Discussions of the Spanish avant-garde generally emphasize only its French surrealistic orientation, the “dehumanized” and “hermetic” poesía pura and its (equally evasive) neo-populist and classicist tendencies.¹ It tends to ignore other possible influences. Yet, in the 1920s, at a time when the Spanish image of Germany was still shaped by the romantic love and nature poetry of Goethe, Hölderlin, and Novalis, Jorge Luis Borges began translating and publishing recent German Expressionist poetry.²

Most literary histories, however, dismiss any impact of Expressionism on the Spanish literary scene. According to the editor of a book on Expressionism as an International Literary Phenomenon, Spain “remained quite unaffected by Expressionism” (Weisstein 31), and the Latin countries in general found Expressionism “uncongenial to their way of thinking” (30). Moreover, most literary dictionaries and encyclopedias define Expressionism as an exclusively Germanic phenomenon.³ Not surprisingly, then, Borges’s translations and commentaries of Expressionist poetry are either left unnoticed, mentioned only in passing, or as an insignificant influence in central studies of the Spanish avant-garde (e.g. Geist 61; Díez de Revenga, Poesía española 25; Videla 99–101).⁴ Even critics who do discuss Borges’s relationship to Expressionism are concerned more with his prose commentaries or his “Expressionist techniques” in his own early Ultraist poetry, rather than with the translations themselves,⁵ stressing what they see as Borges’s later distance from the movement, and the lack of further reception (e.g. Soria Olmedo 85; Gallego Roca 206; Maier, “Borges” 148). In this paper I will make the case for taking a new look at Borges’s versions of Expressionist poetry, viewing them as acculturations and rewritings as defined by André Lefevere (6–14). I will examine them as conscious transpositions of the social criticism and the linguistic innovations of German Expressionism in terms of the Spanish aesthetic climate of Ultraism. These notions of rewriting and re-contextualizing are, in fact, closely connected to Borges’s own views on translation as exemplified in “Pierre Menard, autor del Quijote.”⁶

While Menard translates from and into the same language, and does so literally, a translator who works with two languages may need to take considerable liberties
with the language in order to preserve the sense of the original. Since no text is superior or definitive in Borges view, the translator may cut, add to, and edit the original for its own benefit. This process may result in a translation that highlights aspects of a text of which a reader of the original would be unaware (Kristal 8). Firmly opposed to literal translations, Borges believes that a translation, especially one of poetry, must be above all literary, that is, it must attempt to convey what the poet meant by recreating the work (cf. “Translation” 51–53). In “Las dos maneras de traducir,” he champions the translatability of poetry. In the essay “The Homeric Versions” Borges defines translation as “a long experimental game of chance played with omissions and emphasis” (69). In his discussion of the translations of the 1001 Nights, Borges regards those translations as successful which represent “un buen falseo,” that is, whose infidelities and falsifications actually improve on the original (Waisman 70). Thus, as Waisman underscores, translation for Borges is a “site for potentiality and gain—a gain clearly linked to the creative infidelities of the translator/creator” (72).

Borges’s own work as translator confirms these notions of a liberal, rather than literal, concept of translation. As a translator, Borges generally “has no scruples about editing the original as he translated” (Kristal 2). Some of his most frequent practices, as Efraín Kristal has shown, are to remove redundant, superfluous or inconsequential words or phrases, to cut what might distract attention from another aspect he preferred to highlight, and to add a major or minor nuance not found in the original, such as changing the title (87). These tendencies are also present in the Borges Expressionist translations. In order to show how these changes contribute to Borges’s acculturation of Expressionism in Spain, I will compare three of Borges’s “versions” with their German originals, focusing on the points where the translations depart from the originals as well as from Borges’s own prose commentaries of these translations. Many of Borges’s translations appear to be “literal” translations (in the sense explained by Kristal) that “attempt [. . .] to maintain all the details of the original but change [. . .] the emphasis (understood as meanings, connotations, associations, and effects of the work)” (32). In short, Borges’s Expressionist poems must be considered as “versions.” It was his intention to provide “a text with relevant differences with respect to either the original or another translation of the same work” (32).

Several critics have claimed that Borges’s changes in his German translations are errors due to insufficient knowledge of German (García, “Borges, traductor” n.p.; Vega 247–48; see also Olea Franco, “Borges” 440). Although he certainly spoke it less fluently than English and French, his relationship to German was a special one and, I believe, there is sufficient evidence to indicate that he spoke (or at least read) it fairly well. German was the first language he chose to learn, sparked by his reading of Carlyle’s Sartor Resartus (Rodríguez Monegal 136; Borges, “Essay” 216). In a
later poem dedicated to the German language, Borges singles German out from other languages offering him the pleasure of private yet fecund readings (“pero a ti, dulce lenguaje de Alemania, / te he elegido y buscado, solitario” (“Al idioma alemán,” Selected Poems 326, ll.8–9) [but to you, sweet language of Germany / you I have chosen and searched, alone]. Moreover, he felt that he possessed German in all its beauty and complexity (ll. 24–29). In fact, as he stresses in his “Autobiographical Essay,” he soon “worked [his] way into the loveliness of the language” (216) and read German philosophers such as Schopenhauer and Nietzsche in the original. Furthermore, Kristal notes that Borges also translated the Romantic poet Novalis on several occasions (31).

Although the Argentine poet may not have dominated German “a la perfección” (García, “Borges, traductor” n.p.) [perfectly] and may have made an error or two due to misunderstanding of the original text,7 most of his Expressionist translations (poems full of neologism and ellipses that pose difficulties even for native speakers) show that he did have a thorough grasp of the language. An analysis of his translations indicates that most of Borges’s changes are not due to insufficient knowledge of German, but instead represent a case of his “infidelidad creadora y feliz” (“Borges” 440 and passim) [creative and happy unfaithfulness], which Olea Franco has underscored as a defining principle of Borges’s translations. In my view, these infidelities represent a deliberate attempt on Borges’s part to disseminate Expressionist poetics in Spain by making its aesthetics more congenial to Spanish poets and readers by amalgamating it with the contemporary avant-garde practices of Ultraist poetics.

Ultraism, the central Spanish avant-garde movement, was emphatically anti-naturalist. Ultraist poets focus on striking imagery and daring metaphors that create a new reality beyond that of the external world. Their goal was “renov[ar] [. . .] los medios de expresión” [to renew the means of expression] and “imponer facetas insospechadas al universo” (“Manifiesto” 105) [to impose unsuspected facets on the world]. They sought to create new worlds beyond, and independent of, human reality. In order to achieve this aesthetic renewal, these poets abolished not only all anecdotal content, but more importantly, reduced texts to their “elemento primordial” [primordial element], metaphor, often synthesizing several images in one, and deleting all connecting words or phrases (cf. Borges, “Ultraísmo”). Thus, causal relations are destroyed or even created between otherwise quite dissimilar things (Videla 95). This attitude toward language is comparable to that of the Expressionists, who also share the Ultraist’s anti-naturalism and their sense of revolt. However, while the “grito de renovación” (“Ultra” 102) [scream for renovation] in the Spanish avant-garde movement is primarily aesthetic, it is also profoundly social. I will argue that it is this combination of aesthetic and social renewal that Borges sought to disseminate in Spain.

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While current Borges criticism has emphasized the need to situate Borges in the Argentine context rather than regard him as a universal or cosmopolitan writer (e.g. Olea Franco, *El otro Borges*; Sarlo; Waisman), I will exclusively deal with the very short and early period of Borges’s life when he lived in Europe and participated in, and significantly influenced, its avant-garde movements. Furthermore, I am primarily interested in Borges’s lasting influence on Spanish avant-garde poetics through his translations, rather than his identity as a cosmopolitan or Argentine writer. Because of my focus on this very short period in Borges’s life and the continuing influence of his translations in Spain, the “tensions” and “conflicts” within Borges’s oeuvre that Beatriz Sarlo considers so central to Borges’s identity (12–13), lie outside the scope of this article.

**BORGES’S TRANSLATIONS:**

**PROPAGANDA FOR EXPRESSIONISM**

In the prose commentaries published alongside his translations, Borges emphasized his interest in the Expressionists’ attitude toward reality. His first short synthesis of Expressionism in the journal *Grecia* emphasizes this interest in what he sees as the Expressionists’ attempt to transcend surrounding reality by creating a “spiritual ultra-reality” (10). Borges praises the aesthetically and socially revolutionary nature of Expressionist journals such as *Die Aktion* and *Der Sturm*. Arguing against Naturalist and Impressionist concepts of literary representation, the short note in the Ultraist journal *Ultra* cites the anthology *Aktions-Lyrik (1914–1916)* in order to critique the concept of objective representation and champion the superiority of poetic imagination (“Horizontes”). Borges defines Ultraism as “la transmutación de la realidad palpable del mundo en realidad interior y emocional” (*El ultraísmo* 108) [the transmutation of the world’s palpable reality into an interior and emotional reality]. He sees such a transformation as quintessence of all poetry.

Yet, the goal of Ultraism is an aesthetics that “redeems” (“Manifiesto” 104) art, not humanity. Highlighting the portrayal of solidarity and intense human feeling, Borges interprets the Expressionists’ relationship to the surrounding world as an expression of the movement’s concern with ethical, moral and social transformation. Although two later notes indicate his disappointment with Expressionism’s ultimate failure at achieving a real universal social revolution, Borges nevertheless praises the aesthetic revolution it initiated. In interviews in the 1960s and 1970s, as well as in his “Autobiographical Essay” (1970), Borges continues to insist on the superiority of Expressionism over other avant-garde movements.

In light of this positive assessment, how does Borges’s critical analysis of Expressionism relate to his translations? Borges’s selections themselves represent the variety and hybridism of Expressionist poetic styles and themes, ranging from the
telegram style of August Stramm's love poetry to the hymnal chorus of Johannes Becher's calls for revolutionary activism. Given Expressionism's frequent combination of unusual metaphoric and syntactical constructions with traditional stanza forms and rhyme, Borges's preference for poems with free verse form and without rhyme must be seen as an Ultraist reinterpretation of Expressionism (cf. “Mosaico” 188; Videla 113). Accommodating Ultraist poetics, Borges translates the one poem with rhyming verse that he chooses, Stadler's “Der Aufbruch,” without rhymes.

Borges's clear favorite is Wilhelm Klemm, to whom he dedicates one exclusive sketch in *Grecia*, and of whom he translates altogether seven poems.¹³ Klemm is closely followed by Kurt Heynicke, with five poems. These preferences and selections represent a curious juxtaposition of well-known and forgotten authors, and contrasts with the then contemporary as well as present-day German “canon” of Expressionist poets.¹⁴ What connected Borges to Klemm and Heynicke, representatives of *Die Aktion* and *Der Sturm* respectively, was not only his personal contact and correspondence with them (García, “Borges y el Expresionismo” 121), but more importantly, their use of images and metaphors, their anti-naturalist portrayal of nature, and their depiction of human desolation and solidarity with fellow sufferers. For Borges, these two poets were best suited to promote his agenda of social concerns to the Spanish avant-garde.

However, Borges's translations do not correspond completely to the principles outlined in his commentaries. Most notably, many of his versions do not portray the “ultra-reality” which he applauded in his notes. On the contrary, his use of definite articles and personal pronouns when the original leaves them out often transforms an elliptic, fragmentary world of disorientation into a tangible and concrete reality. For example, in Borges's version of Wilhelm Klemm's “Der Himmel besticht uns . . .” (“El cielo nos soborna,” published in the “Antología expresionista” in *Cervantes*, Oct. 1920), he inserts definite articles where the German conspicuously lacks them: transforms the poem's abstract, elusive reality into a graspmable, tangible, anthropocentric vision. Similarly, in Klemm's “Nacht im Cráter” (“Noche en el cráter” [Night in the Crater], published in the same journal), Borges adds pronouns (“para no sostenernos” (l. 6) [in order to not sustain us]; “para nosotros” (l. 19) [for us]) and anthropomorphizes images (“bostezan en mis costados las heridas de lanza” [yawn in my ribs the spear wounds] as opposed to Klemm's “aufklaffen . . . die Speerwunden,” (l. 4) [gape open . . . the spear-wounds]).¹⁵ Moreover, Borges extends and clarifies phrases (l. 10), changes, or “normalizes” the word order to make the poem less violent. The original, which foregrounds shocking images (“wie geblähter, aufgestochener Darm knallen die Gasgranaten,” [like bloated, lanced intestines bang/explode the gas-grenades]), whereas Borges's version does not (“Las granadas de gas estallan como un intestino pinchado” (l. 9) [the gas grenades explode like pricked intestines]).
Such changes transform the portrayed world of disorientation, fear and horror into syntactically normalized images that re-interpret the traumatic, unspeakable essence of war into a humanly comprehensible experience. In rendering Ernst Stadler’s famous “Der Aufbruch” (“El arranque” [The Departure] also in the “Antología expresionista”), Borges inserts articles and pronouns, thereby intensifying the sense of a humanly defined, explicable, and straightforward world (e.g. “luego de pronto se detuvo la vida. Entre árboles viejos manaron las carreteras. / Nos seducían alcobas. [. . .] / Desnudar la realidad al cuerpo como de un uniforme polvoriento” (ll. 5–7, added emphasis) [then suddenly life stood still. Between old trees, the roads flowed. We were seduced by alcoves. [. . .] To undress reality from the body as from a dusty uniform]). Furthermore, he clarifies phrases and changes word order to emphasize the meaningfulness, rather than the cruelty of war (“y la música de la lluvia de balas fue para nosotros la más magnífica del universo” (l. 4) [and the music from the rain of bullets was for us the most wonderful in the universe] versus Klemm’s “Und die herrlichste Musik der Erde hieß uns Kugelregen” [And the most wonderful music on earth was for us the bullet-rain]).

Borges frequently attenuates the intensity of expression, which in Expressionist discourse often means highly elliptical phrases, in favor of more grammatical sentences and word order.16 In other words, he often transforms a fragmentary, unspecific, timeless experience into a coherent and concrete one. In Johannes Becher’s “Lusitania” for example, the past tense forms and infinitives of the original become present tense and personalized verb forms, thus rendering the mystical, timeless experience of the German into something more concrete and tangible. Likewise, at the end of August Stramm’s “Vorübergehen” (“Al pasar” [Passing]), Borges makes a full, complex sentence out of asyndetic (i.e. without conjunctions between phrases or clauses), short phrases, thereby clarifying and concretizing the event for the reader (“La ceniza que lanzó el viento jadeante / se hiela en tu ventana” (ll. 11–12) [The ashes that the panting wind shot out / freezes in your window]).

At other times Borges cuts and condenses words or phrases where the original repeats or expands them. In August Stramm’s “Liebeskampf” (“Lucha de amor” [Fight of Love]), Borges omits the repetitions of the original: “Und keucht und keucht/Und keucht . . .” (16–17) [And pants and pants/And pants] becomes a one-time “y jadea”; and “um und um/die runde runde hetze Welt” (52–53) [around and around/the round round rush world] becomes “alrededor / de la tierra redonda” [around / the round world]. By deleting the repetition, Borges emphasizes and intensifies the already elliptical, dense staccato of the German poem in his translation. Likewise, he reduces the extended “Ich / Will / Dich / Nicht!” (5–9) [I / Do / Not / Want / You] to two lines: “Yo / no te quiero!” (5–6) [I / do not love you]. The Spanish rendition thus heightens the intense and explosive nature of the lover’s battle. Borges’s version of Kurt Heynicke’s poem “Ich fand” (literally “I found”; translated
as “Jardín amor” [Love Garden] in the journal Ultra) accelerates the poem’s pace by condensing verse eleven and twelve into one and by deleting the last verse entirely. Borges thus reduces the poem to short main clauses and concludes with a glorious encounter of eternity.

Semantically, Borges often favors a word choice that underlines the sense of fraternity and collectivity among those facing the threat of war. For example, in Wilhelm Klemm’s “Schlacht an der Marne” (“Batalla en el Marne” [Battle in Marne] in “Acerca del Expresionismo”) “erstarren” [to congeal, to stiffen] becomes “brillan” [to shine], “kolossale Studen” [colossal, gargantuan] becomes “horas infinitas” [infinite hours] “zusammen” [together] becomes “unidas” [united]. Moreover, Borges leaves out the last verse, which emphasizes the unbearable duration (“tagelang, wochenlang” [for days, for weeks]) of the “boiling” war. Eliminating the menacing elements, Borges heightens the contrast between war as an apocalyptic threat to the individual soldier and as a medium of human communication.

Significant semantic changes in the above-mentioned poems by Wilhelm Klemm (“Nacht im Krater” / “Noche en el cráter”) and Ernst Stadler (“Der Aufbruch” / “El arranque”) also stress the contrast between the conflicted, threatening atmosphere of war and the portrayal of a glorious community of patriotic, enthusiastic soldiers (in the latter, for example, “entketten” [to remove chains] becomes “desnudar” [to undress]; “Trompeten-stöße klirren” [clank, chink] becomes “irradian las trompetas” [the trumpets radiate] “die Schlafenden aufspringen” [get/jump up] becomes “Y los soldados cantan . . . ” [and the soldiers sing]). Similarly, Kurt Heynicke’s “Hinter der Front” (“Detrás del frente” [Behind the Front]) becomes in Borges’s version a poem of an increasingly desolate isolated individual, when he changes “Abend” [evening] to “crepúsculo” [dawn] and emphasizes “la calma del desierto” [the quiet of the desert]. In brief, Borges modifies or reinterprets the poems he translates in order to demonstrate to his contemporaries that an anti-naturalist desire to surpass the surrounding reality can be effectively combined with profound humanism and social concerns.

Of course, examples of completely literal translation, such as the “Gedichte” by Lothar Schreyer (“Poemas,” in “Antología expresionista”), also appear. Contemporary with other poems in which changes are substantial, these literal translations serve to show that the modifications in the other poems were deliberate, rather than resulting from poetic license or an imperfect command of German. In other words, the coexistence of literal and liberal translations indicates that Borges saw these poems and translations as representative of an unambiguous aesthetic as well as a socio-political agenda that he wanted to highlight for his readers. In the space that remains, I will analyze three translations in greater detail, exemplifying the three main alterations (use of definite articles and personal pronouns where the original leaves them out; grammatical sentences and word order where the origi-
nal is elliptical and fragmentary; the cutting and condensing of words or phrases where the original repeats or expands) in order to discuss the significance and impact of Expressionist poetry in Spain in the 1920s.

August Stramm’s “Wiedersehen”: Meeting or Leaving?
My first example (“Antología” 108; see appendix) illustrates the three most significant changes that Borges effects in his translations: the “filling” of elliptical and fragmentary sentences, specification through pronouns and articles, and “condensation” for heightened intensity. August Stramm’s “Wiedersehen” [Reunion] renders the fleetingness of a momentary encounter through very short, elliptical lines. In Borges’s version of the poem (“Encuentro” [Encounter]), the undefined German “In Schauen” [In looking] becomes a specific, reciprocal gaze or exchange of looks between speaker and addressee (“Al vernos muere la mirada” [Upon seeing us/ourselves the look dies]). Similarly, in the German poem, the ending of the “Wiedersehen” (lit. “re-vision”), rather than the actual meeting, is emphasized through its elliptical staccato form. Each word in “Du / Wendest / Fort!” [You / Turn / Away!] is granted a line by itself, thereby extending the moment into a slow-motion movement. Borges, by contrast, accelerates time by compressing the phrase into two lines. Likewise, the absence in Stramm’s poem of the reflexive pronoun “dich” [yourself] in these lines (normally required in German) makes the phrase elliptical and emphasizes the abruptness, impersonality and distance of the ending. In contrast, Borges retains the reflexive pronoun, thereby underlining the intense personal encounter at close quarters. In other words, while Stramm emphasizes the lack of personal contact in what seems to be a fleeting “vision” rather than an actual “meeting,” Borges portrays tension and conflict of a close personal contact, highlighting the moment of “encounter” as an interpersonal collision. Stramm’s impersonal, ambiguous relationship thus becomes intensely conflicted, but intimately personalized in Borges’s version.

Mystical Time vs. Present Symbols: Becher’s “Lusitania”
My second example illustrates Borges’s tendency to make an abstract, allusive reality explicit and specific through the use of tenses and verb forms. Johannes Becher’s “Lusitania” (Becher 79; see app.) refers to the bombing of a British liner by German torpedoes in May 1915 (Lehman-Srinivasan 112), an event hardly present in the minds of a Spanish audience five years later. Yet, in Borges’s translation (“Antología,” 102), it becomes an incident of topical concern.

Borges’s transformation of the archaic, Greek “Hetäre” into a more modern and common “cortesana” turns the ship as a symbol of a remote or lost glorious past into a concrete and familiar figure. Moreover, while the German wavers between present tense, past tense, infinitive and present participle, Borges uses only
present tense and participle forms. That is, he transforms past tense and infinitive into present tense and personalized verb forms, thereby rendering the ambiguous, indefinable and shifting time of the original as an immediate, present-day concern. This transformation is most notable in the line in parentheses (13), where he deletes both the temporal distance of the “einst” [once (long ago)] and the verb “weht” [blows] with its syntactically ambiguous spatial reference (“. . . where a tender stroke that once awoke you . . .”).

Becher’s poem, by situating the process of drowning into an undefined temporal and spatial frame, mystifies and universalizes the experience throughout. Only the “resurrection” in the final stanza takes place exclusively in the present. By contrast, Borges’s preference of present tense and participle forms makes the bombed ship an actual immediate reality whose larger symbolic value is made explicit only in the final line. Paradoxically, then, while the German poem refers to a specific, recent historical event in abstract terms, the Spanish poem transforms the occurrence, which would be only remotely present to a Spanish audience of the twenties, into a current concern of larger significance.

Wilhelm Klemm’s “Der Himmel besticht uns” (1918):

My last example, Borges’s translation of Wilhelm Klemm’s “Der Himmel besticht uns” (Reso, Schlenstedt, and Wolter 414), “El cielo nos soborna” (“Antología” 106; see app.) [“The sky bribes us”], exemplifies Borges’s transformation of an abstract, elusive reality into a concrete, tangible one by inserting definite articles into an originally elliptical discourse. The German poem describes a disconcerting experience in nature, rendering it mysterious by leaving most nouns without an article. On the whole, the poem has only one indefinite and six definite articles, all but one in the first and last stanzas. Partly necessitated by the German composite nouns, which require a genitive phrase in Spanish, Borges's translation adds a definite article to almost every noun, ending up with a total of fifteen definite articles. Thus, the German “Über gläserne Wäldermasken / Hängen Sonnenzügel // Nasses Feuer / Glutet in grünem Fell” (7–10) [Over glassy masks of woods / Hang reins of suns // wet fire / glows in green fur] becomes “Sobre las vidriosas máscaras de los bosques / Las riendas del sol cuelgan / Fuego mojado / Arde en la piel verde” [Over the glassy masks of the woods / The reigns of the sun hang / Wet fire / Burns in the green fur]. The abstractions in the German original become real world references in the Spanish translation.

In Klemm’s poem, the lack of articles combines with the personification of nature (the sky, trees) and the elusive metaphors to evoke a mysterious, autonomous nature, in which human beings play a subordinate role. For example, the “us” of the first line is more a registering, rather than an acting, subject. Moreover, the absence
of definite articles and personal pronouns in the two middle stanzas indicates the speaking subject's complete lack of orientation. Only in the final stanza does the poem return to a humanly definable, anthropomorphized world. Borges's translation, by contrast, retains this graspable anthropocentric vision throughout. There is no danger for the speaker to be submerged by his surroundings, as there is for Klemm's speaker. In the Spanish version, reality may be uncanny, yet its objects are clearly defined and, therefore, less threatening.

By inserting strange elements into a tangible world of every-day life, this translation actually bridges the gap between the objects' hostility and the familiarity Borges introduces in his version. Such a portrayal of nature as grotesquely deformed or threatening, yet still humanly defined and anthropomorphized, is familiar to Spanish poets and readers of Ultraist poetry (e.g. José de Ciria y Escalante's “Angustia” [Diez de Revenga, Poesia española 94] or Cansinos-Asséns’s “Crepúsculo” [ibid. 88]). Likewise, Ultraist poems often combine the strange and the familiar or the abstract and concrete (Videla 96), as did Spanish Surrealist poems. In other words, Borges’s subtle shifts in his translations adapt Expressionism by merging it with avant-garde aesthetics that was familiar to a Spanish audience thanks to the various Ultraist manifestos (cf. Brihuega; Videla 173–219). By employing recognizable techniques (such as the deformation of nature, condensation of language, or enumeration of unconnected images), while highlighting the Expressionists’ concern for human isolation and anguish and the need for human solidarity, Borges’s translations point Spanish avant-garde poetics in a new direction.

**EFFECTS OF BORGES’S EFFORTS:**

**FURTHER RECEPTION AND IMPACT OF EXPRESSIONISM**

Borges remained the only Spanish-language translator of Expressionist poetry until the fifties. His work inspired subsequent Spanish-language commentaries and translations of Expressionist novels and drama. His efforts to disseminate Expressionist poetry were “applauded by luminaries of Spain’s literary milieu” (Kristal 43) such as Ramón Gómez de la Serna, Cansinos-Asséns, and Guillermo de Torre (the latter two themselves Ultraist poets) as the basis for aesthetic and social regeneration. Other Ultraist poets evinced an interest in Expressionist literature and visual arts by publishing commentaries and translations in their journals (Anderson 216).

Throughout the 1920s, several general survey notes on German literature (Paul Colin; Pablo Colin; Petroni; Gullón; two anonymous articles) and art (Panxsaers; Alcántara; Richert) were published, all of which praise Expressionism as aesthetically and socially inspirational. Guillermo de Torre’s influential historical treatment, *Literaturas Europeas de Vanguardia* (1925), devotes a short chapter to Expression-
ism, under the heading “Ootros horizontes,” an allusion to the anthology of contemporary world poetry, *Les Cinq Continents*, by the German poet Ivan Goll, who is himself an important theorist and spokesperson of Expressionism. Torre, citing Borges’s translations and notes, understands Expressionism as a meld of spiritual *Zeitgeist* (“espíritu de un tiempo”) and social engagement (“preocupación social” [354]). In 1927, a study of pictorial Expressionism and *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity) by the prominent German art critic Franz Roh, was translated into Spanish. This book, entitled *Nach-Expressionismus, Magischer Realismus: Probleme der neuesten europäischen Malerei*, analyzes primitivism in contemporary art as a withdrawal from the cerebralism of Cubism without retreating into a purely dream-like state of Surrealism. Reviewed immediately in all the important newspapers, this study had an “enorme repercusión” (Crispin 100) [huge repercussions].

However, Expressionism did not remain a purely abstract critical concept; rather, Expressionist art exhibitions, literary translations, and films were available to the public. Several important exhibitions disseminated Expressionist art. In 1926, the “Exposición del Grabado Alemán Contemporáneo” in Barcelona and Madrid, exhibited more than a dozen of the most famous German Expressionist artists, including Ludwig Kirchner, Oskar Kokoschka, Käthe Kollwitz, and Max Pechstein (Bonet 132). A year later, at the “Exposición Multi-Nacional” in Madrid, some ten German Expressionist artists were represented, among them Max Beckmann, George Grosz, Emil Nolde, Max Pechstein, and Karl Schmidt-Rottluff (ibid. 642).

Other important Expressionist literary works became available in translation. Plays, in particular, were widely translated and reviewed (Anderson 216). As was the case in Germany, Georg Kaiser received the most attention and he was translated and performed more than any other German playwright. His *Von morgens bis mitternachts* (1916), one of the finest and most famous Expressionist dramas, was translated in the *Revista de Occidente* in 1926; two other dramas followed in 1928 and 1929. In the early thirties, the literary critic Ricardo Gullón published an enthusiastic critical analysis of Franz Werfel’s novels in the influential literary journal *Literatura*, indicating that three of the novels had already appeared in Spanish translation.

German Expressionist films such as *Das Kabinett des Dr. Caligari* (1919; *El gabinete del doctor Caligari, 1921*) were shown in the major movie theatres in Madrid and Barcelona. Other films by prominent directors such as F. W. Murnau (e.g. *Tartufo*, 1925), Erich von Stroheim (*Avaricia*, 1923–24), and Fritz Lang (*Metrópolis*, 1926) followed and were favorably received. The well-known film director Luis Buñuel, at that time film critic for *La Gaceta Literaria*, wrote approvingly of the lyricism and the photographic technique of Fritz Lang’s films (Anderson 217). By 1930, the number of German films shown in Spain ranked second only to American

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films, with a total of sixty-five. During the same period only twenty French films were shown (Morris 580).

Not only did Spain offer a warm critical reception to Expressionism, it also was predisposed to embrace the movement by capitalizing on structural affinities and stylistic correspondences in contemporary Spanish literature and the visual arts. The Spanish painter José Gutiérrez Solana and the Belgian Expressionist James Ensor both used masques and distorted lines and figures to portray their vision of the modern grotesque.26 Using angular images similar to those of Kirchner, Solana also painted street scenes of alienation and the under-world of prostitution. Echoing German Expressionist paintings, Solana’s prostitutes in Las chicas de Claudia (1915–17), suggest no interaction either with each other or with the viewer’s outside world.

In drama, as Jerez-Farrán and others have shown, Valle-Inclán’s “esperpentos,” (his “shock” or “nonsense” dramas) from the Comedias bárbaras (1907–22, publ. 1923) to Luces de Bohemia (1920) and Martes de carnaval (1921–26, publ. 1930), all reflect Expressionist characteristics, such as an anti-naturalistic setting, generic characters, and loosely connected juxtapositions of “stations.”27 Novels by Unamuno and Valle-Inclán, especially his Tirano Banderas (1926), have also been interpreted as Expressionist (Foster, “La estructura” and Unamuno; Dougherty). While García Lorca’s drama, just as his poetry, is generally seen as Surrealist, there have been a few attempts to reinterpret his later drama, especially El público (1931) and Asi que pasen cinco años (1929–30), in the context of Expressionism (Jerez-Farrán; Anderson). In poetry, Valle-Inclán’s later work, especially La pipa de Kif (1919) has been interpreted as reflecting Expressionist traits (González López). Finally, García Lorca’s Poeta en Nueva York (1929–30, publ. 1943), contains numerous features of Borges’s Expressionist translations, such as a portrayal of a hostile and threatening nature that is both anthropomorphized and humanly defined. Most of García Lorca’s New York poems betray the presence of an anguished speaking subject striving for human solidarity. The portrayal of violence and brutality and the appeal for human sympathy is a crucial shared feature of German Expressionist poetry and García Lorca’s Poeta en Nueva York. This link was facilitated by Borges’s promotion of Expressionism in the early twenties.28

CONCLUSION: BORGES—GODFATHER OF A SPANISH EXPRESSIONISM

I have argued that Borges’s transformations of the German originals represent an overlooked and influential attempt to disseminate and promote Expressionist poetry among Spanish-speaking readers and poets. By situating ominous and
mysterious elements in a concrete reality, by abstracting this reality as symbolic of
shared human experience, or by intensifying an emotionally charged encounter
with personal affect, Borges campaigned against the poetics of the poesía pura
prevalent in Spain during the 1920s. At the same time he adapted Expressionist
techniques to the “horizon of expectations” of his Spanish audience with trans-
lations that consistently transliterated the originals. The avant-garde movement
Ultraism broke with past aesthetics by literally foregoing all rhyme and reason, dis-
regarding fixed stanza forms, and employing bold combinations of images. These
techniques served the creation of an autonomous poetic reality beyond that of
the human world. Borges’s translations rendered the Expressionists’ concern for
humanity and social regeneration more accessible to Spanish poets and readers
by adapting the poems’ linguistic expression to discourse modes that were then
prevalent in Spain. He underscored the creation of an “ultra” reality by merging the
abstract and the concrete, the human and the non-human. He retained the daring
imagery and metaphors, but recognized the need to sacrifice ellipsis and syntactical
fragmentation in order to underscore what he saw as the essential contribution of
Expressionism: its striving for socio-cosmic unity and a human community.29

Ultimately, Borges’s translations mediate between avant-garde poetic experi-
ments and a poésie engagé. His amalgamation of Expressionism with the aesthetics
of Ultraism and elements of Surrealism highlights the possibility of an effective
social agenda for later Spanish avant-garde poetry. The widespread reception of
Expressionism in all areas of culture and in a variety of adaptations suggests that
Borges’s re-envisioning and portrayal of Expressionism resonated in the cultural
milieu of his time.

Later literary criticism, however, has not recognized Borges’s important role
as mediator and advocate of German Expressionist aesthetics and ethics. Partly, I
think this gap may be attributable, to the devaluation of Expressionism beginning
with the Marxist critic George Lukács who attacked it as a misguided ideology that
prepared the way for National Socialism.30 Moreover, the focus of Spanish literary
criticism during and after the Franco dictatorship was either on the traditional,
“classical” orientation of their generación del 27 and its “autonomy” and “purity,” or
on a more psychologically-oriented Surrealist avant-garde and its focus on dreams
and the subconscious. In other words, various factors have interfered with an ade-
quate acknowledgement of a “Spanish” Expressionism. Critics emphasize that the
introduction of social and political questions occurred from the margins, through
Borges, an “outsider” in the Spanish avant-garde, dealing with a little-known lan-
guage like German (Gallego Roca 201).31 To this day it seems that Spanish literary
criticism wants to reject any association with a literary movement viewed histori-
cally as ideologically compromised and politically implicated.
However, there are indications that this picture is slowly changing. Guillermo de Torre revised and enlarged his early (1925) survey of the European avant-gardes into a voluminous *Historia de las literaturas de vanguardia* (first edition 1965; re-edited 1971) in which the previously five-page chapter on Expressionism is extended to 36 pages (183–219). Dealing with the movement as a spiritual state intimately connected to the social reality and encompassing all arts, this extensive study testifies to Torre’s recognition of the importance, impact and contributions of Expressionism. In an explicit attempt to re-read the avant-gardes, Sánchez-Blosca has stressed the unjust neglect of Expressionism in comparison to Surrealism. Since the mid-eighties, Jerez-Farrán’s numerous studies on Valle-Inclán’s and García Lorca’s drama in the context of Expressionism have significantly helped refocus critical attention. The most recent supplement (1995) of Fransisco Rico’s authoritative *Historia y crítica de la literatura española* includes Jerez-Farrán’s 1986 essay on Lorca’s drama *El público* as Expressionist. This inclusion can be seen as one of the first official acknowledgements of an Expressionist presence in a leading writer of the Spanish avant-garde. Similarly, the re-edition in 1998 of Taléns and Keil’s earlier bilingual collection of poetry by Trakl, Stadler and Heym bears witness to this new critical climate. In short, Borges’s translations do not represent a merely marginal voice from the outside, nor are they simply his personal poetic playground. Rather, his was a purposeful aesthetic and a social campaign, introducing Spain to what he saw as the “profound preoccupations” (qtd. in Modern, “Borges” 395) of Expressionism, and spreading its revolutionary and incendiary spirit to Spain.

\(\sim\) University of Dallas

**APPENDIX**

August Stramm: “Wiedersehen”  
1 Dein Schreiten bebt  
   In Schauen stirbt der Blick  
   Der Wind  
   Spielt  
5 Blasse Bänder.  
Du  
Wendest  
Fort!  
Den Raum umwirbt die Zeit!  

J. L. Borges: “Encuentro”  
1 Tu paso tiembla  
   Al vernos muere la mirada  
   El viento  
   Juega  
5 Cintas pálidas  
Tú  
Te das vuelta!  
El tiempo esta cortejando el espacio!  
Johannes R. Becher: “Lusitania”

1. Ein Maul von Stürzen Wassers ausgestopft!
2. Dann keurz und quer verfahren die Schaluppen.
5. Gemecker der Sirenen.

Vom Mond bestrahlt taucht unter die Hetäre.
Gebohrt von des Torpedos blankem Glied.
Die Wogen siedeten. Geschwüre.
Die Plankenfüßen Kraut des Meeres schmiert.

. . . Lusitania! Palast in die Gründe geschwenkt!
Bunte mit fließenden Gärten, den Fackeln, [besteckt.
Leib dein klarer von tobenenden Höllen verrenkt.
(. . . weht wo ein Streichen das einst dich [erweckt . . .)
Aber der Wimpel, der Wimpel der knatterige [leckt

10. . . Lusitania! Palacio en los abismos flameado
Abigarrado, con jardines chorreantes – ¡con [antorchas!
Tu claro cuerpo dislocado por delirantes [infiernos
(. . . hasta que una caricia te despierte . . .)
Ya lame el bajo azul el gallardete

15 Niedern Azur . . . und der Sirenen!
Sirenen [ertösen . . .
Regenbogenschleime rings zerfließen die [Gekröse . . .
O du erwachst! Durch die Ozeane fliegt
Dein Atem –: eine Säule Morgen frisch.
Die du erwachst! Ja –: du melodisch wiegst:

20 Erneuter Menschheit heiliger Fisch!

J. L. Borges: “Lusitania”

1. Las torres de agua cierran al despeñarse una [boca.
Atravesadas manipulan las lanchas.
Marineros berreantes gotean de los mástiles.
Escarabajos sacudidos.

5. Balidos de sirenas.
Radiante de luna se hunde la cortesana
Agujereada por la virilidad del torpedo.
Hierven las olas. Ulceras.
Plantas del mar untan las caderas de tablas.

10. . . ¡Lusitania! Palacio en los abismos flameado
Abigarrado, con jardines chorreantes – ¡con [antorchas!
Tu claro cuerpo dislocado por delirantes [infiernos
(. . . hasta que una caricia te despierte . . .)
Ya lame el bajo azul el gallardete

15 y sirenas – ¡las sirenas resuenan!
Viscosidad de arco iris tus despojos devienen.
¡Oh te levantas! Por los oceanos vuela
Tu aliento. Una columna fresca es la mañana
que tu despiertas . . . Hímnicamente te meces,

20 Pez, ¡símbolo de las humanidades resurrectas!

Wilhelm Klemm: “Der Himmel besticht uns . . .”

J. L. Borges: “El cielo nos soborna”

1 Der Himmel besticht uns
Mit etwas abgelegenen Augen
Die Wipfel der Pappeln
Flüstern von Frieden und Wind.

1 El cielo nos soborna
con los ojos algo entronados
Las copas de los álamos
Dicen de la paz y del viento

5 Blanke Schwestern
Ebnen hin im Grün
Über gläserne Wäldermasken

5 Hermanas relucientes
Se tienden en la pradera
Sobre las vidriosas máscaras de los bosques

Hängen Sonnenzügel.
Nasses Feuer

Las riendas del sol cuelgan
Fuego mojado

10 Glutet in grünem Fell
Erinnerungsfriede
Quillt unerschöpflich
Ein brauner Bogen
Kehrt langsam zurück

10 Arde en la piel verde
Paz del recuerdo
Mana sin tregua
Un arco pardo
Lentamente vuelve

15 Die Brücke nimmt ihn auf,
Ehe der blaue Abend erscheint.

15 Lo toma el puente
Antes que la tarde azul aparezca.


NOTES

1 For these notions of the Spanish avant-garde see, for example, Debicki; Díez de Revenga, Panorama and Poesía; García de la Concha; Havard; Lama. Further evidence of criticism of this view is provided by Morón Arroyo and Crespo. The notion of a “dehumanized” art harks back to Ortega y Gasset’s influential La deshumanización del arte (1925) in which he describes the new art as evasion of reality, as “arte artístico” encased upon itself that does not seek to communicate (with) a human reality and thus becomes obscure and hermetic.

2 The anthology of German poetry, Las cien mejores poesias líricas de la lengua alemana (1919), edited and translated by Fernando Maristany, devotes much space to the eighteenth and nineteenth century, with a large selection of poems by Goethe, Hölderlin, Eichendorff, Heine, and Mörike. Rilke is probably the most translated twentieth-century poet, with translators as famous as Torrente-Ballester, Gerardo Diego, and J. M. Valverde. For an overview of translations see Hempel 1291–93. These translations, together with his enthusiastic commentaries, were published in leading avant-garde journals such as Grecia, Cervantes and Ultra in 1920 and 1921.

3 See, for example, Garland (213); Cudden (297). The Princeton Encyclopedia is one of
the few to emphasize the international atmosphere of Expressionism (Preminger 398). Interestingly, while Ramón Gómez de la Serna’s (highly idiosyncratic) Ismos (1943) does not even mention Expressionism, Juan-Eduardo Cirlot’s Diccionario de Ismos (1949) includes a lengthy survey of Expressionism and Expressionist manifestations in international art.

4 In her discussion of the influence of other European avant-garde movements on Ultraism, Gloria Videla mentions Expressionism as having influenced it only “en pequeña medida” (99), and indicates that it reached Ultraism solely through Borges’s translations. Implicit in Videla’s treatment of Expressionism, based exclusively on Borges’s introductions, is that Expressionism was too different from the other movements (of a “contenido ideológico y mayor preocupación social” and a “tono patético,” 101) to be easily assimilated and that Borges was the only one whose poems “revelan cierta influencia” (101).

5 Linda Maier’s article on Borges and Expressionism particularly highlights Borges’s merit in bringing Expressionism to Spain and surveys his critical statements. In a more recent book on Borges and the European Avant-garde (1996), Maier focuses on Borges’s own “Expressionist” style in his poetry and prose. Rodolfo Modern’s informative overview of Borges’s “serious and intense” (“Borges” 392) involvement with Expressionism stresses his “fidelidad esencial” (393) without much poetic analysis. Enriqueta Morillas surveys his translations with a focus on his theoretical stance, concluding that Borges’s own “aesthetic preoccupations” led to his interest in Expressionism (“Borges y la marea”). Lehman-Srinivasan’s dissertation, Revolution in Writing: Borges’s Reading of the Expressionists, does analyze several of his translations in great detail, but focuses on his use of these poems for his own development as a poet. Jose Luis Vega’s essay on Borges’s translation of “Der Aufbruch,” by Ernst Stadler does not go beyond stating when and where Borges departs from the original, and concluding that his translations are mostly faithful with exceptions due to misunderstanding of the original (242; 247–48). There are two exceptions that do focus specifically on Borges’s translation practice. While Carlos García’s two short notes in Proa are more concerned with Borges’s personal involvement with the Expressionists and point out their impact on Borges’s ultrasismo, his two later essays focus on Borges’s errors and misunderstandings in his translations of Kurt Heynicke and Wilhelm Klemm. Efrain Kristal’s brief chapter on Expressionism in his insightful study on Borges as translator seems to be the only one to discuss how Borges’s changes “produce an effect different from the original” (44), such as a more apocalyptic and threatening vision of war (44–45).

6 The fictitious author attempts to produce a work identical to Cervantes’s Don Quijote. Yet, due to the historical gap between the two writers, the text that Menard “translates” is very different from that of Cervantes. Thus, although literally copying the text verbatim, Menard automatically, and quite deliberately, contemporizes Cervantes’ work.

7 Carlos García cites Borges’s mistranslation of Klemm’s neologism “Absterbeordung” (order of dying out / of extinction), understanding it as “Afterbeordung” and translating it involuntarily humorously as “colocación de los anos” (placement of the anuses). However, this misunderstanding is due to the older German writing of the letter ‘s’ as resembling an ‘f’: ‘ſ’, and since this word is a neologism, Borges’s misreading is itself
quite creative. Moreover, the genitive error García cites as further indication of Borges’s difficulties with German grammar (“Borges, traductor” n.p.) does not seem sufficient proof to me; the genitive case is one of the most difficult aspects of German and not being able to produce it correctly is not equal to a general inability to comprehend complex German sentences.

8 In contrast, Olea Franco himself confines his highly pertinent argument—“que solo desde el ámbito de la realidad argentina—en su historia, en su literatura, en las inflexiones de su lengua, etcétera—puede empezar a comprenderse la textualidad borgeana” (El otro Borges 17)—to the period of 1923–42.

9 Thus, I am not concerned with the relationship between Borges’s time in Europe and the rest of his life, or between these translations and his later literary production in Argentina. Enriqueta Morillas has drawn a link between Borges’s Expressionist translations and his later fiction by emphasizing his interest in the “magical” element of Expressionism (“Borges, el expresionismo” 26–27). She does not analyze how this interest is manifested in the poetry translations themselves, how features of his translations relate to his later prose, or if and how it affected the Magical Realism of other writers.


11 Borges starts this essay by distinguishing two strands of Expressionism, one mere “documental, histórico” and one “de muestrario del expresionismo lírico en sus albores.” Denouncing the latter as absurd overvaluation of objects over the comprehending subject, Borges goes on to stress the superiority of the subjective: “En el fondo, lo visto, lo sufrido, lo imaginado y lo soñado son igualmente reales, es decir, existen. La objetividad no es en última exégesis mas que una suerte de denominador común de muchas sensaciones subjetivas . . .” (1).

12 In 1962, for example, he sees Expressionism as containing “ya todo lo esencial de la literatura posterior. Me gusta mucho más que el surrealismo o el dadaísmo, que me parecen frivolos. El expresionismo es más serio y refleja toda una serie de preocupaciones profundas […]” (qtd. in Morillas, “Borges y la marea” 78). A similar comparison is made in his “Autobiographical Essay” (1970): “I still think of it [Expressionism] as beyond other contemporary schools such as imagism, cubism, futurism, surrealism, and so on.” (216). Likewise, in an interview from 1970, he contrasts the pacifism of Expressionism with the formalism of the cubists (Morillas, “Borges y la marea” 78). Although no direct comparison is made in “Nota sobre el Ultraísmo” (1966), he indicates his particular fondness of the Expressionist poets stressing that “Al cabo de los años perduran en mi memoria líneas y estrofas de Johannes Becher o de Wilhelm Klemm” (qtd. in García, “Borges, traductor” n.p.).

13 Carlos García, one of the few to have discussed of Borges’s translations of Expressionist poems in various articles, asserts that he translated six poems as well as three fragments. The seven poems of which I am aware are: “Los sentidos” (in “Lírica expresionista: síntesis”), “Noche en el cráter” (“Antología expresionista”), “El cielo nos soborna” (“Antología expresionista”), “La ascensión” and “Extracto” (both in “Lírica expresionista: Wilhelm Klemm”), “Batalla en el Marne” (in Inicial, 1923, and with modifications
in the first five lines, in *Inquisiciones*, 1925), and “Madurez” (*Cartas del fervor* 174–75; originally in a letter to Jacobo Sureda).

14 Franz Werfel, for example, the favorite of the anthologist Kurt Pinthus, does not figure at all, nor do Georg Heym, Georg Trakl or Gottfried Benn, none of whom could not be omitted from an Expressionist anthology today. Moreover, as Carlos García notes, the poems by his favorite poet, Wilhelm Klemm, that Borges chooses to translate are not those which were to be the German author’s best known compositions (“Borges, traductor,” n.p.).

15 All English translations of the German poems are mine. They are literal rather than literary, with the sole purpose of clarifying the differences between the originals and the Spanish texts.

16 In August Stramm’s poems, Borges most notably cuts and condenses words or phrases to intensify the effect of the original. Characterized by extremely short lines and insistent word or phrase repetitions, these poems become even more condensed in the translations. Where many of the repetitions are omitted.

17 I have translated the German “hetze” as “rush” since the German word is a neologism, not an existing adjective, but alluding to the verb “hetzen” (of which possible adjectives would be “hetzig” or “gehetzt”)

18 Interestingly, in Klemm’s war poem “Schlacht an der Marne,” the opposite occurs when Borges’s slows time down, while the German accelerates it (Kristal 44-45). Yet, here too, he condenses lines, thereby rendering the “onslaught of the infantry [. . .] more focused and threatening” (45).

19 While the continental Spanish expression “dar la [o una] vuelta” does not require the reflexive pronoun, in Spanish America, the reflexive “darse vuelta” is possible (Slabý, Grossmann, and Illig 1163).

20 To my knowledge, it is only in 1958 that new translations appear in Spain: Rodolfo Modern ends his study of German Expressionist poetry with an appendix containing translations of some of the most important poets (*El expresionismo*). In 1973, a translation of Georg Trakl is published (Sánchez). In 1971 a bilingual anthology with poems by Trakl, Heym, and Stadler appeared, edited and translated by Jenaro Taléns and Ernst-Ernst Keil, which was revised and re-edited in 1981 with the collaboration of Vicente Forés, and then again amplified and re-edited in 1998. The third edition has a slightly altered title to emphasize the different nature of the book. Overall, the late nineties in Spain have witnessed signs of increasing interest in Georg Trakl (Mingüés; Modern, *Trakl*; Reina Palazón).

21 Cansinos-Asséns and Gómez de la Serna’s articles in praise of Borges’s translations are reprinted in Alazraki 38. According to Modern, Torre was the first to stress Borges’s merit in disseminating Expressionism (”Borges” 395).

22 Goll himself published a brief article, “El expresionismo alemán,” in the Ultraist journal *Prisma* in 1922.

23 An interesting proof of the authority of Borges’s transmission of Expressionism in Spain can be seen in the repetition of a curious error by two later critics. As did Borges in “Síntesis,” Torre oddly mentions Rilke as ancestor and precursor of Expressionism. More recently Gallego Roca, in his study of poetic translations between 1909 and 1939, includes Rilke translations under the subheading “Expresionismo” (103ff.).
Although Anderson’s article focuses on three dramas by García Lorca, it includes a useful discussion of the Expressionism’s reception in Spain and its points of intersection with Spanish aesthetics. He rightly concludes that “el expresionismo recibió una difusión y una atención suficientes en la España de los años veinte” (217).

The *Revista de Occidente* published three translations, in 1926, 1928 and 1929 respectively: *Von morgens bis mitternachts*, *Gas I*, and *Oktobertag* (Anderson 216—for a list of the play’s performances see Anderson 216 and note 17 on pp. 223–24). The first of them has an introduction by Enrique Díez-Canedo.

A few critics have mentioned these similarities (Bozal 500; Jerez-Farrán, *Expressionism* 65), but to my knowledge, there is as yet no study that directly compares the two artists.

See the studies by Jerez-Farrán; Andrés; Matilla Rivas; Sabaté Planes; Wentzlaff-Eggebert.

I have analyzed the (so far overlooked) similarities between García Lorca’s *Poeta en Nueva York* and German Expressionist poetry and their implications for the Spanish Avant-garde in a recent article in the *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos* (Sager).

Rodolfo Modern, in his essay “El expresionismo alemán según Borges,” argues that Borges used Expressionism to expand the literary-cultural horizon of the Spanish-speaking world (69). His claim that the translations are faithful to the originals, whose style and ethics were “más que novedad para el mundo hispánico” (70) does not explain if and how these translations could influence current poetics. Hempel too emphasizes that German culture had the function of “impulsos e innovaciones” but claims that its influence or transmission in the twentieth century was scarce, with the exception of Rilke-translations (1292).

In 1937–38, Lukács started a bitter debate among leftist intellectuals (the so-called *Expressionismusdebatte*), in the exile journal *Das Wort*. For a complete documentation of this attack, see Schmitt; part of the discussion is also in the collection edited by Anz and Stark. Rumold (110–37), Murphy (12–16), and Anz (196–99) discuss its implications for the Expressionist movement.

The number of Rilke-translators (cf. footnote 1 and Hempel 1292), however, suggests that German was not such an unknown language as is often claimed.

Defining Expressionism as purely Germanic, the introductory art guide for schools and colleges, *Las claves del arte expresionista* (González Rodriguez), is a regrettable exception here. While it does have a section on Expressionism outside of Germany, Spain is conspicuously absent. On the other hand, Carlos Areán’s study (1984) of Expressionist art in Spain, bears witness to widespread affinities, but is based on too broad a concept to be a useful as critical tool.

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