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Translating the translator: Translation and
Annalysis of the book Me ve con el corazón, by Ángel
Gómez Mesonero

Translation, comments and journal

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Dades del TFG

Títol: Traducció sobre el traductor: Traducció i anàlisi del llibre Me ve con el corazón, escrit per l'àngel Gómez Mesonero

Título: Traducción sobre el traductor: Traducción y análisis del libreo Me ve con el corazón, por Ángel Gómez Mesonero

Title: Translating the translator: Translation and Annalysis of the book Me ve con el corazón, by Ángel Gómez Mesonero

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Resum:

L'Oriol Gómez Sentís, invident des del seu naixement, tradueix a l'anglès el llibre que va escriure el seu pare. El llibre tracta temes com els sentiments i emocions, la educació, la ceguesa, complicacions, frustracions i els bons moments.

A més de traduir els quatre primers capítols, l'estudiant ha fet l'anàlisi d'una sèrie de punts que ha trobat difícils o d'importància al llarg de la traducció. Alguns exemples d'aquests punts són dites del text original que s'han de traduir al idioma de destinació.

També ha realitzat una reflexió, que alhora serveix com una investigació personal sobre el que comporta traduir un text que afecta de manera emocional al traductor i els problemes, avantatges i inconvenients que això comporta.

L'estudiant va decidir, al principi del treball, no traduir la sinopsis del llibre ja que no forma part de les paraules de l'autor, però al final es va decidir a traduir-la ja que ajuda a entendre el llibre. La sinopsis original també s'inclou com anex del treball per a una millor comprensió dels evaluadors.

Resumen:

Oriol Gómez Sentís, invidente desde nacimiento, traduce al inglés el libro que escribió su padre. El libro trata temas como los sentimientos y emociones, la educación, la ceguera, complicaciones y frustraciones y buenos momentos.

Además de traducir los cuatro primeros capítulos, el estudiante ha realizado un análisis de una serie de puntos que ha encontrado difíciles o de una mayor importancia a lo largo de la traducción. Algunos ejemplos son refranes o locuciones del texto original que deben traducirse al idioma de destino.

También ha realizado una reflexión, que a la vez sirve como una investigación personal sobre lo que conlleva traducir un texto que afecta de manera emocional al traductor y los problemas, ventajas e inconvenientes que ello conlleva.

El estudiante decidió, en un principio, no traducir la sinopsis del libro ya que no forma parte de las palabras del autor, pero al final hizo lo contrario ya que ayuda a entender el libro. La sinopsis original en español se incluye como anexo del trabajo para una mejor comprensión de los evaluadores.

Summary

This TFG focuses on translation and reflexion. Oriol Gómez Sentís, blind since birth, translates the book that his father wrote. The book discusses many topics including feelings and emotions, education, blindness and other complications, as well as the good aspects.

The student has translated the first four chapters. Furthermore, he has built a compendium of a series of points or issues in the book that he has found of major importance. Examples include phrases or sayings that need to be translated into English from the Spanish source text.

He has also wrote a reflexion which serves as a journal and a persona investigation on what it takes to translate a text with emotional value for the translator as well as the problems, advantages and disadvantages that such a text may present.

The student had decided not to translate the synopsis of the book, given that these are not the author's words. However, it has been translated for a better comprehension of the book. The original Spanish version will be included as additional content to facilitate a better understanding by the evaluating staff.

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Table of Contents

1. Translation.....	7
Sinopsis	7
1.1. Introduction	7
1.2. Chapter 1: Love and a wish (16)	9
1.3. Chapter 2: The grief of losing a child	13
1.4. Chapter 3: Fear and frustrations.....	15
1.5. Chapter 4: Why us?.....	17
Issues found during the translation.....	22
2. Journal: A translation about the translator	35
3. Academic Conclusion	40
Synopsis (in Spanish)	42
Translated chapters	43
Introduction.....	43
Capítulo 1: AMOR Y DESEO.....	44
Capítulo 2: LA AMARGURA DE PERDER A UN HIJO.....	47
Capítulo 3: FRUSTACIÓN Y MIEDO.	50
Capítulo 4: ¿POR QUÉ A NOSOTROS?	52

1. Translation

Sinopsis

The author of this book, a Catalan journalist and businessman, offers us this lucid and breathtaking personal testimony. This non-fictional story talks about the greavous experience of losing a premature child and receiving the news that his brother has gone blind. Oriol was born blind in February of 1992 and, along the pages of this exceptional narrative, Oriol's parents give a message of hope, with great sincerity and courage. They received support from the specialists at the Spanish blind and visually impaired Organization, O.N.C.E.

Mercè Leonardt, coordinator of the Center of Early Attention in Barcelona, explains in the prologue how this book fills an important nitch as a testimony and help to other parents of blind children, as well as being an exceptional recognition to all specialists who work in the field of educating children with high degrees of visual disabilities, who see the value in the effort that ángel has put into writing this book.

The frustration and panick that he and his wife felt for the unforeseeable future: Why to us? or the incomprehension of the people around them, are countered by the hope of seeing his son grow up like the rest of the kids, who is only different by his way of seeing. A child who wants to have the same opportunities as the others. Kindergarten, school, music school... In every stage of his education, the baby has learned to be a child, to love and be loved, respect and be respected, with classmates who are now his friends.

Throughout this book, we can see how Oriol grows up with the same responsibilities as others, under the protection of his parents and also specialists who support him with his schooling with sacrifice and effort. It seems as though he makes everything easier. Perhaps due to this, his passion and dedication have helped him achieve unimaginable goals for a society that cannot understand that a blind child of nine years can communicate with friends across the world via the internet.

1.1. Introduction

Yesterday (1) my son asked me if there was anywhere where you could learn to see with your eyes. His words, as harsh (2) as they seem, didn't really surprise me.

Since he was born, seven years ago, I had been expecting him to ask (3), one day or another. My son, that "sees with his heart", why some people see with their eyes and he, as he has said many times, sees with his hands. Whether he had thought that question out I did not know. Perhaps it was just a doubt, a result of the family talk we were having at that time together with his mother, while looking over his last tasks(4) of his third semester of preschool education.

At that moment, his mother and I shared a look. That had been a difficult question. We do not know what he understands as seeing, or whether our improvised answer had been enough to shed some light on (5) his naïve tenderness (6) or to help him understand that there are people that see with their eyes and others with their hands, just like most of us speak using our mouths and some must do it via gestures with their hands. We also asked ourselves whether he, in all his life, has understood(7) to see as the natural way(8) to distinguish everything he touches and picks up. How could he, that sees me with his heart, ever understand that sight is the capability to perceive objects, the main learning channel for most people, or the medium we use to explain (9) some of the most basic experiences of life in the space and environment around us. I often ask myself what will become of him, that sees me with his heart, what his future will be like and if he will be able to overcome the surprises that life throws at us. I wonder if he will transcend(10) the immorality (11) with which some act, or if the comprehension of some will help him get the necessary strength of spirit (12) which we need to confront our daily life.

My friend Andrés often comes to my mind, my paternal grandmother's neighbor who lived in a small town where I spent most of my childhood. He was one of those people(13) who we used to call retards(14), and now we call mentally disabled(15). I remember that my childish cruelty made me feel somehow superior to him, because I was one of the privileged that had, with great success, despite the scarce means available in those times, overcome the great physical difficulties in my birth that almost paralyzed my right leg during the first years of childhood. When I met Andrés he was always the same, they didn't help him further because there were little chances at a time where such a kind of disability was a disgrace and a burden for the family. Andrés was always a great friend of my childhood. How could he not be, if he never knew the meaning of immorality? He

gave himself completely to his peers, but it seemed as though he grew without really growing up, while I went from being paralyzed to an outstanding middle distance athlete in my beloved hometown. Now I have doubts, I am in panick, and I even get terrified when I try(15) to understand that my son, who sees me with his heart, cannot enjoy the light, the colors, the hundreds and hundreds of shapes, or the full freedom of movement in a world full of barriers. This world, that seems so attractive for every human being and which I now feel I am betraying. My son Oriol... He, that sees me with his heart, is blind.

1.2. Chapter 1: Love and a wish (16)

Oriol was born on a February day in 1992. He was born after two years, during which his mother and I, almost holding up our heads (17) subjected ourselves to (18) every possible infertility test, wishing to start a family. I can remember that it was on September 7th, 1991 when a sonography confirmed that my wife was pregnant by a double pregnancy. Our first reaction was that of huge satisfaction, that of two parents who, with much passion, happiness, hope and expectations for the future await the arrival of their offspring. Those days were also in phase(19) with a change in my career as the director in an important Radio station, (20) which forced me to travel almost 300 km every day, the distance between where we lived at the time (by the shores of the Mediterranean sea) and our new residence, in a city located in the mountains, which was a huge change from the warm weather which we enjoyed by the sea.

My wife is a beautician. At that time, she was working at a beauty center in which one of her coworkers and friends was also pregnant (21) almost at the same time, so they were both living their pregnancies with great expectation. This circumstance, coupled with the fact that we wished to have the children in the capital city of where we lived, which was also where my wife had been born, made her want to track the evolution of her double pregnancy from this same place. This finally helped us decide not to move to where I was starting a new job in communication and journalism.

After the first twenty weeks of pregnancy, we began noticing blood losses in the womb. Naturally, we started worrying about it as well (22). Until then, everything had gone as it should. Our hopes were

that of a young couple who are going to be parents for the first time. The blood losses, however, changed our hope into a constant worry, which made us eat our hearts out (23) over the birth of our two children.

On the 25th week, we confirmed that this was not going to be a normal pregnancy. Despite the days that remained for my wife to give birth (24), the first contractions came, which intensified beyond measure (25) as time went on, up to the point that the only important thing was to gain another hour. One more hour so that the fetuses (26) could take shape.

Oriol's birth took place a few seconds after Gerard saw the light of day (27), both born after a bit less than six months of gestation. That day, his mother was also celebrating the day of her Saint, Our Lady of Lourdes. I don't know whether the virgin mentioned above had something to do with it for that day to remain so deeply in our memories, but it was certainly a miracle that my wife pulled through that difficult situation the way she did, with her ever present and painful contractions. I remember arriving to the hospital where she was at about 9, like every evening. I quickly made my way up to the second floor, an area which back then was only a maternity ward (28). Upon entering the room I congratulated her, while I gave her a small gift, thinking only that it was her saint's day, even though I did it in a quite generic way. She quickly answered, "how do you know?" I took advantage of the moment to answer her dearly: "I cannot forget that you celebrate your saint today."

I insisted once more on her saint's day and she quickly answered, when I discovered with great astonishment, her visibly emptier belly. I don't remember ever living a moment like this. It was like when you get a hard slap to one side of the face and you're afraid to get slapped on the other. I went pale, nervous... My only wish was to find out where the newborn babies were, without waiting to hear whether the double pregnancy had gone well.

I went to the incubator room and there they were. At first glance, the first thing I could see was that they were very small, and I was unable to think anything else, believing only that they were two infants. Slowly however, uncertainty swept over me, like when you feel a jolt of electricity running through your body, and a growing uncertainty about their future crept over me. Only by looking around them I had a gutt feeling (29) of incoming difficulties. I saw other infants, each and every one of them with bodies much bigger than those of my children, despite the fact that they had all recently been born.

My children measured only about 10 inches (30) and weighed a mere half a pound (31), which reminded me of the little dolls that my sisters used to play with throughout their childhood. From the very beginning, no one tried to keep the pathological risks a secret. If the days prior to their birth had been tough, the arrival of the two infants changed my life completely. My pride had been shot to hell (32). I kept asking myself what I had done wrong. The worries and fears made me eat my heart out in confusion (33) over the babies that I had dreamed of a thousand times... And standing before these tiny, minimal, totally defenceless beings had me greaving about their luck in the future. Luck that claims all parents during the last months of pregnancy, awaiting the birth of their children. "Let come whatever comes, but let it come fine."* So many times have I heard this phrase coming from family members, friends, or anyone with whom I've crossed paths.

Note: This comes from the Spanish phrase "*Que venga lo que quiera, pero que venga bien.*"

The incubators which gave them life and from which several cables stuck from them and to their bodies with a suction pad were an early reminder of the difficulties that they were facing. However, the hope which I never lost or at least because I wished so, cheered me up because I thought that everything could turn up well. "Why wouldn't it be fine, if every day new children are being born and they all end up running through the streets at any moment?" I kept asking myself over and over. They let us enter the mentioned room very soon, where we could see the first movements of the two babies which, perhaps due to the happiness that we both felt, we thought that they were small smiles. I remember often comparing the length of my index finger with that of their two

tiny heads, which confirmed my idea that they were really small given that their heads were shorter, no matter how long I thought my finger was. I kept wishing for time to hurry up as the fear and uncertainty were even more excruciating than expected.

I still have the beeping of that cardio/respiratory monitor in my mind which made the person closest to the babies come running into the room who, with a brief shaking movement of the incubator, would help the infants' fragile hearts start beating again.

1.3. Chapter 2: The grief of losing a child

March 1st, about two weeks after my childrens' birth, proved fatal. As it happens many other times in the premature ward of the hospital, Gerard's heart monitor beeped once more. My wife and I, holding each other with heavy hearts(34), in that room, because the aforementioned doctors were unable to make our baby Gerard's delicate and vulnerable heart start beating again. I think it was on a weekend, I don't remember it too well. What I really do remember, though, is that the person who was in charge of the medical ward during that shift was an overly young woman (35). By the way she carried herself, it seemed to me as though she was indecisive, as though she could not bear the situation she was facing. I can also recall her overall anxious expression when she told the hospital staff to get us to leave the room. Such nervous and strange behavior made us fear the worst and it turned out to be so, as minutes later Gerard's death was confirmed. According to the medical report, it was due to a hospital acquired infection (37).

I've always had this nagging feeling that more could have been done to try and save his life. No one until then had told us how tough it is to become parents, at least when one has to go up against such difficult circumstances that make you curse each and every second of your life.

Gerard's sad passing (37), even though we already knew it could happen, was a tough and devastating psychological blow. It was. Of course it was a cruel time, it was so unfair... In the span of a few minutes, that castle of hopes that we had been building during months started to crumble (38). The only thing that helped me cope with it was that my mother, already long gone, would be a mother again and would give him the love that she gave me and that she knows I would give my lost son. That moment was terrible. A living hell. Not only because of what had happened, but because of what could happen again when they confirmed that Oriol had also and simultaneously caught the same virus.

We didn't organize a funeral for Gerard, as his life had only been twenty days long. We buried him in private, with the same privacy that we visited Oriol during the next thirty days. We watched him gain 2 lbs, 3 on the next day, then 4 more... But our thoughts were always on what had happened with his brother, fearful that the same could happen to him.

At the same snail's pace(39) that our hopes grew, our son kept on gaining weight. He was starting to look more like the new children that came in the same ward, where Oriol had already spent two and a half months. During these last days we had already held him in our arms, given that the doctors let us hold him dearly a short time after receiving the terrible news of his brother's passing (40). From that first day, I can't forget his mother's face when she hugged him for the first time, of course before me. We both held him as if he were a delicate masterpiece made from cotton. We hugged him so softly, fearing that he would break right there. Despite weighing just a couple pounds, it seemed to us as though he was such a delicate creature, that we didn't know how to put him in our arms. Every day it was so, sometimes we even had the pleasure of feeding him with the baby bottle. One of the most surprising and tender moments, full of love and affection, was when we put him on his first diaper. Those were very happy times. With that huge pack, the very same that is always put on babies with a normal weight, he looked more like a baby who had recovered his normality. During the spring break of that year they let us take him home over the long weekend.

Holy Thursday was a hard day. My office phone rang. It was my wife, and she was telling me to urgently make my way up to the hospital to pick Oriol up, to take him home so he could spend five days with us at home during the holidays. By the tone of her voice I knew that something was wrong. She wasn't behaving as in the previous days, and I also didn't believe that her shaky voice was due to the supposed happiness she felt at the thought of having our child with us at home. However, she insisted that nothing was wrong and that the only thing I should do was make my way to the hospital where our son was. With time against me, I drove 90 miles from my workplace to the city where the hospital was and my wife was there, at the entrance. When I arrived where she was, she hugged me very tightly and started crying. I had no idea of what could happen. I was confused and in shock... And I started to fear the worst. The memory of what had happened to Gerard remained embedded in my heart. Without even saying a word, tears started flowing from my eyes and I was only waiting for her to tell me what I already thought I knew.

"Something terrible has happened," were her first words. I automatically thought of when Gerard was put in that dark niche in the cemetery where he rests together with

his maternal grandfather. With a shaky voice full of grief I asked her, without really wanting to hear the answer, whether Oriol was also dead, to which she immediately said no. But she insisted: “Something terrible has happened... It’s even worse, much worse.”

She went into a tailspin (41) and, without wanting to believe the news that had been tormenting her during the last few hours while she hid her face –probably so as not to see mine- she said: “He’s blind. The doctor says he’s blind... He says he cannot see.”.

Still not fully conscious of my words I sputtered: “But so what? Is he alive? Is he? That’s what matters.”

With Oriol at home for the first time, we spent the first days together (42). They weren’t many, but it was enough for his mother and I to know that the most important thing was to fight to keep this new unfair situation in line.

1.4. Chapter 3: Fear and frustrations

A few short days after the spring break of 1992, Oriol was finally released from the premature ward (43). He weighed just over 5 pounds and a half and he was already starting to be a challenge and responsibility. Back then, I already knew some things about the ONCE, (the National Organization of Spanish blind people), so the idea of being blind wasn’t fully unknown to me. I had sometimes selflessly participated in the organization of several sports events for blind people. Since many years, I have had a trusted contact inside this organization by the name of Andoni. He was a blind man who by that time was a local delegate, but who had in the past sold *el cupón* (the lottery game ran by this organization which makes it well known across Spain) in a nearby city, where I also worked as a journalist.

I called him up and told him the reason for my call, and we decided to meet up for lunch on that same day. The meeting went by pretty quickly, I guess due to the reason that he found me quite stressed out. Once we sat on the table we shared at the restaurant (which he chose and thus showing me his exquisite taste for the food from the sea), he ordered a fine meal which consisted of fish and an assortment of pieces of seafood. Once the meal was on the table he asked me to look at it and tell him exactly what was on the plate. “For us, it’s like a watch face. Tell me how everything is distributed by saying where each fish and seafood piece is located by telling me the hours, quarters and halves as if it were a clock.” I share this bit of experience because then he said something I would remember until now. “People who

cannot see with their eyes are blind, but not stupid.” As I was telling him everything that had happened in the last months he finished every piece of fish and seafood on his plate by using his cutlery with great dexterity and agility.

During our conversation, he also reminded me of the time that I had spent getting to know the environment that surrounds blind people. I never forgot the many times we had shared our experiences, and the trust he had placed in me when he let me be his driver and guide using his own car. I remember this because many times when I’m driving my own car I remember when I was travelling with Andoni. He let his hand outside the window and he said: “You’re driving too fast, you’re driving at 100mph! That did surprise me indeed, as I was driving at exactly 100mph.” I immediately lifted my foot off the pedal, not too much because we were driving through a good highway, even though it was enough for him to let his hand out again and say: “OK, you don’t have to drive so slowly. You’re driving at 60mph.” And it was indeed so. I don’t know whether his precision was just luck; What he did show, though, was that he really had good speed perception. But he was right... He was damn right.

Going back to the topic of the discussion we had at the restaurant, Andoni was harshe with me. Let’s say that back then I thought he seemed harshe, but now I’d say that he was being honest. He said that it is not easy to be blind, because there had also been hard times for him. But he also encouraged me to fight for my son. “Blind people can do almost as many things as the sighted. In a different way, yes, and surely with more difficulties than others. Don’t forget that there are many blind people who are showing that they are able to achieve whatever goals they want, with hard work and effort... Whatever goals they want.” These last words he repeated with a firm degree of security as he said: “Don’t ever forget it.”

This meeting with my friend Andoni was a very positive experience for me. Up until that point, my relationship with the ONCE had always been to lend a helping hand (44) and now, I was the one who needed help. I am guessing he noticed my distress. I am pretty sure that he was conscious of the bad situation I was in. Perhaps due to this, he tried to cheer me up again at the end of our meeting. At least he did try to make me see that, after that day, despite all the difficulties we would be facing from then on, a hopeful future also awaited us. “Your son is lucky to have been born blind today. There is a great organization that will support him... An organization that helps him fight, get jobs, learn to suffer, and live like the rest of the world.” He said.

1.5. Chapter 4: Why us?

Andoni advised me to register my son as a member of the blind organization, and I immediately did so. His mother and wife moved a few days later to the city where I was still working as the director of a State-owned radio station (45). Due to this, we could, from the very beginning, get the necessary help from the Education Resource Center for the Visually Impaired “Joan Amades,” (46) located in Barcelona and owned by the ONCE together with the autonomous Catalan government.

That is where we met Mercè, the coordinator of the Early Attention service. We quickly figured that my son’s progress would not be at all a matter of leaps and bounds (46). We saw many difficulties and hurtles ahead, and we had doubts that wouldn’t let us see the reality of what was coming. A hard situation, because even though we thought that our son’s future was the most important thing, we still couldn’t understand why this had happened to us. “Why us? How could this happen to him?” We asked ourselves: “What wrong could such a small child have brought upon in his very short life?” We asked ourselves what he had done to be unable to enjoy the visual light, the same light that we could see and had never thought of with such an extreme necessity(47) as we did back then. These questions we asked ourselves over and over, questions that made us doubt the existence of a God that protects us.

I cursed our bad luck so many times that the thought of our future made me go over the edge (49). It was so cruel, so horrible, so inhumanely atrocious (50)... I wished for my own death right there and then (51). My life was empty and I had no heart for (53) the human values I’ve always fought for. Life was empty of all that had kept me hoping: Creating a family, my, my work, my relationships, politics... Everything that had made me happy during the last twenty years of my life, since I moved to this land I dearly loved and fought for. A feeling which I do not wish to remember again. Because now, so much time later, I can only hope for pity, understanding and mercy (52).

The meetings with Mercè however, were very important. I would now say they were critical. We understood many things and we especially cleared out many doubts from our minds. The first time we arrived at the specialized center, we roamed around for a while before meeting Mercè at the appointed time. We tried to look around for answers to the many questions that troubled us at the time.

We could see many blind children walking by the halls making their way, alone, to their point of destination. Some of them were at the library, reading a language totally unknown to us: Braille. Others simply played or practiced swimming at the pool or ran at the track outside.

Upon arriving to where Mercè was waiting for us we saw many pictures hanging on the wall, where several blind children were depicted. We supposed that these were pictures of children whose development she followed. This we later confirmed because now, many years later, some of Oriol's pictures hang on that same wall I just mentioned. Even now there is still that same pool, full of balls of different sizes. Or, hanging on the wall and at the height of a children's hands, different elements that help a blind person distinguish different materials or textures that he or she can find at some point. Materials or textures like a curtain made of plastic strips, metal, cork, circular shapes, rectangles, squares... Hundreds of small things that are useful for a blind children's development.

They also held periodical group meetings with other parents that had already gone through our situation. These outspoken parents told us about their experiences, both positive and negative, and with these we could see that there were all kinds of situations.

From the very beginning, this Center they started to work with us as parents of a blind child. They understood that it was very important to mentally prepare us to understand that we needed to understand a variety of concepts about being blind (53) at a time when hope, happiness and future expectations with which every parent dreams and awaits the arrival of a child, almost always of a nice, blond and blue eyed child. All these expectations could have shattered at the arrival of a blind child. This picture of a perfect, beautiful, smart and healthy child with a big smile and eyes that we often try to visualize and create during pregnancy... All of this shatters when you receive such bad news. You just hope that everything was a bad dream, that it was just a nightmare that could never come true.

It's like being immersed in a world full of barriers unknown to you. The pain, the tears and apathy are the escape to such a sad reality. It is the hardest moment. No parent is ready to have a blind child. The insatisfaction felt at these times makes you dizzy. It's as if your brain was battered over and over when you remember the way that the cold fish (55) medical specialist, with a coldness more appropriate to an enemy, certified again, that second time upon my request, that "your son is blind."

I still don't understand why the doctor was so cold, especially given that, even today, he often shows an amiable interest every time he asks me how Oriol is doing (56). However, this

coldness made me think a lot during these last few years. Without a doubt, the field of communication between the doctors and medical specialists and the patients or their family members has many shortcomings. We are in a society in which communication is full of technical media and the communicators, in this case the doctors, are still failing to understand that patients and their close family members need to be treated with more empathy and respect(57). The doctor needs to realize that the results of just another diagnosis completely affects a patient's life. I honestly think that that it would not hurt if doctors worked a bit more on their empathy in this matter.

As I could later read in the book "el bebé ciego", (the blind baby), by Mercè Leonardt, there is a study on the importance of communicating the diagnosis, its nature and implications to a blind child's parents. If it is not done appropriately, many unnecessary problems can arise which lead to a suffering so great that they can handle (it is logical when we are talking about a visual impairment). The doctor present at the time did not comprehend this appropriately. He didn't understand the implications. No. For him, it was just another diagnosis. For us, it was like being back against the wall (58), with no way of escaping. It was like falling into the abyss. We did not want to accept blindness.

This first crisis was one of great pain; the suffering, together with the despair and sense of failure as parents was unbearable. We tried to put a limit to the guilt we were feeling when we reacted with a resounding "it cannot be. There has to be a solution. There was to be. What have I done to deserve such a punishment?" In the face of such uncertainty and disbelief, we started wandering about every hospital, seeking for that doctor who would give us a sliver of hope, looking for the best doctor. We were ready to travel to the four corners of the earth (59) to find someone that told us that our son wasn't totally blind, that he still had some vision left, no matter how slim the chance was. Every specialist we visited however, confirmed the diagnosis. Only in the streets, people who often speak as if they knew everything that happens in this world, some of them dared to speculate. They assured that they had read something on a magazine or that they had seen on TV that in the United States there is this awesome clinic where they do amazing wonders with the blind. Or that in the port of Barcelona regularly docks a hospital soviet ship with the most advanced ways to treat blindness. It was like listening to the apostles praise the word of Jesus. Pity we didn't live during that time to see by ourselves in our own flesh the wonders he did in the Holy Land. This despair even made us ask two fortune tellers, these women that claim to know the future via their cards. My wife did it and, without letting slip any information about our family,

they said that our son would be, at the very least, a good soccer (60) player. For my part, I also asked a seer who was often participating in a radio show at the radio station I directed. She already had an advantage because she knew the situation I was in. She told me that my son would see one day. This answer made me think that she was feeling compassion she felt for me, given my mood and because I needed to hear, even from her lips, a tiny sliver of hope. On the other hand, I figured that in the words of these people there is nothing more than stuff and nonsense (61). They are almost always far from reality and, if not, its just by sheer coincidence. They only say what the people who contact them hope to hear.

After these visits to the oftalmologists, which seemed like the most serious thing we could do, a very prestigious specialists tells us that our son has something called Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP). It is a problem in the retina that, due to a malfunction in the oxygenation during its development results in it forming a mass of scar tissue that fills the space between the retina and the crystalline lens (61) and that affects both eyes of the premature baby. The same doctor had to operate my son a few days later due to glaucoma, an ocular illness caused by the increase in Intraocular pressure and which causes atrophy in the optic nerve. This operation made us forget his blindness for a few days when he saw how much he suffered every time they checked his eyes. The glaucoma operation had to be done with great urgency, at a time when, if we wanted to wait for social security to let this doctor operate my son and take care of all costs we had to wait more than three months, given that we visited this doctor privately. In such situations, it is not common to think about the consequences this may have. We asked him if he could do it as a private operation and what we had to do if we wanted to operate him with the urgency that this case required, according to him. I quickly got an answer: "Ask my secretary." And so I did. I saw how tough it was to get proper health care for people with low resources. An operation that only lasted a few minutes in what was probably the best clinic in the city: The note, the intervention and a an overnight stay at the hospital... about \$3500, which was about 500000 pesetas at the time. It is more than evident that I wasn't at all worried about the money, even though I did not have it at the time. I didn't even want to stop to think whether the operation was really necessary with the urgency that the previously mentioned prestigious specialist said. I just said yes and anxiously waited for the operation to take place in the next 24 hours. I was ready to do whatever necessary to get him operated. I imagine anyone consumed by fear of these kinds of situations would do the same. I then thought that it was time to finally ask for help from my friends I could have made in the passage of time. And so I did.

Thanks to the generosity of a good friend who had a great political responsibility at the time, he got the paperwork all going in a span of just a few hours so that my son could be operated. I mention this here because I will never forget the relief that I felt when he quickly intervened when I was feeling so terribly anxious. I remember calling him on the phone and managed to contact him in a shaky and stuttering voice. He was in the parliament, but he quickly attended my despair call. The situation was probably not so urgent, and we could have probably waited a day or two, or perhaps a couple more. But when I called him, I must confess that I felt terribly anxious.

That also made me understand that, despite the bad times I was going through, I was not alone, that I was lucky. It is true that I never refused to help anybody, and help was offered to me when I needed it the most. With time, the only thing I've come to lament is that not every person have this chance to get help, that there is a child that cannot be attended to in the best conditions because his parents don't have a friend to go to (62).

Issues found during the translation

(1) *“Mi hijo me preguntó ayer que si el ver con los ojos es algo que se aprende en algún lugar.”* In this case, Spanish uses an infinitive verb to express a fact, that humans can see. According to Spanish grammar rules, an infinitive verb may also act as a name in a sentence and can even have other components added to it (el ver con los ojos).

However, the use of *que* after a conditional is wrong. The correct form of this sentence is:

Mi hijo me preguntó ayer si el ver con los ojos es algo que se aprende en algún lugar.

Using my acquired knowledge of the English language and after notifying the author, I have chosen to use a conditional form with the sentence with a reversed structure and avoid using a simple infinitive sentence which would confuse the readers.

I have also translated the articles in Spanish to English possessive pronouns (los ojos/your eyes).

In English, the time form is better understood at the beginning of the sentence.

So the sentence in English would look like this:

Yesterday my son asked me if there was anywhere where you could learn to see with your eyes.

This solves the issue of the infinitive verb, and eliminates the possible confusion.

(2) *Sus palabras, por duras que fueran...*

This sentence has two issues: The first one is with the word "duras". In Spanish, this word has multiple meanings and thus we need to find the correct term in English.

I have chosen to use the English collocation harsh words, and this is correct. According to the free dictionary:

4. *Disagreeable to the mind or feelings: harsh words.*

The second issue is easier to overcome and is with the words *"llegaron a sorprenderme"*. In Spanish, this verb is what is known as a terminative Verb periphrasis

which, in its negative form, implies an interrupted action. In English this can be simply changed to "didn't really surprise me".

(3) “*No sé si su pregunta estaba o no razonada, o si tan sólo se trataba de una duda...*”: I have changed the structure in English to two conditional sentences, a form used more frequently in English writing. (Whether he had thought out that question I did not know. Perhaps it was just a doubt...).

(4) “*Sus últimos trabajos*” in Spanish is very ambiguous. From the situation however, we can easily decide that the word “*trabajos*” refers to school exercises from the last semester. I have chosen the term tasks in English as a replacement for this, as it includes both exercises, homework, etc.

(5) The expression shed some light is often used in English to imply an acquisition of new knowledge or information. The American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms defines it this way:

shed light on Also, throw light on. Clarify or explain, as in I was hoping the professor would shed light on how he arrived at his theory, or Can anyone throw some light on where these plants came from? Originally, from about 1200, these expressions were used literally, in the sense of "illuminate," but they soon were used figuratively as well.

(Ammer, 2013)

However, the Spanish text wasn't clear enough to understand whether I should use this expression or not. “*Dar luz a su tierna inmadurez*”, it says. However, after asking the author I chose it after he explained that what he wanted to say was to help understand or to clarify. This was the closest English equivalent I found.

(6) In Spanish, the meaning of “*inmadurez*” is much less negative than that of immaturity or puerility in English. We can refrain from using those and instead choose a more adequate adjective, like naïve:

(7 and 8): Two issues here. The first one is with the word understood, when the Spanish text says *utilizado*. Again, after asking the author, we decided on changing the English equivalent because the Spanish term *utilizado* is not correct in English.

Another issue is with the word *hecho*. I translate this as way, the natural way, because it's a common term. A confirmation from the author was given, though not mandatory.

(9) The structure here has been completely changed, to better explain what the Spanish text wants to say. The problem here is with the Spanish text, so communication with the author was necessary in order to fully grasp the meaning of the original Spanish text. The word "medium" has been chosen so as not to repeat "channel".

(10 and 11): The reason for the word transcend is, yet again, ambiguity in the Spanish text. After a necessary conversation with the author, it has been decided to use the word transcend. The American Heritage Dictionary's definition is clear:

1. To pass beyond the limits of (a category or conception)...
2. 2. To be greater than, as in quality or intensity; surpass...
3. 3. To exist above and independent of (material experience or the universe)...

(American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition, 2011)

The term immorality has been chosen because it depicts the same meaning as *maldad* in Spanish. However, *evilness* or *wickedness* seemed empty or incomplete.

(12) Strength of spirit is a known term which tries to explain the word *Fortaleza* in the Spanish text. It has been deduced that the original text means strength of mind, of will, of spirit, an English term used in many cases.

(13) Where the Spanish text refers to being part of a collective, it has been decided to instead use a singular form that refers to a collective in the English text (being one of many instead of part of) due to linguistic reasons. Both in Spanish and English, it is common to say that something is part of a bigger group. However, when referring to a person, the English language in a standard registry uses a singular form.

(14 and 15) The source text uses a negative word (*subnormal*) and then a more positive one (*disminuidos psíquicos*). In English, the word retard has a very negative sense, which is exactly what the source text wants to express. Mentally handicapped would be the equivalent to the second term.

(15) The word try is used here as a replacement for want because the meaning of want in English is not as broad as in Spanish.

(16) After talking to the author, he said that the word *deseo* expresses just one wish, the wish of having a son, hence the reason why the English translation includes an indefinite article to avoid sounding too unnatural.

(17) I did not want to use a simple word like “pride” or “self respect”, because *amor propio* in Spanish has a deeper meaning, one which in English needs an idiom with a similar meaning. I chose “holding up our heads” thanks to the American Heritage Dictionary:

hold one's head high Also, hold one's head up; hold up one's head. Behave proudly; maintain one's dignity. For example, After the bankruptcy Mr. Jones still held his head high, or Grandma told Brian he could hold his head up because he'd tried extremely hard, or After that newspaper article, I'm not sure I'll ever hold up my head again. All these expressions allude to a posture of pride. [Second half of 1500s]

(Ammer, 2013)

(18) I chose the verb “subject to” because it suggests that the author felt reluctance against what he and his wife had to do.

(19) I chose “in phase” because I wanted something that sounded a bit more English than the verb “coincide”. Let’s take a look, once again, at the American Heritage Dictionary:

in phase Also, in sync. In a correlated or synchronized way; in accord, in harmony. For example, If everyone were in phase we could step up the schedule, or John and Pat often say the same thing at the

same time; their minds are perfectly in sync. Both versions of this idiom refer to physical phenomena. The first, dating from the second half of the 1800s, alludes to being at the same stage in a series of movements. The second, a slangy abbreviation of synchronization dating from the mid-1900s, alludes to exact coincidence in the time or rate of movement. Also see IN STEP; PHASE IN; for the antonym, see OUT OF PHASE.

(Ammer, 2013)

(20) After asking the author, he agreed that we could use the type of media that he was working in at the time, since it makes more sense in English.

(21) This issue is expressed in the journal. The Spanish writing is somewhat confusing, so I have changed the structure of the English phrase to make it sound more natural.

(22) In order to avoid repetition of the verb begin or start, I created a new sentence for better readability.

(23) I wanted to find a good replacement for “*ver con temor*”. I chose this one because it expresses a constant feeling that constantly eats at your insides. Once again, thanks to the very useful American Heritage Dictionary:

eat one's heart out Feel bitter anguish, grief, worry, jealousy, or another strong negative emotion. For example, *She is still eating her heart out over being fired, or Eat your heart out--my new car is being delivered today. This hyperbolic expression alludes to strong feelings gnawing at one's heart. [Late 1500s]*

(Ammer, 2013)

(24) *Salir de cuentas* in Spanish means to give birth. I was having trouble at first with the Spanish phrase as I thought it meant something like come to a conclusion, but after looking it up I found out that it has a direct relationship with giving birth. The American Heritage Dictionary has given me another phrase to work with:

give birth to 1. Bear a child, as in *She gave birth to her first child exactly at midnight. [Early 1800s]* 2. Also, *give rise to*. Be the cause or origin of. For example, *His hobby gave birth to a very successful business, or The economic situation gave rise to widespread dissatisfaction. The first term dates from the early 1700s, the second from the late 1700s.*

(Ammer, 2013)

(25) I changed the structure of the sentence a bit so that it can be understood better in English and added the term *beyond measure*. American Heritage Dictionary's definition follows:

beyond measure To an extreme degree; exceedingly. For example, *Her attitude annoys me beyond measure. This term was first recorded in 1526.*

(Ammer, 2013)

(26) This word defies the rules of Latin English borrowings ending with *-us*, as in that the plural of *fetus* is not "feti" but "fetuses", contrary to what I had first thought.

(27) I chose this idiom after a few moments of puzzlement. It might seem a bit cruel to use the term "see the light of day" in a book about a blind child, but I am using it to show that blind people should not get offended with these terms and because it fits in the phrase. The definition by the American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms follows:

see the light of day Be published, brought out, or born. For example, *I wonder if her book will ever see the light of day, or The family reunion was a disaster, and I wish the idea for it had never seen the light of day, or When we visited Pittsburgh, we saw where Mom had first seen the light of day. [Early 1700s]*

(Ammer, 2013)

(28) The Free Dictionary defines *maternity ward* as follows:

maternity ward - a hospital ward that provides care for women during pregnancy and childbirth and for newborn infants

(29) A gut feeling is a feeling that comes from intuition or instinct.

(30) 30 centimeters=0,98 feet which equals to about 10 inches, rounded off.

(31) a mere half a pound sounds better than a few lbs.

(32) I chose shot to hell because it alludes to the Spanish sense of death, I think it makes more sense to use—though this might have to be looked at by a native speaker. Here is the explanation I found from the American Heritage dictionary:

shot to hell Worn out, ruined, as in This carpet is shot to hell, or My privacy's been shot to hell, what with all these reporters. This term alludes to being shot by gunfire. [Slang; late 1800s]

(Ammer, 2013)

(33) This part is a bit confusion. The Spanish text expresses a multitude of feelings in very few words, so what I tried to do in the English translation was to add strength to the negative emotions while trying to express them all. Hopefully this will be good enough.

eat one's heart out Feel bitter anguish, grief, worry, jealousy, or another strong negative emotion. For example, She is still eating her heart out over being fired, or Eat your heart out--my new car is being delivered today. This hyperbolic expression alludes to strong feelings gnawing at one's heart. [Late 1500s]

(Ammer, 2013)

(34) I chose heavy hearts because it expresses the over all feeling of an emotion too strong to control: American Heritage dictionary, says:

heavy heart, with a In a sad or miserable state, unhappily, as in He left her with a heavy heart, wondering if she would ever recover. The

adjective heavy has been used in the sense of "weighed down with grief or sadness" since about 1300.

(Ammer, 2013)

(35) There is a reason for choosing “overly young” in this sentence. In Spanish, the expression *bastante* expresses a bit too much. It has been confirmed with the author.

(36) According to online research, hospital acquired infection, or nosocomial infection (medical term), would be the appropriate terms for “*virus de quirófano*.” Since the term used in the source text is not nosocomial infection, I figured that the English translation should also use a less medical term.

(37) In English we can't translate this *adios* as goodbye, since it is not natural and is never used in this way. I chose a better expression, passing, which also includes the meaning of death.

(38) I had to restructure the sentence here to make it sound natural and grammatical in English. In English, commas and sentence endings are different in some cases.

(39) A very slow pace: American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms says:
snail's pace A very slow pace, as in They're making progress with testing the new vaccine, but at a *snail's pace*. [c. 1400]

(American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition, 2011)

(40) A sentence restructuring was necessary here, as the source text repeats *nuestros brazos* twice. It was shortened for readability.

(41) Very useful idiom here, as the source text implies panick, collapse... It wants us to know that she was deeply worried.

go into a tailspin Lose emotional control, collapse, panic. For example, *If she fails the bar exam again, she's sure to go into a tailspin.*

This expression alludes to the downward movement of an airplane out of control, in which the tail describes a spiral. [Early 1900s]

(Ammer, 2013)

(42) While it is true that the source text says *en familia*, it could be misinterpreted as spending these days with the whole family. However, after a brief talk with the author it has been decided to use “together” instead, as the original intent of the author was together, the three of us.

(43) In English, it makes more sense to use a verb that does not imply giving (entregar in the source text) as give usually implies an object (something):

When we use a verb like being released, the sentence includes a sense of finality and freedom. It is usually used for being released from jail as in many news articles. However, it makes sense to use it in this text because a premature ward isn't something particularly pleasuring

(44) We have to use this construction because it's an appropriate collocation for this sense. The author is talking about giving his help and being of assistance.

lend a hand Also, lend a helping hand. Be of assistance, as in Can you lend them a hand with putting up the flag, or Peter is always willing to lend a helping hand around the house. [Late 1500s] Also see GIVE A HAND.

(45) This term is used when referring to a government-owned agency, company or entity. The Cambridge Dictionary definition follows:

owned by the government:

a state-owned airline/bank/industry

Many people acquired shares in the former state-owned group when it was privatised in 2009.

(Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.)

(46) Due to my knowledge about the author, I know that he was working close to that center at the time. This is not in the source text however, but the author agrees that it should be included.

(47) I decided to invert this phrase and put it this way to emphasize a slow progress, by using an opposite phrase and a negation. I hope that the evaluators agree that this also works as an appropriate translation. American Heritage Dictionary definition for “by leaps and bounds” follows:

by leaps and bounds Rapidly, or in fast progress, as in *The corn is growing by leaps and bounds, or School enrollment is increasing by leaps and bounds. This term is a redundancy, since leap and bound both mean "spring" or "jump," but the two words have been paired since Shakespeare's time and are still so used.*

(American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition, 2011)

(48) I had to make this sentence shorter because that is the best way I found to make it sound natural. There are some difficult bits in this text which just need restructuring in English. However, I feel that it sounds good enough.

(49) I chose an alternative translation because in this sense, the author is talking about an uncertain future, a future full of problems and difficulties. The author is insanely terrified and uncertain about the future.

over the edge Insane, as in *I think he's gone over the edge. This expression alludes to the edge of sanity. [1920s]*

(Ammer, 2013)

(50) I translated inhuman and atrocious together because it makes the sentence more readable. This act of putting two words together as an adjective and noun is called a compound structure and it adds value to the writing.

(51) Right there and then adds a sense of finality or urgency. The American Heritage Dictionary explains this:

then and there Also, there and then. At that precise time and place; on the spot. For example, When the board questioned his judgment again, he resigned then and there. The first term was first recorded in 1442, the variant in 1496.

(Ammer, 2013)

(52) Problem: *Piedad, comprensión y misericordia* are very similar words. I chose to translate this as pity (pain for others, presumably me, as the victim of blindness), understanding (comprehension) and mercy (in hopes that others (me?) forgive him for having these thoughts.)

(53) Translating *aproximación* is complicated and thus, I restructured the sentence to achieve the same or even a broader meaning.

(54) IT means that the author had no enthusiasm for anything anymore.

have no heart for Also, not have the heart for. Lack enthusiasm for, as in After the dog died he had no heart for taking long walks, or I should go through the family albums, but I don't have the heart for it.

[Mid-1600s]

(Ammer, 2013)

(55) *cold fish* A hard-hearted, unfeeling individual, one who shows no emotion, as in Not even the eulogy moved him; he's a real cold fish. This expression was used by Shakespeare in *The Winter's Tale* (4:4): "It was thought she was a woman, and was turn'd into a cold fish." However, it came into wider use only in the first half of the 1900s.

(Ammer, 2013)

(56) Amiable means having good qualities, qualities that define a person's good nature. I decided to shorten the sentence because there would have been much repetition otherwise.

(57) I had to restructure this sentence completely because I did not understand the original text at all. I asked the author to rewrite it completely and he told me to say that what the doctors aren't understanding is that the patients need to be treated with empathy.

(58) This phrase implies that there is no exit or escape from a situation. Perhaps this could be changed.

American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms definition:

back to the wall Also, *back against the wall*. In a hard-pressed situation; also, without any way of escape. For example, *In the closing few minutes, our team had its back to the wall but continued to fight gallantly, or The bank has him with his back to the wall; he'll have to pay up now. This term was used originally for a military force that is making a last stand. [First half of 1500s]*

(Ammer, 2013)

(59) The author is ready to travel all over the world to find a cure. American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms explains this:

four corners of the earth, the *The far ends of the world; all parts of the world. For example, Athletes came from the four corners of the earth to compete in the Olympics. This expression appeared in the Bible (Isaiah 11:12): "And gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth." Although the idea that the earth is a flat plane with actual corners has long been discarded, the term has survived.*

(Ammer, 2013)

(60) I am using American spelling, so I put soccer instead of football.

(61) The words of these people are nonsense, they aren't worth listening to.

stuff and nonsense Utter foolishness or absurdity, as in Stuff and nonsense, of course I can pack a suitcase.

(Ammer, 2013)

(61) the crystalline lens is the part of the eye that focuses nearby and objects and is the equivalent of the Spanish term lente, though in the source text it is not specified.

All about Vision, an organization dedicated to promoting vision and accessibility defines the eye lens as follows:

4. *Light focused by the cornea and crystalline lens (and limited by the iris and pupil) then reaches the retina — the light-sensitive inner lining of the back of the eye. The retina acts like an electronic image sensor of a digital camera, converting optical images into electronic signals.*

5. (Access Media Group LLC, 2016)

(62) this is a change from the source text, as the source text implies that the child has a friend to go to and not the parents. I changed this with permission from the author.

2. Journal: A translation about the translator

I am starting this journal in the hopes of expressing how the translation of a book of which I am the protagonist is coming along. It is a difficult process. For one, it is a full-fledged book and thus it is complex. It is also difficult emotionally, due to the words that the author uses to describe how my blindness, as a child and a son, affected him. However, this emotional involvement also helps to understand the author's point of view. Even though communication with the author is necessary in many cases to understand the context of the words he uses, I, as the protagonist, am able to understand the ways in which he writes. However, I like to communicate with the author as much as possible so as not to make the mistake of translating something in a way that sounds obvious to me but it is not really what the author intended.

This idea of meeting and knowing the author is further reinforced by Clifford E. Landers, in his book called *Literary Translation*, chapter "techniques of translation decisions at the outset:

Though not always feasible for reasons of time, distance, and expense, a face-to-face meeting - preferably a series of encounters - with the SL author is probably the most fruitful activity a translator can undertake. More than any dictionary, native informant, or Internet search, direct contact with the author can prove invaluable in an often arduous task. Perhaps the best known example of the personal element in a writer/translator collaboration is that of Jorge Luis Borges and Thomas di Giovanni. Di Giovanni, who translated many of the Argentine master's works, moved to Buenos Aires to be near Borges and became his amanuensis for four years, all but living under the same roof for part of that time. While opinions of the quality of di Giovanni's translations may vary, his was undeniably an example of making fullest use of author/translator contacts.

What I mean with this is that what the author might have wanted to say is not necessarily what, as the protagonist, might discern from the context.

The concept of literal versus contextual translation is very important when dealing with this source text, as it contains some errors that can easily be avoided by changing some terms in English, something that is **crucial** for a better understanding of the book by the reader. The errors that are present in the source may be due to the author's background, which is not related to creative writing. In context, these errors can easily be understood by a Spanish reader. In English, however, they are slightly more complicated.

But literal translation is never a good idea, even when the source text does not contain errors. It is always a good idea to examine the source text closely and adapt the translation grammatically, lexically and morphologically so that it follows the correct rules for the target language.

The book *Reflections on Translation*, by Susan Bassnett, explains this concept very well:

When should we follow a source text so closely that we reproduce each word, and when should we diverge from that close following to create something that effectively translates the meaning, or the sense, instead? Most translators would immediately opt for the second option, being all too aware of the pitfalls of the word-for-word approach. After all, a translation that is too literal can be simply unreadable.

(Bassnett, 2011, p. Chapter 2)

I remember having a lengthy and somewhat embarrassing discussion with my father, the author of this book, about his title for chapter 1, "*amor y deseo*". I know my father pretty well and I know for a fact that he is not very accurate when it comes to describing his own emotions, as contradictory it seems if we observe the complexity of this book. This title is, in my opinion, wrong, as for new readers it may indicate lust, even though we all understand the seriousness in which this book has been conveyed. His answer was, as I had expected, that his wish was that of starting a family and that it had nothing to do with lust, at least not directly...

Sometimes, my father's writing strikes me as somewhat careless. Let's take a look at the following examples:

*Aquellos días coincidieron también con un cambio profesional
como director en un medio de comunicación...*

Mi esposa es esteticista. En aquellos momentos ejercía en un centro en el que su compañera había quedado embarazada también

(Gómez Mesonero, 2002)

Luckily for me though, being able to talk to him and knowing perfectly what he wanted to write is a huge plus. Perhaps a linguist might argue that his writing is bad, and I wouldn't deny their words; It is not proper writing, though understandable, and that is the important part. However, as a translator, my job is, with his permission, to correct these small style mistakes. Perhaps, in the near future, an edited copy of the Spanish book can be published.

It is also important to note here that this is the first translation into Spanish that is being done for this book and thus the job becomes, if not more difficult, more challenging.

It is not easy to translate my own birth, especially when my own father is asking himself what he has done wrong to have a blind child. While I understand that any parent would do that, a selfish part of me finds it hard to accept it, even though I could have never asked for two more loving and caring parents. My parents are exemplary, yet translating this part of the book is not without some degree of uneasiness. The worst part of it is, what if I had a language problem in this part? Or a later part where my own father expresses a negative feeling towards having born a blind son? Would I have the guts to ask him about it? Would he see it as a language problem, or some sort of resentment on my part? Hopefully it will not come to this, though if it does, I will try to make sure that he understands that I am asking a question because of a language problem and not because of childish pride.

Related to this, I have seen a sentence in the book *Lost in Translation* by Clifford E. Landers which I would like to comment on:

A decision to involve the author actively in the translation process is not one to be taken lightly, and his or her offer to 'help out' or to 'take a look at the manuscript' should not be accepted merely out of courtesy. Authors are as individual in temperament and personality as other human beings, if not more so, and there are 'easy' authors and, so

to speak, 'high maintenance' authors. More than one translation project has foundered because of excessive authorial input (read interference).

(Landers, 2001)

This quote says that authors should not interfere with a translation all that much. I do agree somewhat, however in this case I have done differently. It is mine and the author's wish that the author contributes as much additional information as possible (see translation issues) and I believe it has worked reasonably well.

I have also decided that I will translate the whole book into English so that everyone can enjoy it. It is such a good book and it must not go unnoticed.

IT is hard translating how my parents felt after losing my twin brother. Even though I never met him in this life, I know he has always been here, and I cannot bear to read that he is gone. Here is when I really begin to see how hard it is to translate a book that has emotional impact for the translator... It is largely positive, however in these cases it proves painful, especially when you think of how different life is now. I had of course read the book already, but translating it makes you see things in a whole different light.

Psychology today says the following about expressing thoughts in another language:

"When people make decisions in a foreign language, their decisions tend to be less rooted in emotional reactions. Interestingly, speaking a foreign language might come especially in handy when people find themselves having to make a high-stakes decision – say about savings or investments." – Psychology Today via Lifehacker.

So, translating this book makes it all the harder. Yes, I lost my brother, I never met him, and I have to translate this from my father's point of view. I cannot even begin to imagine what it must feel like.

After having translated the first chapters, I can now begin to understand the importance of having an emotional link with the author. I have worked on many translations before and yet, none of them were like this one. Knowing how the author feels

is key to a good translation of certain words, especially about concepts that try to express feelings.

IT also helps that I am used to his writing style. For instance, the source text is very vague when it comes to specifying detail. In chapter 4, the author talks about a city where he was working and an education center for the blind. The source text never specifies that this center is close to the city where he was working, but I know this from experience and because the text is written about me. I of course asked him whether I can include this bit of information, to which he agreed.

Near the end of this translation, I have had to write one of the most painful chapter of this book. A chapter where my father expresses his deepest concerns about having a blid soon, where he curses his own life and wishes for his own death (chapter 4). It is tough to read this, though I can now understand some of his motives. His love, his protection, his need to always be there...

I would like to write my conclusions based on this aspect. Having a close link with the author has not affected my translation as much as I thought it would, apart from the things I have mentioned above. The translation is still a translation and thus it is translated from the author's point of view. Even though sometimes I have wanted to add some modifications, the original book needs to be respected as much as possible. From this point on, I will continue this translation and publish this book on the internet and libraries. I will need to go through an editing process with native speakers to make sure that everything looks good before the actual publishing, but I will try not to let people fiddle around with it too much, as this is a personal project and I would also like it to be a true testimony of my own doing.

3. Academic Conclusion

A good translation requires many steps, and one of these important steps is knowledge about the author's environment and knowing how to properly read and interpret what the author wants to say. This isn't easy, as every author has his or her own writing style and certain terms or expressions can mean different things, especially when it comes to translating things with a high personal and emotional value.

However, this case is different. The author is a family member of the translator and thus, the translator knows exactly how the author thinks. This is not at all irrelevant, as it provides with a greater sense of understanding which no other translator could achieve without a great deal of communication.

On the other hand, throughout the translation, there are several mentions to the emotional state of the author and, given that the book is about the translator, the emotions of the translator are also affected. This, in the end, results in small breaks or an attempt from the translator to partially ignore the author's feelings temporarily so as to keep translating, and this might result in a less accurate term. However, a future review of the translated passages fixes these problems.

In conclusion, we can say that it is beneficial, if possible, to have available a translator close to the author. It results in an emotionally accurate translation, and the translator is able to provide other co-translators, if any, with better insight into the author's words.

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Additional Content

[Synopsis \(in Spanish\)](#)

El autor de este libro, periodista y empresario catalán, nos presenta su testimonio, lúcido y estremecedor, en un relato que evoca la tristeza de perder un hijo prematuro, y recibir la noticia de que su hermano ha quedado ciego. A través de las páginas de esta excepcional narración, el mensaje de los padres de Oriol, el hijo que nació ciego en 1992, se llena de esperanza, gracias a su sinceridad y coraje, y al apoyo recibido por parte de los profesionales de la ONCE. Como señala en el prólogo Mercè Leonhardt, coordinadora de atención precoz del Centro de Recursos Educativos de la ONCE en Barcelona, el libro llena un vacío importante, como testimonio y ayuda a otros padres, pero también supone un excepcional reconocimiento a los profesionales que trabajan educando a los niños con graves deficiencias visuales, que ven así valorado el esfuerzo realizado. El autor de este libro, periodista y empresario catalán, nos presenta su testimonio, lúcido y estremecedor, en un relato que evoca la tristeza de perder un hijo prematuro, y recibir la noticia de que su hermano ha quedado ciego. A través de las páginas de esta excepcional narración, el mensaje de los padres de Oriol, el hijo que nació ciego en 1992, se llena de esperanza, gracias a su sinceridad y coraje, y al apoyo recibido por parte de los profesionales de la ONCE. La frustración y el pánico hacen ver con temor el futuro. El ¿por qué a nosotros? o la incomprensión del entorno lo vive junto a su esposa con la esperanza de ver crecer su hijo como un niño más, que es sólo diferente en su forma de ver. Un niño que reclama las mismas oportunidades que los demás. En la guardería, en el colegio, en la escuela de música... en todas las etapas de su educación el bebé ha aprendido a ser niño, a querer y a ser querido, a respetar y a ser respetado, con unos compañeros que son ahora sus amigos. A lo largo de la obra se puede observar cómo crece con las mismas obligaciones que todos, al amparo de unos padres y profesionales que velan intensamente por su trabajo, sacrificio y esfuerzo. Parece que todo lo hace fácil, por ello, tal vez su ilusión le ha hecho alcanzar con pasión metas impensables para una sociedad que no acaba de comprender que un niño ciego, con nueve años, se comunique con medio mundo a través de Internet.

Translated chapters

Introduction

Mi hijo me preguntó ayer que si el ver con los ojos es algo que se aprende en algún lugar. Sus palabras, por duras que parezcan, no llegaron a sorprenderme. Desde que nació, siete años atrás, esperaba que un día u otro él que “ve con el corazón” preguntara por qué algunos vemos con los ojos y él lo hace, como dice muchas veces, con las manos. No sé si su pregunta estaba o no razonada, o si tan sólo se trataba de una duda, fruto de la tertulia que en esos momentos manteníamos en familia, junto a su madre al repasar los trabajos del último trimestre escolar de tercero de Educación Preescolar.

En aquel momento su madre cruzó su mirada con la mía. La pregunta era para reflexionar. Desconocemos qué entiende por ver, y si nuestra improvisada contestación fue suficiente para dar luz a su tierna inmadurez o para hacerle comprender que hay personas que ven con los ojos y otras que lo hacen con las manos, al igual que la mayoría hablamos con la boca y otras lo han de hacer con señas con sus manos. Nos preguntamos, también, que si toda su vida ha utilizado el ver como un hecho natural para diferenciar todo lo que toca y coge. Cómo puede entender él, que “me ve con el corazón”, que la visión es la capacidad de percibir los objetos, el principal canal de aprendizaje de la mayoría, o cómo entender algunas de las experiencias más básicas de la vida en el entorno y el espacio que nos rodean. Me pregunto qué será de él, que “me ve con el corazón”, cuál será su futuro y si podrá superar las sorpresas que nos da la vida. Me pregunto si superará la maldad con la que unos actúan, o si la comprensión de la mayoría le ayudará a conseguir la fortaleza necesaria con la que hemos de afrontar el vivir del día al día.

Con frecuencia me viene a la memoria mi amigo Andrés, un vecino de mi abuela paterna que residía en un pequeño pueblo donde pasé la mayor parte de mi niñez. Él formaba parte de aquellas personas a las que entonces llamaban “subnormal”, y ahora les dicen “disminuidos psíquicos”. Recuerdo que mi crueldad infantil hacía entonces sentirme algo superior a él porque yo formaba parte de esos privilegiados que habían superado con éxito, a pesar de los escasos medios del momento, las grandes dificultades físicas de

nacimiento que me obligaron a estar casi paralítico de la pierna derecha durante los primeros años de mi infancia. Al pequeño Andrés le conocí siempre igual, tampoco le ayudaron más porque las oportunidades eran pocas en unos años en los que este tipo de disminución era sólo una desgracia y una carga familiar. Andrés fue siempre un magnífico amigo de la época infantil, ¿cómo no iba a serlo si no sabía lo que era la maldad? Se entregó por completo a sus compañeros, pero parecía que iba creciendo sin hacerse mayor, mientras yo pasaba de la invalidez a ser un destacado atleta de medio fondo en mi querida ciudad natal. Ahora tengo dudas, tengo pánico, y me llevo a aterrorar al querer comprender que mi hijo, que “me ve con el corazón” no pueda disfrutar de la luz, los colores, los cientos y cientos de formas, o del movimiento y la plena libertad en un mundo lleno de barreras. Este mundo que tan atrayente parece para todo ser humano y que me parece ahora traicionar. Mi hijo Oriol... él, que “me ve con el corazón”, es ciego.

Capítulo 1: AMOR Y DESEO.

Oriol nació un día de febrero de 1992. Lo hizo después de más de dos años durante los cuales su madre y yo, al final casi por amor propio, nos sometimos a todas las pruebas de esterilidad posibles, con el deseo de tener familia. Recuerdo que fue el 7 de septiembre de 1991 cuando una ecografía confirmó que mi mujer gestaba en su seno un doble embarazo. Nuestra primera reacción fue de una gran satisfacción, la propia de unos padres que con ilusión, alegría, esperanza y expectativa de futuro esperan la llegada de descendencia. Aquellos días coincidieron también con un cambio profesional como director en un medio de comunicación, lo que me obligó a viajar casi a diario 300 kilómetros, los que distan entre la ciudad donde residíamos a orillas del Mediterráneo y nuestra nueva residencia, en una ciudad ubicada tierra adentro, que no tiene nada que ver con el cálido clima que se disfruta junto al mar.

Mi esposa es esteticista. En aquellos momentos ejercía en un centro en el que su compañera había quedado embarazada también casi en los mismos días, con lo que ambas compañeras y amigas vivieron los dos embarazos con gran ilusión. Esta circunstancia y el que deseáramos tener a los pequeños en la capital donde vivíamos en aquel momento, que era a su vez la ciudad donde había nacido mi mujer, hicieron que ella quisiera seguir la evolución del doble embarazo desde este mismo lugar, con lo que decidimos que era bueno

no trasladarse aún hacia donde yo comenzaba una nueva etapa en el campo de la comunicación y el periodismo.

A las 20 semanas de embarazo empezamos a observar que se producían algunas pérdidas de sangre en el útero. Comenzaron, pues, también nuestras preocupaciones. Hasta ese instante todo había transcurrido normal, con la lógica ilusión de una pareja joven que por primera vez van a ser padres. Las pérdidas, sin embargo, nos hicieron cambiar aquella ilusión. Pasó a ser una constante preocupación que nos hizo ver con temor el nacimiento de nuestros dos hijos.

A las 25 semanas confirmamos que aquel iba a ser un embarazo anormal. A pesar de los muchos días que faltaban para salir de cuentas, llegaron las primeras contracciones, que se fueron intensificando tan sólo con el paso de las horas, hasta el extremo de que lo único importante en aquellos difíciles momentos era ganar cada hora. Una más para que los fetos se consiguieran formar.

El nacimiento de Oriol se produjo a los pocos segundos de nacer Gerard, ambos con poco más de 6 meses de gestación. Ese día su madre celebraba también el día de su santo, nuestra Señora de Lourdes. Ignoro si tuvo algo que ver la mencionada virgen para que ese día quedara tan grabado en nuestras vidas, pero lo cierto es que fue un milagro que mi esposa aguantara como lo hizo hasta ese momento, con las fuertes contracciones que se producían a cada instante. Recuerdo que como todas las tardes al anochecer, hacia las 9 llegué al hospital donde se encontraba. Accedí rápidamente a la planta segunda, zona que entonces estaba destinada íntegramente a Maternidad.

Al entrar en la habitación la felicité- a la vez que le hice entrega de un pequeño detalle, pensando únicamente en que era el día de onomástica, aunque lo hice de una forma un tanto genérica. Ella respondió enseguida, “¿cómo lo sabes?”, momento que aproveché también para decirle cariñosamente: “No puedo olvidar que hoy celebras tu santo.” Insistí una vez más en su onomástica, pero ella me respondió enseguida, cuando descubrí, con una enorme sorpresa, su vientre sensiblemente ya vacío. No recuerdo haber vivido nunca más un momento como aquel. Fue como cuando recibes una fuerte bofetada a un lado de la cara y temes que te golpeen vivamente en la otra. Me puse pálido, nervioso...

Mi único deseo era averiguar dónde se encontraban los recién nacidos, sin esperar, incluso, a asegurarme de que el doble parto había transcurrido bien.

Me dirigí a la sala de prematuros y allí se encontraban. A primera vista, lo primero que pude observar fue que eran muy pequeños, sin reparar en pensar en nada más, y creyendo tan sólo que se trataba de dos niños. Lentamente, sin embargo, se fue apoderando de mí la incertidumbre, como cuando sientes una descarga de electricidad estática que recorre todo tu cuerpo. Comencé a tener grandes dudas sobre el futuro de ambos. Con tan sólo mirar a su alrededor intuía dificultades. Veía a otros niños, todos ellos con unas dimensiones corporales inmensamente superiores a las de los míos, a pesar de que se trataban todos ellos de niños recién nacidos.

Los pocos más de 30 centímetros que medían cada uno de mis hijos, y el kilo escaso de peso que hacían recordar que no eran mayores que los muñecos con los que mis hermanas habían jugado toda su infancia. Desde un principio nadie me ocultó los riesgos patológicos que podía tener. Si los días previos al parto fueron muy duros, la llegada de los dos pequeños cambió por completo mi vida. El orgullo lo tenía herido de muerte. Me preguntaba qué había hecho mal. La inquietud y el temor me produjeron una gran confusión de sentimientos, frente a los bebés soñados mil veces y ante la presencia de esos dos seres... menudos, diminutos, totalmente indefensos y al amparo de la suerte. De esa fortuna que en tantas ocasiones reclama todos los padres durante los últimos meses de gestación, a la espera del nacimiento de los hijos. “Que venga lo que quiera, pero que venga bien.” Cuántas veces no habré oído estas palabras en boca de un familiar, un amigo, un vecino, o de una simple persona con la que me haya cruzado en el camino.

Las incubadoras que les daban vida, y de las cuales salían decenas de cables que se les pegaban al cuerpo con una ventosa, avisaban de las muchas dificultades por las que pasaban. La esperanza, sin embargo, porque no la perdí nunca o al menos porque así lo deseaba, me daba ánimos para pensar que todo podía terminar bien. ¿Por qué no va a transcurrir todo bien, si nacen niños cada día y todos terminan corriendo en algún momento por la calle? Me pregunté una y otra vez. Muy pronto nos permitieron la entrada a mi esposa y a mí a la mencionada sala, donde pudimos ver los primeros gestos de los dos bebés que, por la ilusión que teníamos ambos, intuimos que se podía tratar de pequeñas

sonrisas. Recuerdo que solía comparar la longitud de mi dedo índice con la de la cabeza de los recién nacidos, lo que reafirmaba la idea de lo pequeños que eran al no superar ésta mi dedo, por largo que creyera tenerlo. Las prisas porque transcurriera en el tiempo, el miedo y la inseguridad resultaban más agobiantes de lo esperado.

Aún mantengo en la memoria los pitidos de aquel monitor cardiorespiratorio que obligaba a correr a la persona más cercana a los bebés para que, con un leve movimiento en forma de zigzag a la incubadora hiciera de nuevo latir los frágiles corazones de los pequeños.

Capítulo 2: LA AMARGURA DE PERDER A UN HIJO.

El 1 de marzo, días después del doble nacimiento, resultó fatal. Como en anteriores ocasiones vividas en la sala de prematuros del hospital, los pitidos del monitor sonaron una vez más en la incubadora de Gerard. En aquel momento tanto mi mujer como yo, encogidos e impotentes, “lo juro”, nos agarramos con fuerza el uno al otro en el interior de aquel recinto porque veíamos cómo los profesionales del centro sanitario eran incapaces de hacer el endeble y delicado corazón de nuestro pequeño Gerard. Creo que era un fin de semana, la verdad es que no lo recuerdo muy bien. Lo que sí tengo fuertemente grabado en mi memoria es que la persona que se encontraba como médico de guardia era una mujer bastante joven.

Por su forma de actuar me pareció que lo hacía con indecisión, que no conseguía plantar cara a la difícil situación que se le había presentado. Recuerdo también que, con un cierto nerviosismo, ordenó al personal de enfermería que nos hicieran salir de la sala. Aquel ambiente tan extraño nos hizo temer lo peor. Y así fue, porque minutos más tarde nos confirmaron la muerte del pequeño Gerard. Según el informe médico, como consecuencia de un virus de quirófano.

Siempre me ha quedado la duda de si hubieran podido hacer algo más por salvar su vida. Nadie hasta entonces nos había dicho lo duro que resulta ser padres, al menos frente a circunstancias tan adversas como éstas que llevan a una persona a maldecir cada uno de los segundos de su vida.

Aquel triste adiós de Gerard, a pesar de tener conciencia de que podía ocurrir, no por ello dejó de ser un fuerte golpe psicológico. Lo fue. Claro que fue un momento enormemente cruel, fue tan injusto... En unos minutos comenzó a derrumbarse aquel gran castillo de ilusiones que durante meses habíamos construido. Sólo me consoló el pensar que mi madre, ya en el cielo, volvería a hacer de madre, dándole el mismo amor que ella me dio a mí y que sabe que yo daría a mi hijo perdido. Aquel momento fue terrible. Un infierno. No sólo por lo que había pasado, sino por todo lo que podía volver a suceder al confirmarse que Oriol había cogido simultáneamente el mismo virus.

Por la corta vida de Gerard, 20 días tan sólo, no celebramos la misa de funeral. En la intimidad enterramos al pequeño. En la misma intimidad que en los 30 días siguientes acudimos mi esposa y yo a visitar a Oriol, observando cómo un día engordaba 60 gramos, otro día 100, al siguiente 80... pero siempre con la mirada puesta en lo sucedido días atrás con su hermano, temerosos de que se pudiera producir un hecho igual en él.

Con la misma pasividad que crecían nuestras esperanzas, nuestro hijo fue cogiendo peso y un semblante más parecido al de los niños que iban internando en la misma sala, dónde Oriol llevaba ya más de dos meses y medio. Durante esos últimos días estuvo ya algunos momentos en nuestros brazos, puesto que al poco tiempo de recibir la terrible noticia de la muerte de su hermano los médicos nos dejaron, por fin, acariciar en nuestros brazos al pequeño. De aquel primer día no se me puede olvidar la cara de su madre al abrazarlo por primera vez, antes, por supuesto, de que lo hiciera yo. Aunque ambos coincidimos en coger a la pequeña criatura como si se tratara de una obra de arte hecha de algodón. Le abrazamos con tal suavidad que temíamos que se pudiera romper en aquel mismo instante. A pesar de tener un peso superior a los dos kilos, nos parecía una criatura tan delicadamente diminuta que no sabíamos cómo colocarla en nuestros brazos. Así fueron todos los días, algunos de ellos con el placer de darle el biberón. Uno de los momentos más sorprendentes, lleno de ternura, de afecto y cariño, fue cuando le colocamos el primer pañal. Fueron unos instantes de gran alegría. Con aquel enorme paquete, el propio que se les suele colocar a los nacidos con un peso más habitual o corriente, nos parecía ya un bebé que había recuperado la normalidad. Durante los días de

la celebración de la Semana Santa de aquel mismo año nos permitieron llevarlo a casa durante ese largo fin de semana.

El Jueves Santo fue un día difícil. En mi oficina sonó el teléfono. Era mi mujer. Me llamaba desde el hospital para decirme que “regresara urgentemente para recoger a Oriol para llevarlo con nosotros a casa durante estos 5 días de fiesta”, dijo. Por el tono de su voz y de la conversación, observé que algo no iba bien. No era el de otros días, y tampoco creí que su voz entrecortada estuviera motivada por la supuesta alegría de tener al niño con nosotros en casa. Ella, sin embargo, insistió en que no sucedía nada, y que lo único que debía hacer era desplazarme lo más pronto al hospital donde se encontraba nuestro hijo. Con el tiempo justo para recorrer los aproximadamente 150 kilómetros que hay entre la ciudad en la que yo trabajaba y el hospital llegué al lugar donde se encontraba mi mujer. Lourdes se encontraba en el umbral. Nada más llegar a su altura me abrazó con fuerza. Se echó a llorar mucho. No entendía nada de lo que podía pasar. Me encontraba confuso... muy aturdido. Temí de nuevo lo peor. El recuerdo de lo sucedido a Gerard permanecía aún muy fresco en mi corazón. Tanto fue así que, aún sin mediar palabra alguna con mi mujer, creo que las lágrimas comenzaron a aparecer en mis pupilas. Tan sólo esperaba a que me certificara lo que yo esperaba oír de su boca. “Ha sucedido algo horrible”, fueron sus primeras palabras. Mi pensamiento volvió a recordar aquel momento en el que Gerard fue introducido en el oscuro nicho del cementerio en el que reposa junto a su abuelo materno. Con voz entrecortada, sin querer incluso oír lo que me tenía que decir, le pregunté insistentemente que si también había muerto. Inmediatamente me dijo que no. Pero insistió: “Ha pasado algo horrible... Es algo mucho peor.”

Preso del pánico, imagino que sin dar aún crédito a la noticia que durante las últimas horas la había atormentado, a la vez que escondía su cara probablemente para no ver la mía, me dijo: “Es ciego. El médico me ha dicho que es ciego... Me ha dicho que no puede ver.” Inconsciente de mis palabras aún, imagino, con voz entrecortada le contesté: “Bueno, ¿y qué?... ¿Pero está vivo? ¿Está vivo? Eso es lo que importa”.

Con Oriol en casa por primera vez vivimos los primeros días en familia. Fueron pocos, pero los suficientes como para que tanto su madre como yo pensáramos que lo más importante era luchar para sacar esa nueva e injusta situación adelante.

Capítulo 3: FRUSTACIÓN Y MIEDO.

Apenas habían pasado unos días desde aquella Semana Santa de 1992 cuando nos entregaron definitivamente al niño. Con poco más de dos kilos y medio de peso, comenzaba ya para siempre el gran reto y una gran responsabilidad. Por aquel entonces yo tenía conocimiento del funcionamiento de la ONCE (Organización Nacional de Ciegos Españoles), con lo que el mundo de los invidentes no me era desconocido del todo. En ocasiones había participado de forma desinteresada en la organización de diversas actividades deportivas para ciegos. De este organismo conocía desde muchos años antes a Andoni. Es un ciego que en aquel momento era Delegado de Zona, pero que tiempo atrás había vendido el cupón en una ciudad próxima en la que yo también ejercí de periodista.

Le llamé por teléfono. Le adelanté brevemente el motivo de mi llamada y acordamos comer juntos ese mismo día. El encuentro entre ambos fue rápido. Imagino que fue así porque me encontró un poco apurado. Una vez sentados en torno a la mesa del restaurante que compartimos- por cierto, elegido por él mismo y demostrando así su exquisito gusto por los excelentes frutos del mar- el profesional de la ONCE pidió un plato combinado que consistía en pescado y marisco. Una vez servido sobre la mesa me pidió que me fijara bien en el contenido de su plato y que así se lo hiciera saber: “Para nosotros es como la esfera de un reloj. Señálame cómo está distribuido, dónde se encuentra cada una de las piezas de pescado y marisco indicándome cómo referencia los cuartos, las medias y las horas en punto.” Comento esta anécdota porque desde ese mismo instante me dijo una de las frases que desde entonces más he recordado. “Las personas que no vemos con los ojos somos ciegos, pero no somos tontas.” Y es que al mismo tiempo que le hacía una síntesis de los acontecimientos ocurridos durante los últimos meses, él acabó con el pescado y el marisco utilizando con una gran destreza y habilidad los diferentes cubiertos.

Durante la conversación también me recordó el mucho tiempo que había tenido yo para conocer el entorno que rodea a los ciegos. No olvidaba las muchas ocasiones que habíamos tenido para compartir conjuntamente algunas de sus vivencias, y la confianza, según me dijo, que había depositado en mi persona cuando me permitió hacerle de guía

como conductor de su automóvil particular. Recuerdo esta anécdota porque en muchas ocasiones que viajo yo al volante de mi vehículo me acuerdo de en una ocasión que viajaba con Andoni. Sacó la mano por la ventana del automóvil y dijo: “Vas demasiado rápido. Circulas a 160 kilómetros por hora.” Su apreciación me sorprendió mucho, claro que lo hizo, porque iba exactamente a esa velocidad. Intuitivamente levanté el pie del acelerador. No demasiado porque circulábamos por una buena autopista, aunque sí lo suficiente para que volviera a sacar la mano y dijera: “Tampoco hace falta que vayas tan despacio. Ahora vas a 100 kilómetros por hora.” Y así era, justo a esa velocidad. Desconozco si su exactitud fue producto de la suerte, porque lo que quiso demostrar en aquel momento era su buena percepción y la proximidad en el cálculo de la velocidad. Pero acertó..., vaya que si estuvo acertado.

Volviendo a la tertulia que mantuvimos en la mesa del restaurante Andoni fue duro conmigo. Más que duro estuvo muy sincero, diría yo ahora. Me dijo que el entorno de un ciego no es fácil, porque para él también había habido momentos difíciles. Pero también me animó a luchar por mi hijo: “Los ciegos podemos llegar a hacer casi tantas cosas como los demás. De manera diferente, y seguro que con más dificultades que otras personas. Pero no olvides que hay muchos ciegos que están demostrando que con esfuerzo y trabajo son capaces de conseguir todo lo que se propongan... Todo lo que se propongan”, palabras estas últimas que repitió con una gran seguridad a la que recalcaba con la misma firmeza: “No lo olvides nunca más.”

El encuentro con el amigo Andoni resultó muy positivo. Pero si en anteriores oportunidades mi relación con la ONCE había sido siempre para prestar mi ayuda, en esta era yo el que la necesitaba. Imagino que en aquella ocasión me vio angustiada. De hecho lo estaba. El directivo de esta organización seguro que era consciente del mal trago por el que pasaba, y quizá por ello sus últimas palabras de aquel encuentro fueron nuevamente de ánimo. Al menos intentó hacerme ver que, después de aquel día, además de las dificultades se presentaba también un futuro esperanzador. “Para tu hijo es una suerte el nacer ciego hoy. Tiene a su disposición una gran organización... Nos preparan para luchar, para trabajar, para saber sufrir, para vivir como el resto de la gente”, manifestó.

Capítulo 4: ¿POR QUÉ A NOSOTROS?

Andoni me aconsejó que afiliara al niño en la ONCE. Así lo hice desde el primer día. Su madre y el bebé se trasladaron pocos días después a la ciudad donde yo seguía ejerciendo como Director de una emisora de radio vinculada a una cadena de ámbito estatal. Esta circunstancia hizo que desde un principio siguiéramos las instrucciones del Centre de Recursos Educatius per a Deficients Visuals “Joan Amades”, con sede en la capital de nuestra Comunidad Autónoma, y dependiente de la ONCE y del Gobierno Autonómico.

Allí conocimos a Mercé, Coordinadora del Servicio de Atención Precoz. Pronto fuimos conscientes de que el camino a recorrer sería largo, muy complicado. Vimos que las dificultades iban a ser muchas, tantas como las dudas que en aquel momento nos impedían ver la cruda realidad que se acercaba. Una situación difícil, porque aún pensando en que lo primero debía ser el futuro del bebé, su madre y yo no llegábamos a entender aún el por qué. ¿Por qué nos había tocado a nosotros? El por qué, sin reparar ni tan sólo en el niño... ¿Por qué le había tocado a él? Nos preguntamos: ¿Qué culpa puede tener un ser tan pequeño que no ha hecho nada malo en su vida? Nos preguntamos qué había hecho para no poder disfrutar de la luz visual, de la misma luz que nosotros veíamos, y de la que hasta ese momento no habíamos sentido su extrema necesidad. Preguntas que nos repetimos una y otra vez. Preguntas que me hicieron dudar de si existe realmente un Dios que nos protege.

Maldije tantas veces nuestra mala suerte que el futuro parecía moverse sólo entre sombras. Fue tan cruel, tan horrible, tan inhumano, tan atroz, que en ese instante... llegué a desear mi propia muerte. La vida se había vaciado de contenido. No había valores humanos por los que mereciera la pena seguir luchando. La vida carecía de todo lo que hasta aquel momento me había mantenido en la primera línea de la ilusión: crear una familia, el trabajo, las relaciones sociales, la política... Todo lo que a lo largo de los últimos 20 años, desde que aterricé en esta tierra que tanto he querido y por la que tanto he luchado, me ha hecho feliz. Un sentimiento que no quiero volver a recordar tal cual, porque ahora, mucho tiempo después, para ese pensamiento tan sólo puedo pedir piedad, comprensión y misericordia.

Los encuentros con Mercé fueron, sin embargo, muy importantes. Yo diría ahora que decisivos. Comprendimos muchas cosas, y despejamos, sobre todo, muchas dudas. La primera vez que llegamos al centro, antes de encontrarnos con la profesional a la hora prevista, recorrimos varias de las áreas de éste con el fin de encontrar alguna respuesta a las muchas dudas que nos atormentaban en aquellos instantes.

Por los pasillos pudimos ver a varios niños ciegos que se dirigían en solitario a sus puntos de destino. Algunos de ellos se encontraban en la biblioteca leyendo un lenguaje para nosotros entonces desconocido: el braille. Otros simplemente jugaban o practicaban deporte en la piscina o en la pista de cemento que hay en su exterior.

Al llegar al área donde se hallaba Mercé vimos como por las paredes se podían contemplar varias fotografías de niños ciegos, que por suposiciones creímos que eran niños que habían tenido el seguimiento de la profesional con la que nos habíamos citado. Así fue porque ahora, varios años después, se pueden ver varias fotografías de Oriol colocadas en las paredes de la zona mencionada. Como se puede ver también ahora, igual que entonces, una enorme piscina repleta de bolas de diferentes tamaños. O colgadas de la pared a la altura de la mano de un niño pequeño distintos elementos que ayudan a un ciego a conocer los diferentes materiales o texturas que pueda encontrar en un momento determinado. Materiales o texturas como una cortina a base de tiras de plástico, metal, corcho, elementos con forma circular, rectangular, cuadrada. Cientos de pequeñas cosas que son muy útiles para la enseñanza de un niño ciego.

Periódicamente hubo también reuniones de grupo con otros padres que ya habían pasado por nuestra misma situación. Nuestros contertulios nos dieron a conocer sus experiencias, las negativas y las positivas, porque entre ellas se pudo comprobar que había situaciones de todo tipo.

Desde un principio, en el Centre de Recursos Educatius per a Deficients Visuals comenzaron a trabajar con nosotros como padres de un niño ciego. Entendían que era muy importante prepararnos psicológicamente para conocer los pasos de aproximación del mundo de la ceguera en un momento en el que la ilusión, la alegría, la esperanza y la

expectativa de futuro con las que todos los padres sueñan la llegada de un hijo esperado, casi siempre como un niño que sea rubio, guapo y con ojos azules, se pueden haber hecho pedazos con la llegada de ese hijo ciego. La imagen de ese niño perfecto, sano y hermoso, con grandes ojos y con una gran sonrisa, ideal, cariñoso e inteligente que habitualmente intuimos e intentamos crear durante el periodo del embarazo, en un momento se rompe al recibir un traspié de este tipo. Se espera sólo que todo haya sido un sueño terrible, que se trate de una pesadilla que nunca pueda llegar a ser real. Te encuentras inmerso en un mundo lleno de barreras desconocido hasta entonces, en el que el dolor, la apatía y el llanto se convierten en el refugio que te ayuda a huir de esta triste realidad. Es el momento más difícil. Ningún padre está preparado para tener un hijo ciego. La insatisfacción que se experimenta en momentos así aturde. Es como si te dieran fuertes y continuados golpes en el cerebro, al instante que recuerdas, una y otra vez, la forma y el momento en el que el despiadado profesional de la medicina, con una frialdad más propia de un enemigo, volvía a certificar, en aquella segunda ocasión a petición mía, que “su hijo es ciego.”

Aún hoy no termino de entender el por qué de aquella terrible frialdad en un médico que posteriormente, aún hoy con bastante asiduidad, suele mostrar interés y una cierta simpatía cada vez que me pregunta cómo se encuentra mi hijo. Aquella frialdad, sin embargo, me ha hecho pensar mucho a lo largo de estos años. Sin duda existen carencias en este campo, en la comunicación del profesional de la medicina con el enfermo o sus familiares, en una sociedad en la que la comunicación cuenta con tantos medios técnicos, falla, no hay duda, el comunicador. El médico se debería dar cuenta de que para lo que para él es un diagnóstico más, para el afectado es su vida. Sinceramente pienso que no estaría de más que los responsables de la sanidad trabajaran con más sensibilidad en este aspecto.

Como pude leer posteriormente en el libro “El Bebé Ciego”, de Mercé Leonhardt, se ha realizado un estudio sobre la importancia de comunicar el diagnóstico a los padres de la forma más adecuada, su naturaleza e implicaciones, ya que de no hacerlo así se pueden originar algunos problemas que son innecesarios y causar un mayor sufrimiento que el que se puede experimentar- cosa lógica por el propio déficit visual. La facultad de comprender esto no estuvo en esa ocasión bien medida por el médico de turno. No estuvo a la altura de las circunstancias. No. Para él fue un diagnóstico más. Para nosotros fue

como entrar en un túnel sin salida. Fue como caer en el abismo. No queríamos aceptar aún la ceguera.

En esta primera crisis, en la que con un gran dolor sufrimos la desesperación y la sensación del fracaso como padres, intentamos poner límite a nuestra propia culpa al reaccionar con un rotundo “No puede ser. Alguna solución habrá. Tiene que haberla. ¿Qué he hecho yo para merecer un castigo así?.” Ante tanta incertidumbre e incredulidad comenzamos a peregrinar por los hospitales en busca del profesional que nos diera una mínima esperanza, en busca del mejor médico, dispuestos a viajar al fin del mundo para encontrar una afirmación- por mínima que fuera- que nos dijera que nuestro hijo no era totalmente ciego, que tenía restos de visión. Todos los profesionales, sin embargo, nos confirmaban el diagnóstico. Tan sólo en la calle, entre las personas que frecuentemente suelen hablar como si lo supieran todo en este mundo, alguna de ellas se atrevía a especular, porque aseguraba que lo había leído en alguna revista o porque algún día salió en la televisión que en Estados Unidos hay un clínica que es la leche, que hacen poco menos que milagros con los ciegos, o que en el puerto de Barcelona atraca periódicamente un buque-hospital soviético que dispone de los medios más avanzados para tratar la ceguera. Era como escuchar a los apóstoles cuando hablaban de Jesucristo, lástima no haber vivido en aquellos tiempos para comprobar en nuestra propia carne los milagros que hacía en Tierra Santa.

La desesperación nos llevó, incluso, a consultar a dos videntes, esas mujeres que dicen saber cómo será el futuro a través de las cartas. Por una parte, lo hizo mi mujer a quién, sin dar a conocer ningún tipo de características familiares, le dijeron que nuestro hijo sería poco menos que un gran jugador de fútbol. Por otro lado, yo aproveché para hablar con una vidente que en aquel momento participaba con una cierta frecuencia en un programa de radio de la emisora que yo dirigía, la cual, jugando con ventaja, por conocer de antemano la situación, me dijo que mi hijo vería algún día- respuesta que me hizo pensar que era el resultado de la lástima que le pude dar por mi estado de ánimo y porque necesitaba escuchar, aunque fuera de sus labios, una mínima voz de esperanza. Aunque, por otra parte, certifiqué que en las palabras de estas personas no hay más que rollo- que si no es por fruto de la casualidad, casi siempre suelen estar alejadas de la

realidad, y que suelen decir sólo lo que las personas que se ponen en contacto con ellas esperan escuchar.

Después de las consultas a los profesionales oftalmólogos que, al fin y al cabo parecían lo más serio que debíamos hacer, finalmente un especialista muy prestigioso nos diagnosticó que nuestro hijo padece Retinopatía del Prematuro- enfermedad de la retina, en la cual un fallo en la oxigenación durante su desarrollo induce la formación de una masa de tejido cicatrizal que llena el espacio entre el fondo de la lente y la retina, y que afecta a los dos ojos del bebé prematuro. El mismo doctor, días más tarde, tuvo que intervenir quirúrgicamente a Oriol de Glaucoma, enfermedad ocular debida al aumento de presión intraocular que causa atrofia en el nervio óptico. Esta operación hizo olvidar, por momentos, su ceguera, al ver cómo sufría nuestro pequeño cada vez que pasaban revisión a sus ojos. La operación de Glaucoma se tuvo que realizar con mucha urgencia, en un momento en el que para que le operara el mencionado doctor con cargo a la Seguridad Social había que esperar más de tres meses- puesto que la consulta que realizábamos en aquellos momentos era de carácter particular, y en situaciones así no se suele caer en las repercusiones que eso conlleva. Le pregunté si lo podía hacer él de forma particular y que qué debía hacer para que interviniera con la rapidez que, según él, requería el caso. Pregunta para la que pronto obtuve respuesta. “Póngase de acuerdo con mi secretaria.” Así lo hice, y pude comprobar lo duro que puede resultar la Sanidad para personas con pocos recursos. Una intervención de poco más de unos minutos en la, probablemente, mejor clínica de la ciudad. Entre minuta, intervención, internamiento de una noche... algo más de medio millón de pesetas. Es evidente que me preocupaba poco el dinero, aunque no lo tuviera disponible en aquellos momentos, ni tampoco quise pararme a pensar en si realmente era necesaria la operación con la urgencia que decía el prestigioso y mencionado especialista. Tan sólo dije que sí, a la espera del instante en que se llevaría a cabo en el transcurso de las siguientes 24 horas. Estaba dispuesto, como imagino que hace todas las personas que se ven atrapadas por el temor en este tipo de situaciones, a hacer lo que fuera necesario para conseguir que le operaran. En ese momento pensé, pues, que era hora de recurrir a las amistades que podía haber cultivado con el paso del tiempo. Y así lo hice.

Gracias a la generosidad de un buen amigo que desempeñaba en aquellos momentos una alta responsabilidad política, en pocas horas consiguió acelerar los trámites

para que operaran a mi hijo. Comento aquí esta anécdota porque nunca podré olvidar el alivio que supuso su rápida intervención en aquel momento que sentía tanta angustia. Recuerdo que, con voz entrecortada y muy nerviosa, conseguí ponerme en contacto con él a través del teléfono. Se encontraba en el Parlamento, pero no dudó en atender aquella llamada que rozaba la desesperación. Probablemente la situación no era para tanta urgencia, y se podría haber esperado un día, dos, o quizás alguno más. Pero confieso que cuando le llamé telefónicamente me encontraba muy angustiado.

Aquello me hizo comprender, también, que a pesar del mal momento que pasaba no estaba solo, que era una persona afortunada, porque si es cierto que nunca he negado mi ayuda a nadie, a mí me la ofrecieron cuando creía más necesitarla. Con el tiempo, lo único que he llegado a lamentar es que no todas las personas puedan disponer de la misma ayuda, que haya algún niño que no pueda ser atendido en las mejores condiciones porque no tenga un amigo a quien recurrir.