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Piers Plowman the A Version: Passus 3, lines 101-133

Abstract

As a Dominican American born and raised in The Bronx, New York, I grew up with a rich, diverse group of individuals from different backgrounds. Out of my entire family, who traveled from Santo Domingo and Santiago, I was the only one who set out on a path to obtain a master's degree. When I first received this assignment, I thought of all the creative ways to translate a passage from *Piers Plowman* into Middle English. I remembered a conversation I had with a coworker who pointed out that I and another coworker, who was also Dominican, spoke the "wrong" type of Spanish. I thought to myself, "This is where I could prove him wrong," so I translated the passage with the same slang and relaxed tone I would use speaking to any of my other Dominican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban friends back in The Bronx.

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D'ANGELO RAMIREZ

Piers Plowman the A Version: Passus 3, lines 101-133

My name is Deon Angelo Ramirez, also known as D'Angelo Ramirez. I am a Dominican American born and raised in The Bronx, New York. I grew up with a rich, diverse group of individuals from different backgrounds. Out of my entire family, who traveled from Santo Domingo and Santiago, I was the only one who set out on a path to obtain a master's degree. My mother stopped after getting her bachelor's degree and working as a federal government paralegal. Despite her not being home, we were still close. I had become close with all my family members, and if I had to talk about each of them and how their decisions have impacted my choices in pursuing higher education, this introduction would be about ten pages. So, the opportunity to participate in this collaboration isn't just a win for me but for the Ramirez/Rodriguez/Alava family.

When I first received the assignment, I thought of all the creative ways to translate a passage into Middle English. The project allowed me to express myself creatively, and my professor, Don Calabrese, always encouraged us to translate the passage uniquely, so long as it made sense. As I was selecting a passage, a conversation with my coworker rang in my head: he mentioned my Spanish, and how I and another coworker, who was also Dominican, spoke the "wrong" type of Spanish. I thought to myself, "This is where I could prove him wrong," so I translated this passage with the same slang and relaxed tone I would use speaking to any of my other Dominican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban friends back in The Bronx.

My favorite scene, and the one I decided to translate, is from *Piers Plowman*, the A Text, specifically in Passus 3. The scene begins with dialogue between Lady Meed and the King regarding who should take the hand of the fair Lady. Lady Meed is a character who personifies giving payment and receiving payment through the acts of rewards. By the act of giving rewards to certain individuals, Lady Meed encourages the most heinous of people to continue with their sins, causing the continuation of sin to be spread around. The King offers Lady Meed an opportunity to marry and live a life of her own accord between two men, Truth and False. The King advises her that False would not be the best choice, since she refuses to marry Truth, and offers her a chance to re-marry his best man Conscience. However, when this idea is presented to Conscience, he immediately hates the idea, and protests why he is against this marriage. Conscience used every reasoning that pretty much shows why he will not marry Lady Meed in a comical and dramatic way that reminded me of how dramatic some Dominican men can be when presented with an option they absolutely dislike.

For the translation, I took the opportunity to use certain phrases such as "*Que lo que tigre*," which is a slang version of how Dominican men greet each other, especially amongst friends. This was important to me to include, as the relationship between Conscience and the King felt casual, and allowing people to see this opening shows the level of comfort one can have with a longtime friend, regardless of status. Line 110 was difficult to translate, as I had many debates on how to translate this text. I remembered something my grandmother would

tell me whenever I had resisted her rules. “*Nino, tu no eres fasci.*” I immediately knew that I wanted to include this in my translation, so I made it into “*Esta tipa no eres fasci.*”

There were many moments while translating this passus that allowed me to be myself, especially in a city without many Dominicans. Even the title, “A Lady and a Knight: A Bad Romance,” came to me by accident because I checked the time on my phone, and for some odd reason, Lady Gaga’s “Bad Romance” played out loud, and my headphones had disconnected from my phone. Not only did I die from embarrassment, but one classmate said, “Welp, at least you have your title now,” and the entire class laughed. That same joy that I felt in drafting this translation, the same little mistakes that turned out to be pure gold, even now as I remember this process, has made me smile, and I would like my future students to feel the same joy.

Then there was Conscience, who came for an appearance before the king and his counsel, with the clerks and many others. Bowing down to his lord, Conscience questioned his king and asked “*que lo que tigre?* what do you need from me? “Will you marry this lovely woman with my consent? She is filled with joy with the idea of marrying you and y’all would be a great match.” Conscience with a tone of disgust said to the king, “*Jesus santísimo, ya te pasaste tigre, no!*” *Que Dios me ayuda si yo me casarse con esta tipa de diablo!* Underneath, she is a hungry wolf in sheep’s clothing, a manipulator especially in speech; She manipulates and encourages men to commit *la trabajo de diablo*, since the creation of time; *Esta tipa no eres fasci*, she will destroy her trustful treasures. *Y ella esta enseñando las Doña’s como ser un mujer de la calle;* For those who learned her gifts, have also become their own blood suckers; She through her false promises, *Esa es la razón tu padre estas muertos;* She even poisons the mind of our popes causing *la casa de Dios to fall apart.* *Que esta tipa is not the women for me, que Dios lo sabe.* You can search between hell, heaven, and earth, and she still wouldn’t be enough. She’s a loose woman, *y no sirves mas que para decir tonterias,* She is gets around on the cart tracks from knights to monks; She even goes after musicians, even diseased men. The Jurymen and bailiffs praise her; Even the police and sheriffs officers allow her to do what she pleases. She steals the land of men, killing them in the process And she grants prisoners a path to escape, payment for their freedom. Gifting jail keepers riches that no one would be able to achieve. She has even released False so he can fly away. and takes truth by the top and ties his fate. And hang him for hatred, *y nunca le hizo nada a nadie.*