y un maletín de piel* (Cerdá, 11).
>
> — *Un jour, trois hommes en chemise blanche et cravate rayée entrent dans le parc. Ils ont une petite moustache sous le nez, un ventre bedonnant caché sous la veste et une mallette à la main* (Cerdá, trans Favreau, 11).
>
> "One day, three men came to the playground each with little mustaches under their noses, wearing white shirts, striped ties and

buttoned jackets covering their pot bellies while holding leather briefcases."

When translating a sentence such as this one, an English speaker is most likely to think in the plural. For example, "the men were wearing striped ties and white shirts" would match the pluralized subject. This way, one avoids the concept of three men wearing or sharing the same shirt and tie. However, in Spanish as well as in French the sentence sounds most natural when the object is in singular form. Interestingly, despite the linguistic proximity of Spanish and French, Favreau was not able to recreate this descriptive sentence into one whole one, making the decision to break it up into two parts. Or perhaps she was simplifying the sentence for the child reader. In any case, the concept of number presented tremendous difficulty for me and the only way to closely render the adjectives in singular form would be to use the word 'each' to single out every one of the men wearing the same thing. I had to break the sentence up also because in the English language a single noun does not carry the weight of multiple descriptive elements; rather it prefers very simple sentences. For this reason I had to rearrange certain words to make the sentence flow better, as it is already quite long. I could have simplified it like Favreau and possibly even more but I am confident that a child reader will be able to understand and envision the image of the three engineers, all identical.

Character Names and Titles

The translation of characters' names is a problem that every translator faces, especially when dealing with children's literature. The names always serve a purpose, be it cultural or textual; they have many associated functions such as "amusing the reader, imparting knowledge or evoking emotions" (Van Coillie, 124). The risk with leaving the names in the original language is that it may be difficult to pronounce them or "it may not have the desired connotations in the target language" (Van Coillie, 125). The translator must then "decide not only how to translate, but when to translate and when to leave words in the original" (Jentsch, 191). The names that are "readily understood by the target audience and those that have no further significance can and should be left in the original" (Jentsch, 191). In case a translator decides to change the character's name, he/she must ensure that it "will function precisely as the original name does" (Van Coillie, 124). The name is always bound to have an impact on the reader regardless of whether it has been translated or not. Van Coillie proposes ten translation strategies for dealing with character names: reproduction; non-translation accompanied by additional explanation; replacement by a common noun; phonetic or morphological adaptation; replacement by a counterpart in the TL; replacement by an international name; replacement by another name in the TL; translation in case a name carries a specific connotation; replacement by a name with additional connotation and lastly deletion (Van Coillie, 125-129).

In my opinion, translating characters' names is the most extreme form of domestication, because a translator erases the last link connecting the readers with the source culture, often referred to as 'foreignness'. The text is left without any cultural connotations, leaving the reader feeling at ease because they are in their comfort zone. If the name has a certain connotation, it is most likely necessary to translate it because of its importance. Luckily, in *El árbol solitario* this was not the case, so I was only partially exposed to the problem of character names. Below is a list of the character names mentioned in the book:

Spanish	**French**	**English**
Hugo	Hugo	Hugo
Don Amadeo	Monsieur Amédée	don Amadeus
Cecilia	Cécile	Cecilia
Grego	Grégoire	Grego
Aure(lia)	Alex	Aurelia
Félix	Félix	Felix
Don Ricardo	Monsieur Pichard	*Mr. Ricardo (org. *don Ricardo)*

The name of the protagonist don Amadeo is a special case in that it is accompanied by a title as in don Ricardo, which I will comment on later. In Spanish culture, as well as in Portuguese and Italian, the honorific title '*don'* (sing. masc.) or '*doña'* (sing.fem) are roughly equivalent to the English 'Mr.' and 'Mrs./Ms.' and are followed by a person's first name, unlike in English, where the title precedes the last name. The title 'don*'* is also used to address a person in a familiar way, which is another characteristic setting it apart from the English 'Mr'. This honorific title is not completely unknown to the English world and almost certainly owing to earlier translators who recognized that it does not have an English counterpart and therefore kept it. For example, the Spanish legend of Don Juan, which may be better known through Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni,* is known in the Anglophone culture with the title included. Another example among many would be Don Diego de la Vega, the true identity behind the legend of Zorro ("Don Diego", nd). Given the English speaker's familiarity with this part of Latin culture, I chose to use non-translation as a strategy to deal with the title. In order to distinguish the title from the English name 'Don' I opted for writing leaving it as is and in small case letters. When it comes to the first name of the protagonist ('Amadeo') I opted for 'replacement by a counterpart in the TL', which is the original Latin form of the name Amadeus. The reason I decided to replace the name is that I felt that it will accommodate the reader better while still retaining its cultural association. The Latin version of the name is actually longer, which may

not always be the best way to deal with names, but I feel that it is a well enough known form of the name.

The French translator takes a different approach to dealing with the name of don Amadeo. Choosing a French equivalent for both the title (‘Monsieur’) as well as the name (‘Amédée), Favreau uses the concept of domestication to its fullest potential and takes away any ‘foreignness’ left in the character’s name. Due to my lack of knowledge of how the Spanish title of ‘don’ is received in the French culture, I am not able to provide a possible reason as to why she chose to substitute it with ‘monsieur’, the French equivalent of ‘Mr’, even though that is not the closest translation of the word.

Another instance where the title ‘don’ is mentioned in the book is when the children talk about another teacher at school calling him ‘don Ricardo’. I felt that, since the person in question was only mentioned once and was not a character in the book, it was not significant enough for me to preserve the title, especially for a child reader. This is not to say that a reader would not be able to handle the title, but since don Ricardo is not a character, I took the poetic license to change his title finding it was not important to prove his relationship with the children. When using the title ‘don’, the child readers are informed that there is a difference between characters: they may not recognize ‘don’ as an honorific term or what it means, but they may understand that it is foreign and applies to an authority figure, which would prove my efforts worthwhile. According to the

children’s impression of don Ricardo, they are not too fond of him, and so I found it beneficial to have the option of addressing him as a stranger (‘Mr. Ricardo’) and distinguishing him from the adored don Amadeus. When it comes to the first name, however, I did not feel comfortable taking it away from the character, even though it could easily have been turned into the English counterpart of ‘Richard’. I also felt that the original sounded rather charming and went well with all the other character names that ended with an ‘o’. I am not radically opposed to translating names or having unfamiliar words in a text, but translators need to prioritize and see what kind of an impact they wish to have on the reader and how they want the reader to remember the book.

Favreau, on the other hand, uses her poetic license and chooses ‘translation’ as a strategy while playing with the connotation of the name. Instead of choosing the French equivalent of ‘Ricardo’, which is ‘Richard’, Favreau chooses ‘Pichard’, which has many spellings in English and even in French, but it is essentially French, referring to people from the region of Picardy in Northern France, and most interestingly “or it can be derived from a French personal name compounded of the elements "Pic -hard" with the strange translation of "sharp and hardy" (“Last Name: Pickard”, 2012). The second origin corresponds perfectly to the context and the way the children perceived don Ricardo. It is a great effort on the translator’s behalf, but I am sceptical that her efforts will be recognized by a child reader. As said by Rita Törnqvist, a Norwegian translator, a child will not

go to the extent of grabbing an encyclopedia or go to the library to research elements of the book (quoted in Van Coillie, 133).

Accents in names are rarely seen in English because it is not a diacritical language, but not completely unusual. In the case of *domestication*, a name may be adapted in the TL but the accent taken away, as is the case with Felix (‘*Félix*’). In the case of *foreignization*, the complete original name is transferred to the TL, as is the case with Hugo. The name ‘Hugo’ is the Latin form of the name known to the English world as ‘Hugh’. I chose not to translate the name because in my opinion, it looks better on a page and it is a very charming name for a child. Favreau did not change the name as well because it is already a familiar name in the French culture. I feel that, in the case of children’s literature, it is best to eliminate accents when translating into English, in case the reader is not bilingual or familiar with another culture’s orthography. In the French translation, character names such as Cecilia are spelled with an accent because that is the correct way of the name. French children are accustomed to accents as they are an essential part of the orthography, but leaving the name in its original Spanish form, may be unusual. As for English, It is best to take them out in order to facilitate reading and avoid confusion.

Character nicknames have special connotations in the source language. Leaving the original spelling of a name in the target text automatically increases the level of ‘foreignness’ and can sound odd or

“awkward to pronounce” (Van Coillie, 130). For example, the character of Aurelia has her name shortened to Aure, whose name has numerous variants in English such as Aurelie, Aurellia, Auriella, Orelia, and Auralia (“Aurelia, 2012). To solve the issue with the nickname, I chose replacement by a counterpart in the TL. I did not give the character another form of a nickname in the TL feeling it was not vital to the plot, but I aimed to preserve her identity more or less. In Spanish, however, Aure, tells the reader more about her background than some of the other characters. For example, she could be called by her nicknames because that is how her parents and other adults refer to her, or she could have been nicknamed by her friends because her name is too long, possibly too ‘grown-up’ in children’s eyes, or simply out of affection.

The same can be said for Grego, which is short for Gregorio, the Spanish equivalent of Gregory. I chose to leave it in Spanish because it rhymed well with Hugo and to an English speaker, who may not note its resemblance to its English counterpart ‘Greg’, it is not difficult to pronounce, it sounds exotic, fun, more youthful and playful because it rhymes with other character names.

Favreau dealt with these nicknames quite differently by opting for substitution with the French equivalent or by giving a new name altogether. When it comes to Aurelia, its French equivalent would be Aurélia, but for an unknown reason, Favreau chose to refer to the character as Alex. It is most likely that the translator found Alex to be an

easier name to pronounce to a French speaker. In any case, Aurélia is not an unfamiliar name in the French culture just like Grego, which ended up taking on an even longer version of the name: Grégoire. The spelling of Grégoire is not youthful sounding and amusing like ‘Grego’, which I think a French speaking child would enjoy pronouncing, but the translator obviously felt that it was necessary to translate all the character names for the purpose of domestication.

Social Register

Social register is best defined as “a variety of language that a language user considers appropriate to a specific situation” (Baker, 15). Register variations arise from three distinct categories: the *field of discourse* or the way texts functions together with the activity, *the tenor of discourse* or the lexicon used, steered by the relationship between the speakers, and lastly *the mode of discourse* or the function (speech, essay etc.) which includes the transmission of language (written, spoken) (Baker, 16). Determining what kind of language is appropriate in a particular situation varies from one social group to the next and from one culture to the next. A translator has the linguistic and cultural knowledge which provides him/her with the flexibility to modify the target text and ensure that it agrees with the assumed audience. A very culture-specific register marker is the Spanish personal pronoun ‘you’. Unlike English, Spanish has many variations of this pronoun: the singular informal form (*tú*/*vos*) and its plural (*vosotros*/*vosotras*) which also indicates the gender of the addressee, and

the singular formal form (*usted*) and its plural (*ustedes*) which does not indicate the gender of the addressee. The difference between these is primarily in the tenor although the field also dictates, to a certain extent, the culturally imposed requirements for the appropriate use of the pronoun. For example, in Spanish, when children in Latin America speak among themselves, they are most likely to use the informal '*tú'*, or '*vos'*, which is the case with many countries of Central America. The reason for this is that '*tú'* is used when familiarity between speakers is implied; they can be from the same social circle and of the same age. However, when children address adults, strangers, or other authority figures, sometimes including family members, they are expected to use the formal '*usted'* in Latin America. This pronoun is used in order to express respect towards the other person. It is somewhat of an honorific title ("When do I use tu", 2012).

The difficulty when translating into English is that the social register cannot be transposed through pronouns because the personal pronoun 'you' in English can be used to address one or more persons, regardless of their age, social superiority, and their relationship with the speaker. For this reason, a translator must find the appropriate register in different places such as vocabulary or using the formal or informal speech. The following example demonstrates the different personal pronouns as practiced in Spanish society:

— ¿Qué <u>van</u> a hacer? – preguntó Hugo.

Ya lo verás, chaval – contestó un obrero. Os vamos a arreglar la plaza. (Cerdá, 14)

— Qu'allez-vous faire? leur demande Hugo.

Tu verras bien, mon garçon, répond un des ouvriers. Nous allons rénover le parc. (Cerdá trans. Favreau 13)

"What are you going to do?" – He asked.

"You'll see kiddo" – answered one of the workers— "we're gonna fix up your playground."

The first sentence which is spoken by Hugo, a child, has a verb ('*van'*) which is conjugated to correspond to the formal pronoun 'you' in the plural (*'ustedes'*). This demonstrates that in Spanish society, a child addresses an authority figure, who also happens to be a stranger, with a formal 'you'. Hugo puts the verb in plural because he is referring to a group of unfamiliar adults. Using the informal pronoun (*'vosotros'*) would imply that he is either familiar with the construction workers, of the same age and from the same field, or that he is even being slightly impolite for an unknown reason. When the worker answers, he addresses Hugo informally by conjugating the verb to second person singular and in the future tense ('*verás'*). He then addresses the group of children ('os') by conjugating the indirect object to the form of 'vosotros', otherwise known as informal plural.

When it comes to translation of social register in Spanish, it is easier to accomplish in French, which happens to have the formal ('*vous'*)

and informal (‘*tu’*) personal pronoun. Unfortunately, the plural form of the singular formal pronoun does not change (‘*vous’*), and the plural form of the informal pronoun ‘tu’ is also ‘vous’, for which the Spanish text uses ‘vosotros/ vosotras’. The social register is translated successfully into French, with minor changes. When Hugo addresses the workers, Favreau uses the formal ‘vous’, and when the worker replies, he addresses Hugo informally (‘*tu verras’*), but the TT fails to address the group of children, which in the ST is shown through the indirect object for ‘vosotros’ (‘*os’*). Rather the translator just carries on with the workers’ intention of reconstructing the square.

Finding an equivalent of the social register is not as easy in English and a translator has to resort to other textual characteristics such as sentence structure or vocabulary. Modern English does not have variants of the pronoun ‘you’ but this does not mean that formality is unknown to an English speaker. A sign of informality in English, for example, can be expressed through contraction of words, which imitates orality and makes the language sound more idiomatic. What I have done is use this strategy to inform the reader of the relationship between the speakers. For example, when Hugo addresses a stranger, he does not use contractions, which would be characteristic of a higher register, demonstrating a tone of politeness and respect. The worker, on the other hand, uses a lower register when speaking to a child, which is characterized by contractions (‘you’ll see’ and ‘we’re gonna’). By adding an everyday endearment term

'kiddo', the worker's relationship toward Hugo demonstrates that of a familiar one or simply one that does not require formality, given the circumstances.

Narrator's Voice

Social register is also a big part of the narration in *El árbol solitario*. Although the ST appears to be "aimed at a much 'higher' readership", the language used is in fact the standard for telling stories in Spanish (Rudvin and Orlati, 173). In her book, *The Narrator's Voice: The Dilemma of Children's Fiction* (1991), the well-known translator Barbara Wall presents three techniques that authors of children's literature have used to address the reader when narrating: *double address*, *single address* and *dual address*. The first one "was used in the early days of children's literature" when authors wrote "to please the adult reader looking over the child's shoulder" (Birketveit, 2011). The *single address* is "intended to please and be understood by the child reader disregarding adult response", and *dual address* is narrating style assuming that "children can understand complex texts and therefore speaks to the adult and the child alike" (Birketveit, 2011). In my opinion, Cerdá's narrator uses dual address as he maintains a higher register whose "syntactic and lexical clarity [is] entirely suited for a juvenile readership" (Rudvin and Orlati, 173). Below is an example of the text's higher register, with a more formal tone.

— *Por las mañanas, cuando los niños están en el colegio y hace buen tiempo, se reúnen en ella muchos ancianos que ya no*

trabajan. También suelen ir algunas madres con niños pequeños, de los que todavía no van al cole. (Cerdá, 5).

— *Le matin, guand les élèves sont en clase et qu'il fait beau, les gens âgés s'y retrouvent et des parents viennent y promener les enfants qui ne vont pas encore à l'école* (Cerdá trans. Favreau, 5)

"In the morning, when the children are at school and the weather is nice, many old people hang out there. Mothers with little children who can't go to school can also be spotted there."

Given the flexibility and expressivity of the ST, a sentence can be broken up with a coma, which is followed by a long description, and then continue, as is the case with the first sentence. Given that the age of the intended reader is seven, this complex sentence structure may be quite difficult to deal with. After all, a child of this age is just learning how to read books. The author also elevates the register by his explanation, as in the second sentence. Had he wished to simplify the narrator's voice strictly for a *single address* he could have just written something like "Moms with little preschool children also go there". Instead, he first states that mothers with little children also go there, following an explanation that those children still do not go to school. This only elongates the sentence, which could also be the reason why the author chooses to shorten '*colegio'* (school) to '*cole'*, by bringing the register down a bit. Favreau does a great job with simplifying the French text and combining the two sentences. Even though the sentence may be long, it has a beautiful flow and is not difficult to read.

She does not over explain, nor get too creative with the sentence structure.

Cerdá's skilful writing style demonstrates a blend between the registers, which shows him accommodating the parent as well as the child reader. In the following example, he incorporates very proper syntax with silly, scatological humour that children adore:

> — *A la mañana siguiente, muy temprano, apareció una máquina enorme y amarilla. Resoplaba al andar y echaba humo con pedorretas por una chimenea larga y sucia. (Cerdá, 13).*
>
> — *Le lendemain matin, de bonne heure, une machine jaune, énorme, arrive dans le parc. Elle avance en soufflant et, par un gros tuyau sale, crache de la fumée en pétaradant.* (Cerdá trans. Favreau, 13)
>
> "Early next morning a giant yellow machine appeared. It huffed and puffed as it moved, farting smoke out of its long, dirty exhaust pipe."

Even though the narrator's tone remains formal throughout most of the book, Cerdá likes to throw in a very informal remark often, such as in this case. The word '*pedorretas'* in Spanish means 'little farts' and the expression '*hacer/echar pedorretas'* is the sound a child might make with their mouth in order to imitate a farting sound. The French translation does not retain any vulgarities and therefore keeps the higher register. As for the English translation, I enjoyed dressing up this sentence by adding 'loud' for exaggeration and 'spew' in order to give a disgusting image of

the giant machine, as it may be interpreted by one of the child characters. It was this sentence that gave me the freedom to lower the register completely throughout my translation. I felt that in English, the high register would not work with children, especially for a very young audience. A lower register will also make the text more readable for a child. Due to the translator's power to manipulate the text, such as in this case, a translator becomes visible. A translator that is "visible or audible as a narrator is often more tangible in translated children's literature than in literature for adults" (O'Sullivan, 2003). This visibility is the essence of 'foreignization' because it interferes with fluidity of text and takes the reader "abroad" and closer to the origin of text. For this reason, I prefer to leave traces of the original higher register all throughout the text, but the informal language prevails through the use of contractions and vocabulary that demonstrates colloquial speech.

Culture-Specific Collocations

Languages vary in their expressivity for various reasons: every culture views the world in a distinct way; it has been influenced by different circumstances which create culture-specific concepts that lack counterparts in other languages. These distinct terms will not evoke the same emotions in a target reader as they do in a native speaker nor will they have the same cultural significance even if translated as closely as possible. The target reader's unfamiliarity with these collocations has to be made up with "a partial increase in information" (Baker, 60). It is tempting

sometimes to disregard the importance of these concepts, especially in children's literature, and to just simplify the text. However, the translator must keep in mind that the "writer constantly chooses words and phrases, compelled by intuitions and reasons that often have more to do with language than their own intentions" (Levine, xiii). This careful decision-making should also be undertaken by the translator. In *El árbol solitario*, there are many culture-specific collocations; certain ones, such as the significance of the title *don* were previously discussed, but there are yet many more. The Spanish word '*plaza'* is normally translated as a 'city square'; referring to a public area, but it is also often seen in the original language given its specificity. In Spanish, this word is not simply a square, such as a city square, rather it is a place for social life, "the living room of a city" and "a symbolic place that represents the whole society" ("The Plaza...", 2012). A plaza is a place where people meet, socialize and enjoy themselves: they are normally blocked off from traffic, have formal and informal seating, and the focal point usually tends to be a fountain along with public art "that reflects the city's history and traditions and supports children's play" ("The Plaza...", 2012). Nowadays it is also more frequent to see plazas with lots of trees. The French text translates this word as '*parc'*, and this could be due to the fact that there are so many trees in this square and throughout the story, so eventually the place does somewhat turn into a park. To solve the problem of equivalency, I chose to refer to the plaza as a 'square' when the narrator talks about it and to call it a

'playground' when the children talk about it, or when grownups (ex. construction workers) speak to children and 'get down to their level'. I chose this because, to the children, the square is a personal and cherished place. They play there all the time and enjoy it, so calling the place a 'square', does not communicate to the reader their feeling of attachment, whereas 'playground' closely represents playing of games and having a good time.

Another culture specific term is one of the children's many favourite pastimes to do in the square: soccer. In the following example, the narrator describes the children's disappointment with the new square.

> — *Tampoco se podía jugar a la pelota porque sólo con un árbol no se puede hacer una portería* (Cerdá, 16-17).
>
> — *On ne peut même jouer au ballon parce que pour faire un but il faut au moins deux arbres* (Cerdá, 16).
>
> "Playing soccer was also difficult because with only one tree, you can't make a goal post".

Just like hockey holds a special spot in Canadians' hearts, soccer is the same to Spaniards, possibly even greater. As a matter of fact, soccer is referred to as the new religion in Spain because "once upon a time the essential Sunday activity was going to church in the morning, now it is watching the Sunday night fixtures" ("Soccer in Spain", 2012). Spain's soccer team Real Madrid is "the most successful soccer team in Europe", so it is obvious that the nation takes its sports seriously ("Soccer in Spain,

2012). As for the children in the story, soccer is also a big part of their lives and a sport they choose to practice after school hours. The ST does not mention the word ‘soccer’, or ‘*fútbol’* in Spanish, but the expression ‘*jugar a la pelota’* (playing ball) in a country with such a great history of soccer, this could only mean one thing, which is probably why it is not even mentioned: the Spanish reader will automatically know. This is the significance of a culture-specific term: it means so much to the native speaker that the real word does not even have to appear in the text. Unlike Favreau, I chose to translate this expression as ‘soccer’ in my TT because a Canadian child may not have the same understanding of the word, after all, playing ball could mean a lot of things in Canada because a ball is used in countless sports. As an extreme form of domestication, I could have substituted the word ‘soccer’ with ‘street hockey’, and that would be something a Canadian child could easily relate to, but I wished to leave a trace of the foreign culture.

Translating a Language that is not my Mother Tongue

Next to speaking, translating is perhaps the most important language-learning activity. It is crucial that the TT meaning always reflects the ST and that the mother tongue does not disrupt the language structures, which still happens unintentionally (Krajka). When it comes to many of the linguistic characteristics discussed above such as idioms, vocabulary, or culture specific collocations, translators “working into a foreign language cannot hope to achieve the same sensitivity that native speakers seem to

have" (Baker, 65). For this reason, a translator needs to always work *into* a "language of habitual use or mother tongue", which is why I translate into English (Baker, 65). I have been speaking English since the age of twelve and I find myself communicating in it just as well, or perhaps even better than I do in my mother tongue, which is Serbian. Because I have spent the majority of my academic years reading, writing, speaking and even thinking in English, I regard it as my primary language of communication. When it comes to Spanish and French, I started studying them quite early in my life as well, taking my first Spanish lessons in junior high and French in high school. Among the two, I know that Spanish is my 'better' language, but nevertheless, I want to continue studying French. My mother tongue plays a significant role in the way I learn all of the other languages and it shares many characteristics with Spanish and French when it comes to general language structure and expression. When translating, the "influence of the source language […] has to be controlled" as well, for which reason, I struggled with awkwardness in my translation for a long time, not being able to let go of the Spanish (Krajka). Often, even though a translator may be well aware of how something is said in the target language, the desire to stay true to the source text disrupts the work and that is how an awkward translation comes about. Once the work is completed, a translator needs to leave the source text behind and focus solely on the expression of the target text in order to make the text equivalent.

CONCLUSION

Upon starting this project, my goal was to determine whether it is possible to foreignize a children's text and still achieve fluency. Since 'foreignization' does not make the text transparent, as readability becomes affected by the interruption of unknown terms or concepts, it would be impossible to wish for complete fluency. However, my goal was to take the reader "abroad" but not to the point of losing sight of 'his/her home'. From a translator's point of view, it is the ultimate achievement when the text is made accessible in the target language and the reader gets acquainted with the source culture. The steps I took throughout my research included applying numerous translation methods to my work such as addition, omission, paraphrase, to name a few. Some of the challenges that I came across involved the untranslatable culture-specific concepts.

Another significant factor that impacted my work was the fact that I was not translating from my mother tongue, which contributes to my lacking the sensitive ear that only a native speaker can offer. On the bright side, I acquired an immense knowledge of the functionality of Spanish and French languages, and sometimes English, which only made me appreciate the experience even more. It was the translation process that made this project most advantageous: I have gained insight into the culture and the mentality of Spain. I have strengthened the task of "living" in two (or more) worlds" meaning that I was able to "maintain mental models of the cultures involved" (Krieger, nd). I have confirmed over and

over that a translator must above all believe in the value of the material: in my case, the book is worthwhile because it stands for good quality of children's literature, it offers a different perspective on life, it takes the reader to another place and teaches him/her about the lives of people from different backgrounds and ideologies.

As a "pioneering" translator, still learning about the language and the culture, thus exposing myself to big risks but nevertheless, I have tried my hardest and "place[d] a value on language itself, recognizing that culture is bound up in language" (Krieger, nd.) Should this work be published, it will reach an even wider audience and children in the English speaking world will be able to read and learn about Spain and Spanish culture. I hope that they will appreciate and enjoy the work as much as I did and be inspired to go "inside" the Spanish culture.

The Magic Formula

Hugo

Don Amadeus

Cecilia

Grego

1
The Best Playground on Earth

The town square where Hugo and the other children play is the best place on Earth. There is nothing better! After all, it is the only one in the neighbourhood.

In the morning, when the children are at school and the weather is nice, many old people hang out there. Mothers with little children who can't go to school can also be spotted there.

But when the afternoon comes… It's game time! In the afternoon, it's crazy, I tell you! That's where all the kids from the neighbourhood go: Hugo, Cecilia, Aurelia, Grego, Felix…and lots more! The square becomes a crazy playground with all the screaming and running around! The respected don Amadeus also goes there; he is the old chemistry and science teacher.

He doesn't like to hang out with old retired farts in the morning,

even though he *is* one. That's why he likes to be with the kids: they know how to have fun.

Don Amadeus is tall, slim, and the two strands of hair he has left on his head are as white as snow. Despite being as old as a dinosaur, everyone says that he walks straighter than a broom stick. Everyone loves don Amadeus. He's always telling amazing stories and helps the kids with their homework: but don't tell anyone: that's a secret.

"Too bad you can't be our teacher" – said Felix—. "That would be the best!"

"Don't kid yourself, son" – don Amadeus said with a smile – "I'd turn into a mean old fart."

"Doesn't matter, I'd still like it…!"

"I warn you, they used to say I was 'as tough as nails'".

"You gotta meet Mr. Cockroach then" – said Hugo.

"'Mr. Cockroach!' What kind of a name is that? Show some respect."

"I meant to say Mr. Ricardo" – said Hugo. "Now HE really is a mean old fart."

"Maybe it's because you don't study hard enough?"

"Whatever! I study all day…"

"Yeah right!" – everyone rolled their eyes at Hugo.

Don Amadeus smiled at the kids' funny explanations. There wasn't

a single afternoon that would go by that a group of kids would fail to hang around him.

“You’re a genius, don Amadeus” – Grego would tell him.

“What nonsense!”

“That’s what my dad says. He also says you invent things.”

“Oh no!” – protested the old teacher shaking his head. Smiling, he explained: “I just keep a little lab where I do research all the time.”

“Are you trying to discover something?” – the children eagerly asked.

“Anyone who’s doing research is always looking for something”

“And what do YOU wanna find?”

The children asked as they surrounded the patient teacher, eagerly awaiting his secret.

“What a bunch of rascals!” – don Amadeus sighed.

“Are you gonna make a bomb?”

“What? NO! I don’t want to destroy anything.”

“A machine…?”

“Perhaps, but it will be something important.”

“Can we go see your lab one day?”

“Sure, come whenever you like.”

And like that, life went on peacefully in this little playground.

2

Hugo and his friends spend their time in the neighborhood square, they go there every afternoon and play non-stop. But then one day, the problems begin…

The Ginormous Machine

One day, three men came to the square each with little mustaches under their noses, wearing white shirts, striped ties and buttoned jackets covering their pot bellies while holding leather briefcases.

Hugo warned the others:

“Hey, look at those weird guys!”

Those men were checking everything out: top to bottom, bottom to top, right to left, left to right…and they measured it all: the square, the sidewalks, the trees, the walls on the buildings ….

“These men are up to no good”. – said don Amadeus.

Those three men scribbled something on a map then brushed something off their pants, as if they had dirt on them, and left in the same direction where they had come from.

“Did you see that, don Amadeus?” – Cecilia asked him.

“I saw it and I don’t like it one bit.”

With a worried expression, the teacher got up to leave, even though it was still early.

“Don Amadeus, tell us the story about the city that had it all.”

“Sorry children, I’m just not in the mood. Maybe next time” – And so he got up and went home.

The next morning a giant yellow machine appeared. It huffed and puffed as it moved, farting smoke out of its long and dirty exhaust pipe. A truck filled with machinery soon followed, and behind that truck a van filled with workers.

And just like that, with no explanations, they kicked everyone out of the square. In the late afternoon, Hugo approached the workers with determination.

“What are you going to do?” – He asked.

“You’ll see kiddo” – answered one of the workers— “we’re gonna fix up your playground.”

“But we like it the way it is…!”

The workers fenced off the square forcing the kids to play in a small crammed corner for weeks and weeks. Many of them soon got bored and decided to stay at home watching TV.

One afternoon, when the whole neighbourhood was getting anxious due to the never-ending construction, the workers started taking down the fence.

They finished at last! Seeing the new square the kids were disappointed: it was half its original size. In its place was a large parking

lot and worst of all, only one tree remained in the centre. It was very sad to see it so lonely, withered, and covered with dust.

That machine had devoured more than half the square.

The grown-ups on the other hand loved the new parking lot. They were so happy that night!

“It’s about time we had a parking lot in the neighbourhood” – they said – “Now we can park closer to home.”

What could be done? The kids went back to play in the playground, or should I say, what was left of it. But it just wasn’t the same anymore.

It was impossible to run around. There were cars everywhere. Playing soccer was also difficult because with only one tree, you can’t make a goal post.

It was then that the kids began to call it “One-Tree Playground”.

Don Amadeus became even grumpier. Sometimes he’d sit on a bench and just start grumbling out loud:

“What they’ve done with the playground is a disaster! And I’ll say it again. It’s not fair! It’s inhumane! … It’s UGLY! This parking lot is just so ugly…!”

3

Don Amadeus and the children don’t like the parking lot that was made from their beloved square. It’s no longer possible to have fun there and it’s all because of that horrible yellow machine...

Mud Bucket

Several months passed and all the kids had already forgotten what the playground was like before the construction took place. It was spring and the lonely tree was blooming beautifully with its green leaves.

One afternoon, the three men in white shirts and striped ties came back to the neighbourhood. This time, all the kids stopped playing and a deep silence reigned in the playground. Those men started measuring everything again, taking out maps and dusting off their pants as if they had gotten dirty.

“If they start with the construction stuff again we’ll end up with no playground at all” – said Cecilia.

“And if they take the playground away” – Felix continued – “we’ll never play outside again.”

“Or see each other.”

“We’ll get so bored.”

“And we’ll stop being friends.”

This made Hugo so mad that he screamed:

“We’re not gonna let them do this to us!”

Just as everyone feared, the next day that ginormous, yellow machine showed up again. And the truck full of equipment arrived. And the workers in the van arrived.

Hugo had a determined expression and said once more:

“We’re not gonna let them do this to us!”

“What can we do?” – Aurelia asked him.

Hugo scratched his head and said:

“We’re gonna break that machine!

“That’s a great idea!” – said Grego, nudging him gently. – “But...how are we gonna to do that?”

“Now listen up: we need a big bucket and a lot of mud...”

Don Amadeus, who was eavesdropping on their conversation from his balcony, played dumb.

Grego and Hugo were voted to carry out the plan, which consisted in dumping a bucket-full of mud over the machine’s engine. The two hid in a doorway with the bucket ready. They waited there eagerly. When the workers were gone, they sneaked out of the doorway, with innocent faces.

“Help me! I can’t do it all by myself!” – Hugo complained.

“Sorry, I’m just so nervous” – Grego apologized. – “What do I gotta do? I forgot.”

“Grab here!”

“It’s so heavy!”

“Shhh!”

“Careful, Hugo!”

“Now! Come on!”

Splash! They dumped the mud and ran away in the blink of an eye. They did it so fast that the workers had no time to react.

The machine couldn’t work that day but the following morning, it was already cleaned and fixed, ready to get back into action.

All the kids watched the workers cut down their beloved tree with an electric saw. They saw it fall down and get chopped up into pieces before getting loaded onto a truck.

Mid-afternoon, when the workers had left, the kids went to the playground. What a disaster! The whole place was covered with cement. They looked at the spot where the old tree used to be. The poor tree! Only a little stump remained. The kids sat around it, in silence.

4

Hugo and his friends decide to stop the construction work. They try to destroy that nasty machine with a bucket of mud...but it’s no use.

The Magic Formula

By nightfall, the kids were giving up hope that they would ever get their playground back. They went home in silence. On their way home, they passed by don Amadeus’ place and suddenly remembered him.

“Why don’t we go upstairs to see don Amadeus’ lab?”

Lacking much enthusiasm, they went upstairs and rang the doorbell.

The professor, as always, gave them a warm welcome.

“Well hello, kids...” – he said.

“We were passing by and ... wanted to see your lab.”

"Come in, come in, I'll show it to you. It's nothing special, but it works for me."

Don Amadeus noticed the kids' sad faces and said:

"What's with the long faces? Are you worried about the playground? You shouldn't have to worry about that. The ones who should be worried are all the neighbours near the playground."

"They all like their parking lot" – Grego assured him.

"You have to make us a new playground, don Amadeus" — added Cecilia.

Hugo started scratching his head real fast, a sure sign that a great idea was about to come.

Don Amadeus led the kids through a long hallway and into a big room. He opened the door slowly and turned the light on.

"This is my little lab."

"Look at all the stuff!"

It was a strange place, or at least that's what the kids thought. There was a giant glass cabinet full of jars: it covered the whole wall. There was also a crystal counter, a sink with two faucets, and all sorts of weird stuff…

Hugo, who was still in the other room, jumped up in the air all of a sudden.

“Don Amadeus!” – he yelled – “I have an idea! You don’t need to make us a new playground. You just need to invent something that makes trees grow super fast.”

They were all looking at each other, surprised.

Grego broke the silence:

“And what would that do?” – He asked.

“We’d pour it on our tree.”

“I get it now! It would grow again and they wouldn’t be able to make their parking lot bigger.

“What a great idea!”

Everybody congratulated Hugo. But just then they realized that it was don Amadeus who had the last say. In the end, HE was the science guy. All the eyes were on him now.

Don Amadeus started walking back and forth nervously.

“I have something very important to tell you” – he said at last – “for months now, I’ve been searching for that formula. I felt like I needed to start it when those guys destroyed our playground”.

“And did you find it?” – Hugo asked anxiously.

“I found something, but I haven’t tested it out yet.”

“We’ll do it!”

“I don’t know… I don’t know… This is more serious than you think. I don’t know…” – don Amadeus was having doubts.

Either way, the kids were excited about the discovery. They knew that it was going to help them. That's why they kept on bugging.

Don Amadeus thought about it and then thought some more. As soon as he decided to give them the formula, he would to regret it. "This is crazy", he said.

But the kids convinced him.

With his heart pounding, he poured all different-coloured liquids in one huge container. He threw in some dust and stirred everything with a crystal stick. The liquid turned a pinkish color and bubbles started coming from the bottom. AND THERE IT WAS: THE MAGIC FORMULA!

Hugo picked up the container, his eyes sparkling with excitement. The kids came down the stairs quietly and went into the hallway. They waited there until nightfall.

When night fell, the playground was empty. Hugo wiped off his sweaty palms on his pants, grabbed the container tight and ran out the door. In a few seconds, he got to the place where the tree's stump was still there. He looked around and dumped all the liquid without thinking.

The kids all went back home so happy. They didn't even think of the trouble they would get in for coming home so late.

That night all of the kids had the same dream: that their tree was growing and growing, being pushed by the force of don Amadeus' magic formula.

The following morning, the lone tree was back in its place in the exact same place in the playground.

And what a ruckus it caused!

5

Hugo takes his chances one night and pours don Amadeus' magic formula on what remains of the destroyed tree. And it works!

Three hurrays for don Amadeus!

Very early the next day the workers came back. They couldn't believe their eyes. They informed their boss and he flew in urgently. Crushed, he stared at the tree with his mouth open, tongue tied.

In the meantime, the shocked neighbours gathered in the playground to talk about the unusual event.

There was so much noise! The news spread quickly stopping traffic on all the nearby streets! Every now and then, the kids would look up towards don Amadeus' balcony.

The old teacher was looking out the window, half-visible behind the lace curtains.

When he saw the kids, he winked and smiled at them.

The three men in white shirts and striped ties were back, of course.

They stared at the tree, shocked. Then, they gave an order to the person in charge and left the same way from where they had come.

It didn’t take long for the work to continue. The little bit of hope that sparked in each one of the children suddenly disappeared.

The ginormous, yellow machine let out a fart through its filthy exhaust pipe, roaring loudly and moving straight towards the tree. It dug its enormous jagged claw into the ground, pushing and pulling. The entire tree, along with its roots, got ripped out.

Then, the machine lifted it up in the air like a feather and threw it to the far end of the playground.

“It’s over” – said Aurelia, her eyes filling up with tears.

The workers worked quickly all day. They worked so hard forgetting to cut up the tree into pieces and load it onto the truck.

They left it in the furthest end of the playground, dirty, covered in dust and bits of cement.

The kids came up to the tree and sat on its trunk, depressed. They were so worried that they didn’t even notice don Amadeus arrive.

“Hello, little ones” – the old teacher told them.

“Did you see, don Amadeus?”

“I saw everything.”

“This time there’s nothing we can do” – Hugo said. “They ripped everything out and filled the hole.”

“Don’t be so sure! Every problem can be solved.”

“Do you have an idea?”

Don Amadeus’ eyes lit up like never before.

“You kids have to find the tree’s seeds among its branches. This kind of tree is very generous, it produces thousands of seeds.”

“For sure!” – cried Hugo. – “We’re going to plant the seeds and water them with your formula.”

With an air of wisdom, the teacher carried on:

“If my calculations are correct, every seed should produce a tree as big as the lone tree itself.”

“Awesome!”

“Look over here” – said don Amadeus showing them a plastic barrel. – “There is enough liquid for all.”

“Three hurrays for don Amadeus!”

“Hip, hip, hip! HURRAY!!!”

6

All that effort with nothing to show. The construction work continued. But don Amadeus and the children do not give up. The new plan is sure to work!

A Beautiful Day

The kids had to sneak out of their homes without their parents finding out. It was a complicated and even dangerous plan. They had stayed up with the tree’s trunk until exactly midnight. Each one brought an object with

which they could to make holes: picks, sticks, hoes, screwdrivers... Anything! Each one also had to bring a container; this way they could all share don Amadeus' magic formula.

The kids split into pairs. Some would dig holes; and the others would throw seeds and water them with the magic formula. And with pockets full of seeds, they dispersed throughout the neighbourhood. And boy, did they work hard that night!

They didn't return home until dawn. They were tired and filthy but very happy and proud of their work. Soon they would have an incredible and amazing neighbourhood, filled with vast, luscious, trees; just like the lone tree.

They poured the magic formula everywhere: on sidewalks, parking lots, corners, streetlights...Their wishes were heart-felt but not well planned-out.

When the neighbours left their houses the following morning, they were shocked at what they saw.

The workers arrived at the work site, but when they saw the new square they refused to get out of their work van. They disappeared as quickly as possible, terrified. Soon after, their boss did the same.

By mid-morning the square was so packed with people, it could burst.

Then the three men in white shirts and striped ties were back. The sight of what had happened made their faces slowly turn white. After a while, they said nervously and in unison:

“Who...who...who did this?”

The determined Hugo responded just then:

“We did!”

Because the kids were overpowered by the crowd, he had to yell it a few times over.

“It was us! It was us!”

“What? How? Who?”

“The kids!”

All the eyes were on the kids now and miraculously, a path opened up through the crowd. They made their way towards the three men in white shirts and striped ties.

Everyone’s legs shook a little.

“It was us!”

“You kids?”

“We have don Amadeus’ magic formula”

“They’re telling the truth!” – the teacher yelled as another path opened up in the crowd.

What a terrible mess! Suddenly everyone wanted to voice their opinion. Only by mid-afternoon did people begin to have a clearer picture.

The entire neighbourhood was on the kids’ side.

The three men in white shirts and striped ties looked like they were getting harassed.

“We want a nicer neighbourhood!”

“And a cleaner one!”

“And one with more trees!”

“And a square just like the one before!”

What a ruckus! The three men in white shirts and striped ties began to say yes to everything.

“We’ll do it! We’ll do it!” – they were saying. “But don Amadeus must promise never to give out his formula to anyone. NEVER EVER!”

Don Amadeus smiled happily and promised to comply.

“I will only break my promise,” – he added, “if you break yours. But I’m sure that my formula will not be needed again in this neighbourhood.”

It was a beautiful day. Everyone felt happy.

The new square they made was bigger and with even more trees than the first one. From that day on, it was officially called “One-Tree Playground”.

From now on, Hugo and the other children play there every afternoon until they are exhausted.

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