When lies become the truth: rewriting the conquest of Mexico in Carlos Fuentes's novella, *The Two Shores*

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ABSTRACT. This paper owes its inspiration to Jay's (1997) article on Carlos Fuentes's *The Two Shores* (*Las dos Orillas*, in the original, and *As Duas Margens* in the Portuguese version), one of the long short stories in the celebrated Mexican author's collected stories *El Naranjo*, translated as *The Orange Tree* and *A Laranjeira,* in the respective English and Portuguese versions. Jay bases his analysis on a number of authors in Translation Studies [1]. Translation and mistranslation is just one aspect of this very rich and complex narrative. I argue that Jay's use of the word "translation" to refer to Fuentes's novella is too broad to be useful if one takes into account the existence of different types of translation and varied strategies employed by translators to deal with literary, technical, commercial, legal and Biblical texts in their daily work (Sager, 1998).

Key words: rewriting, translation, Carlos Fuentes, globalization, post-modernism, conquest of México.

RESUMO. Quando as mentiras se tornam a verdade: a re-escrita da conquista do México no conto *As Duas Margens* de Carlos Fuentes. Este trabalho deve a sua inspiração ao artigo de autoria de Jay (1997) sobre o conto *The Two Shores* ("Las dos Orillas", na língua fonte, e "As Duas Margens" na versão em língua portuguesa), um dos contos incluídos na coletânea *El naranjo* escrito por Carlos Fuentes, célebre autor mexicano. Jay baseia a sua análise nos trabalhos de especialistas no campo de Estudos da Tradução (ver nota de rodapé 1). A (in)fidelidade é somente um aspecto desta narrativa complexa. Argumento que o uso por parte de Jay do vocábulo "tradução" é abrangente demais para ser útil, levando em consideração a existência de diferentes tipos de tradução e de uma gama de estratégias utilizadas por parte de tradutores no trabalho diário para traduzir textos literários, técnicos, comerciais, jurídicos e bíblicos (Sager, 1998).

Palavras-chave: reescrita, tradução, Carlos Fuentes, globalização, pós-modernismo, conquista do México.

Introduction

The Two Shores

Carlos Fuentes's novel *The Two Shores*, part of a collection of short stories included in the volume *The Orange Tree* (*El naranjo*)[2], deals with the tragic events that brought about the fall of the Aztec Empire and the conquest of Mexico by the Spanish forces led by Hernán Cortés. This short story recounts the role of one Jerônimo Aguilar who mistranslates Cortes's words, thereby lying to the defeated Guatemuz, but in reality, telling him the truth. His "mistranslation" communicates what will indeed come about: "You will be my prisoner, today. I will torture you by burning your feet and those of your comrades until you confess where the rest of your uncle Montezuma's treasure is…" (Fuentes, 1995, p. 10) [3].

Aguilar came to the New World with his Spanish compatriots, was shipwrecked, lost in the wild, and

[1]All references cited by the authors I present in the final bibliography are provided in footnotes in this paper to help interested readers locate the sources. I have not read all the sources cited by them. Cf. P. de Man, Conclusion: Walter Benjamin's The Task of the Translator. pgs. 73-105. The Resistance to Theory. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1986; B. Johnson. Taking Fidelity Philosophically, In: Gramham, J. E. ed. Difference in Translation. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985; J. Derrida. Des Tours de Babel, In Graham, op.cit.; S. Basnett and Lefevere, A. Introduction. p. 1-13. Translation, History and Culture. Ed. Basnett, S. and Lefevere A. London: Pinter Publishers, 1990; E. Gentzler, Contemporary Translation Theories. London: Routledge, 1993.

[2]The collection of short stories in which *The Two Shores* is included bears the name *The Orange Tree* (*El Naranjo* or *A Laranjeira).* The orange has its origin in Persia and traveled around the world and was introduced to the New World as a result of the Spanish Conquest. It represents the globe and might be considered a symbol of globalization. Aguilar (Fuentes, 1995, p.14) points to tomatoes, turkeys, corn, potatoes and chocolate as items never seen in Europe. The horse, extinct in America, returned with the conquest. I have argued elsewhere that the Spanish Conquest of the Americas is one of the early instances of globalization. Cf. J.R. SCHMITZ. O inglês como língua internacional, globalização e o futuro de outras línguas e culturas: uma reflxão. *Investigações: Lingüística e Teoria Literária*. (Federal University of Pernambuco), v. 17, no. 2, p. 223-242, (julho), 2004 and M.F.Guillén. Is globalization civilizing, destructive or feeble: A critique of five key debates in the social science literature. *Ann. Rev. of Sociol*. 27, p. 235-260, 2001.

[3]I have chosen to use the English translation of Fuentes's collection of stories: Carlos Fuentes, *The Orange Tree* (Translated by Alfred Macadam) New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1995.

then found and adopted by the Indians. He learned their language, took on their customs and referred to them as his brothers. We have, in this instance, an excellent example of the "double bind" on the part of Aguilar, an identity with the Aztecs, on one hand, and an allegiance, on the other, with his fellow Spaniards and his commander Cortés, that is, and identity with the "two shores", with two worlds, the European and the American. He agonizes about his special situation: "But I found myself divided between Spain and the New World. I knew both shores." (Fuentes, 1995, p. 22). Aguilar marks his dual identity very explicitly in the use of pronouns for he attributes his death to "… a bouquet of plagues bestowed on *me* by *my own* Indian brothers in exchange for the evils *we Spaniards* visited on *them."* (Fuentes, 1995, p. 3-4). The protagonist stresses this again when he remarks: "*We* Spaniards killed something more than the power of the Indians" (Fuentes, 1995, p. 9). Aguilar makes his new identity clear:

> I fell in love with my new people, with their simple way of dealing with the matters of life, letting the daily necessities take care of themselves naturally but without diminishing the importance of serious things (Fuentes, 1995, p. 40).

The structure of this lengthy short story is ingenious. Fuentes has his main protagonist and the narrator Jerônimo de Aguilar relate his story from the grave: "I just died of buboes[4]. A horrible death, painful, incurable" (Fuentes, 1995, p. 3). Aguilar is a deceased narrator but indeed a very self-aware one for he agonizes, in this posthumous narration, over his betrayal of Cortés via his unfaithful translation as well as inability to prevent the decimation of the Indians by the Spanish conquistadores. In death, he actually threats about his inability to stop the course of history. In this story, we listen to the voice of a dead man who while indeed not at all "conscious" actually suffers the pangs of "conscience", his feeling of guilt about his "translational" disloyalty and his impotence in the face of the fatal events.

The story is divided into eleven parts beginning with number (10) and regressing to zero, no doubt to nothingness. Section ten begins with the fall of the Aztec Empire observed by Aguilar, an eye witness to the events. Aguilar describes poignantly the fall of Tenochtitlán in these words:

> All this I saw. The fall of the great Aztec city in the moan of conch shells, the clash of steel against flint and the fire of the Castilian cannon. I saw the burnt water of the lake where stood the Great Tenochtitlán, two times the size Córdoba (Fuentes, 1995, p. 3).

Aguilar's reference to the "clash of steel against flint" and the "fire of the Castilian cannon" are indeed telling for the Aztecs were doomed to be conquered by a relatively small number of Spanish troops "fewer than six hundred" who were militarily superior with swords, horses and fire power "subdued an empire nine times larger than Spain in territory and three times larger in population" (Fuentes, 1995, p. 6-7).

The conquest of new Spain: Bernal Diaz del Castillo

Fuentes's long short story *The Two Shores* retells the conquest of the Aztec Empire as well as the part Aguilar played in that event. It is based on *The Conquest of New Spain* by another eyewitness to the event, the Spanish historian, Bernal Diaz del Castillo (London: Penguin, 1963) who cites Aguilar in many instances in his account. Aguilar did indeed act as a translator for Cortés, but there is no suggestion in *The Conquest* that he (Aguilar) mistranslated Cortés's words. As narrator, Aguilar provides his own view of what happened and what did not happen. Aguilar interprets his experience in this meeting of two worlds and approximation of European and Indian. What is new here is Aguilar's reflective and evaluative stance with respect to the conquest of Mexico.

> Let's not fool ourselves. No one escaped unscathed from this venture of conquest and discovery --- neither the conquered who witnessed the destruction of their world, nor the conquerors, who never achieved the total satisfaction of their ambitions, suffering endless injustices and disenchantments (Fuentes, 1995, p. 4-5).

As Cortés's translator, Aguilar bluntly states that he: "… translated, betrayed and invented" (Fuentes, 1995, p. 10). But his disloyalty to his commander and his attempt to tell the truth with "his lies" to the Aztecs is only one aspect of the story. Aguilar's narrative is more daring for his account stands as actually a rewriting or a palimpsest of del Castillo's well known history (de Toro, Internet, accessed on 29 sept. 2006). Is Castillo's *The Conquest of New Spain* really history or just as much fiction as Aguilar's *The Two Shores*? Could del Castillo have lied as well and purposely "constructed" the events to please those in power? The line between history and fiction is often tenuous. The Spaniards came to

[4] *The New Lexicon Webster's Dictionary of the English Language*. New York: Lexicon Publications, Inc. 1988, p. 125 provides an entry for the word "bubo" which is defined accordingly: "**bubo** (bjú:bou) pl. **buboes** n. *(med.)* an inflamed swelling of a lymph gland, esp. In the groin or armpit **bubonic** (bjubónik) adj. [L. L. fr. Gk boubon, groin]. This dictionary also registers **bubonic plague:** "an epidemic disease symptomatized by fever, chills, protration, and bubões. It is spread by rats and transmitted to man by fleas" (p. 125) .

the "other shore" or "other margin" in the name of their King and Queen and their Christian God. Their historian, Diaz Del Castillo never questions the Conquest but Aguilar does. In the Conquest, Aguilar is cited frequently but he is merely one of the hundreds of individuals who participated in the discovery and destruction of Aztec civilization. In Fuentes's *The Two Shores*, Aguilar is the protagonist (my emphasis, Kay, 1997, p. 407).

> The temples fell, the standards, the trophies. The very gods themselves fell. And the day after the defeat, using the stones of the Indian temples, we began to build the Christian churches (Fuentes, 1995, p. 3).

The last section (0) of the story ends with Aguilar's narration of what did not happen in history. He imagines a rewriting of history for he relates how Spain is vanquished by the Mexican forces.

> All this I saw. The fall of the great Andalusian city in the moan of the conch shells, the clash of steel against flint, and the fire of Mayan flamethrowers. I say the burnt water of the Guadalquivir and the burning tower of Gold (Fuentes, 1995, p. 43).

History is rewritten by a dead man who provides an alternate account of the events. In his scenario, the Mayans have flamethrowers and conquer the Spanish city of Sevilla. From his grave, Aguilar states that the "New World" is older than the European and that the stones of the Aztec pyramids are "as old as those in Egypt". The deceased man's reconstruction of history presents a new world order in which the religious words of Christ, Mohammed, Abraham and Quetzalcoatl exist harmoniously and "… where all powers of imagination and language would have their place without exception" (Fuentes, 1995, p. 44). To be sure, in these early years of the 21st Century we are concerned about the many religious fundamentalisms that "fatally" lead to violence at this very moment. This is one of the messages in Fuentes's story. The late Aguilar is indeed presenting a Mexican view of the Spanish conquest. Cortés's cruelty to the Indians is duly noted. There are no statues to Hernán Cortés in Mexico. He is a hated figure and far from being a hero. The Spanish sovereigns' (Ferdinand and Isabela) plan was to remove both Jew and Arab from Spain and to use the so-called "Holy" Inquisition to identify, torture and kill those whose blood was deemed to be "impure". The Indian "conquest" of Europe creates a "new world" in the Old World. Aguilar uses the pronoun "we" to include himself as part of this invasion by his brother Indians. He informs: "*We* (my emphasis) revoked the edicts of expulsion for Jews and Moors" (Fuentes, 1995, p. 44).

> All of *us* (my emphasis) who contributed to the Indian conquest of Spain immediately felt that a universe simultaneously new and recovered, permeable, complex and fertile, frustrating the fatal purifying plan of the Catholic kings, Ferdinand and Isabella (Fuentes, 1995, p. 45).

Aguilar's conception of a "new" Old World with its racial mixing, intercultural context and multiple identities reflects what is happening in Europe, America and parts of Asia and Africa today. The concept of a pure nation-state with one language, a unified culture, and one identity is indeed a thing of the past. Aguilar's narrative, with the help of his Spanish "brothers" and fellow Indians who contributed to the invasion of Europe and a rewriting of history, serves as a distant mirror to perceive what is occurring today before our own eyes.

In Aguilar's "sleep of death", the Jews, the children of Israel, as he calls them, return to Spain, to the "… cruel mother who expelled them." (Fuentes, 1995, p. 44) The Moors also return and the air is filled "… with songs sometimes deep, like a sexual moan, sometimes high" along with "sweet Mayan music" (Fuentes, 1995, p. 44).

Aguilar asks two intriguing questions about the workings of the world: "What would have happened if what did happen didn't?" and "What would have happened if what did not happen did?" (Fuentes, 1995, p. 47). Why do things happen in real life the way they do and not in another way? Fuentes is concerned with fate and destiny. Was it really the case that the moment the Spanish forces embarked for the "New World", the Indians were condemned to their tragic destiny? Could it all have occurred differently? These questions as the above have also intrigued social scientists, philosophers and historians from the beginning of what we call civilization. Sidney Hook (1962, p. 103) in his *O Herói na História* refers to the "if" in history. He asks what would have happened if Napoleon has fled to America or, as Winston Churchill once asked, what would have been the consequences if the Confederate General Robert E. Lee had won a battle during the American War of Succession? [5]

Paul Jay's analysis of *The Two Shores*

Paul Jay (1997) bases his analysis of the Mexican short story on the work of scholars in the field of

[5]The focus of this paper does not deal with what might have or could have happened in history. Suffice it to say that HOOK (1962, p. 110) distinguishes between wild speculation or fantasy, on one hand and scientific reconstruction, on the other.

translation studies (Basnett and Lefevere, 1990, Gentzler (1993). Jay (1997, p. 413) argues that Fuentes's short story "… can be read as a translation of Bernal Diaz's *The Conquest of New Spain*, one that seeks, quite literally, to undo or reverse his chronicle of the conquest." Jay (1997, p. 421) follows Basnett and Lefevere (1990) who view translation as a "rewriting of an original text". Jay goes on to conclude that Fuentes's narrative represents "a postmodern translation of Diaz" or a postmodern mediation on translation". The word "postmodern" for Hassan (1985, p. 119-120) is not a stable term as some writers would have us believe. Hassan (1985, p. 121) argues that "… no clear consensus about its meaning among scholars […]. Thus some critics mean by postmodernism what others call avant-gardism or even neo-avent-gardism, while still others would call the same phenomenon simply modernism".

While I agree with Jay that Fuentes's novel is a reversal of the Conquest in that the events are presented from the end to the beginning rather than the beginning to the end, I find it difficult to accept that *The Two Shores* is a "translation" of the 16th Century history. Is Fuentes's short story a translation in the same sense that *Véridique Histoire de la Conquete de la Nouvelle Espagne* (Translated by Alphonse Lemeure, 1878) or *The True History of the Conquest of Mexico* (Translated by Maurice Keatinge New York: McBride and Co., first published in 1800!) are translations? Jay ascribes a wide meaning to the word "translation". Sager (1998, p. 69) argues that there are indeed different types of translation and he points to technical, literary, and Bible translations. He argues that they are all distinct "… on the basis of the different choices made by translators on a small number of parameters which determine *distinct strategies for each major translation type*" (My emphasis). When one thinks of a "translation" one can point to a travel brochure translated from French to English, an affidavit written in English and rendered into Portuguese, or an instruction manual "verted" from English to Japanese.

Certainly in the case of the Mexican short story as well as the two translations cited, there actually is a "transporting", a "carrying over", but the treatment of the source text in the French and English versions is quite different from Fuentes's supposed translation of the events. It is not a question of faithfulness to the text or to the readership here. All target texts betray their source texts in a multitude of ways. It would seem that (almost) anything can be a "translation" if we accept what some specialists in translation studies contend. Jay (1997, p. 411) subscribes, on one hand, to de Man's (1986) claim that the original text is "obliterated" by the new rendition and, on the other, to Gentzler's (1993) view that it also modified, thereby deferring and displacing forever any possibility of grasping that which the original text desired to name". Historians can still read del Castillo´s *True History* and may not view Fuentes´ novella as an historical document. In my view, Fuentes's narrative in no way obliterates Diaz del Castillo's *True History* for it still exists and can be read independently. Different readers who consult the 16th Century history at this time can both attribute and grasp varied meanings depending on their backgrounds and purpose in reading. The existence of Fuentes's short story does not silence the *True History*.

Another problem is that Fuentes's short story is not what the majority of members of the reading public would consider a translation to be. In fact, it is a rewriting, but the word "rewriting" is ambiguous. It can refer to something being written up a second, third or more times, that is, a revision with corrections and alterations. Or, it can be another writing that mirrors, "enhances" or *distorts* (my emphasis) the original in varying degrees. It all depends on what the readership or interpretive community considers as an enhancement or a distortion. In my view, *The Two Shores* is indeed an original, innovative and very creative story on its own ground, a radical departure from *The True History of the Conquest of New Spain*, situated[6] not in the 16th Century but plainly in the last decade of the 20th Century. I agree with Jay (1997, p. 411) that Fuentes's narrative is a parody of the *True History* but the Mexican author is no means a "translator" of the 16th historical work.

Aguilar, a male chauvinist? Is he a trustworthy narrator?

In this rewriting of history, Aguilar informs his readers that "… Europe has marked the face of this New World, which, in fact, is older than the European face" (Fuentes, 1995, p. 4). He also claims that "… the stones we've found here are as old as those of Egypt" (Fuentes, 1995, p. 4). These are provoking and controversial claims.

[6]Some scholars are rightly outraged at the violence and injustice of colonialism and imperialism in times past. Some tend to forget that Histories such as Bernal Diaz Del Castillo's *True History* were also situated in a particular moment in time. Manuel Durán, a celebrated hispanist considers the *True History* as both a literary and historical work. He argues that Bernal Diaz's account "… represents an act of rebellion and almost a deicide, in the sense that he removes in his narrative Cortés's mythical or god-like qualities. The Indians attributed divine qualities to the Spaniards and, of course, as a Christian writer Bernal Diaz Del Castillo´S intention was to make it clear in his narrative that Cortés was human with no supposed supernatural powers (Duran, 1992, p. 80 3).

One point that has not, to my knowledge, been examined is Aguilar's relationship to Malintzín, the enslaved Indian woman baptized with the name Marina. He states the she "caught his eye, not only because of her beauty but because of her arrogance". The smitten Aguilar continues:

> We exchanged looks, and without speaking I said to her, "Be mine. I speak your Maya tongue and love your people, I don't know how to combat the fatality of all that's happening. I can't stop it, but perhaps you and I together, Indian and Spanish, can save something if we come to an agreement and above all if we love each other a bit…" (Fuentes, 1995, p. 31).

While Aguilar's plan to save the Aztec's from their fate may appear to be generous and noble, it can also be argued that he was motivated by ambition, lust and personal gain. He dreamed that both he and Marina "… owners of the languages would be also owners of the lands, an invincible couple because we understood the two voices of Mexico, the voice of men and the voice of the gods" (Fuentes, 1995, p. 32). In an erotic, but frustrating scene for Aguilar, he tells his readers that Marina undressed before him, "… while a simultaneous chorus of hummingbirds, dragonflies, rattlesnakes, lizards, and hairless dogs broke lose around her transfigured nakedness." Aguilar coldly concludes that "… she disrobed to deny herself to me" (Fuentes, 1995, p. 32), for the following day, Aguilar laments, "Cortés choose her as his concubine and his interpreter". Could this erotic picture be a dream Aguilar had when he was alive?

Women have always been ill-treated no doubt even before the beginnings of civilization and still today, women, in many parts of the world suffer at the hands of men. Marina would be no exception. As an historical figure in Mexico, Marina survived enslavement, violence, humiliation and a liaison with Cortés (she had no choice!) and gave birth to one his many children. For some, she is a heroine for she gave birth to the first child, born of a mother from one shore and of a father from the other, a product of racial mixing. For others, Marina is called "La Malinche" meaning "traitor" for as a translator, informant and spy she contributed to the demise of the Aztec Empire and the establishment of a Spanish presence in Mexico.

Aguilar confesses his jealousy of Cortés, his rancor at Marina and his resentment at loosing his status as the sole translator and proprietor of the languages. Notice the bitterness in his sexist, chauvinist references to Marina:

> I realized that Jerónimo de Aguilar was no longer needed. The diabolical figure was translating everything, this bitch of a Marina, this whore who learned to speak Spanish. This scoundrel, this trickster, this expert in sucking, the conquistador's concubine, had stolen my professional singularity away from me, the function where there was no substitute for me, my--- to coin a word--- my *monopoly* (Aguilar's emphasis) over the Castilian language. La Malinche has pulled the Spanish language out of Cortés's sex, she'd sucked it out of him, she castrated him of it without his knowing it, by disguising mutilations as pleasure… (Fuentes, 1995, p. 24-25).

As a critical reader of this short story, I indeed have a problem with this narrative. Both the author (Fuentes) and the narrator (Aguilar) are men. How would the story be told if, first of all, the author were a woman and, secondly, if the main protagonist were Marina? These questions are not raised by Jay (1997) who is merely impressed with "postmodern rewriting" of Bernal Diaz's *True History*. Marina is a victim of her own male-dominated society, was sold as a slave, and subsequently she, along with a number of other Indian women, were "presented" to Cortés as a tribute. No doubt she was converted (or coerced?) into becoming a Christian. Marina became the or one of the mistresses of Cortés (my emphasis). The stakes for her were high. She was abandoned by her own relatives, disinherited, and sold into slavery. The presence of the Spanish forces in the New World offered an opportunity of survival for those individuals who were bilingual or even multilingual. Her knowledge of the native languages, their cultures as well as political problems and, no doubt, her competence opened new life chances for her. For Kummer, Marina´s position in the new world order in which she was enmeshed is highly complex:

> She (=Marina) can take over this function because through her transformation of allegiance to the other side, she, as representative for her tribe, has established a bridge to the dominant society, in as much as she submits to their dominance and yet, at the same time, identifies with it and accepts the norms imposed by the conqueror and passes them on to her tribe (Kummer, 1981, p. 179).

Kummer simply outlines the role of native speakers who for one reason or another change identities and act as "cultural brokers" between the dominant group and the dominated. I agree with the feminist historians, in particular, Alarcon, (1981, 1989)[7] cited in Delisle and Woodsworth (1995,

[7]Cf. N. Alarcón. Chicana's Feminist Literature: A Revision through Malintzin/or Malintzin: Putting Flesh Back on the Object". *In:* Moraga, C. and Anzaldúa G. (Ed.), The Bridge Called me Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color. New York: Academic Press, 1981 and also N. Alarcón. /Traddutora, Traditora: A Paradigmatic Figure of Chicana Feminism", *Cultural* Critique. 1989.

p. 149) who "stress the constraints to which she was subjected as a woman and a slave, and who look upon her as a model, a symbol of fruitful cross-cultural exchange rather than betrayal. Fuentes's short story, I would argue, is far from being (with respect to the treatment of women) postcolonial, for gender differences and inequality in the distribution of power have not been dealt with, as Simon (1996, p. 167) "… to loosen the bonds of accepted verities, to challenge social and conceptual hierarchies".

Some final words about *The Two Shores*

I have argued that Fuentes's short story is imaginative and creative. It is "original" in the sense that Fuentes uses the material in the 16th Century history of Diaz del Castillo to weave his own story with a "conscious" but deceased narrator who indeed suffers from the pangs of "conscience" due to his disloyalty, on one hand, to his commander and fellow compatriot and, on the other, to his distress at the cruelty bestowed on his Indian "brothers" by the Spanish expedition and his inability to impede the tragic and fatal course of events.[8] This interesting "twist" in the historical events makes for captivating short story. The irony in this story is that Marina, on one hand, translated Cortés's words faithfully but she lied because what she said did not happen. She was faithful to the text and to her "master" but not to her audience. Aguilar, on the other hand, translated disloyally, betraying his chief, although Aguilar spoke the truth for what he said happened. Aguilar was faithful to his Indian audience and disloyal to the text and his commander and compatriot.

I have also argued that considering the *The Two Shores* to be a "postmodern translation" of the *True History* … contributes to making the word "translation" practically meaningless if one takes into account the existence of different types of translation and the strategies translators employ to deal with literary, technical, commercial, legal and Biblical texts in the daily work in the field (Sager, 1998).

I have contended also that Fuentes's protagonist is a male chauvinist. Both the author and his narrator are males. While the very creative story of the invasion of the Old Word by the New World that envisions the mixing of races, creeds and languages mirrors the postmodern condition of the world today (particularly in parts of Europe and the Americas), the story is far from being post-modern (or a post-colonial view as de Toro (2006, p. 5) contends) when it comes to the role of women in society. In the course of my paper, I have asked how a woman writer would react to Bernal Diaz del Castillo's 16th Century history and Fuentes's contemporary short story.

Finally, one last remark. Jay (1997, p. 407) states that Fuentes …" develops in the *The Two Shores* a rich, complicated and speculative exploration of translation in all its guises. One can only speculate if Fuentes actually was familiar and consulted the bibliography dealing with translation and Translation Studies cited by Jay in the course of his article (see footnote 1 above). If this is the case, it is felicitous indeed. If not, it is all the more admirable.

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[8]For an interesting study of fatality in translation and "translation as destiny", cf. K. Rajagopalan. A Fatalidade da Tradução. *Estudos Acadêmicos Unibero* (União Ibero-Americano), Faculdade Ibero-Americana (São Paulo), Ano III, n. 5, p. 41-48, março, 1997.