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Translating New Zealand Poetry into French:
Anna Jackson's Poetry as a Case Study

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Abstract
What are the challenges of translating New Zealand poetry into French? I present here some of the issues encountered in my translation process for a selection of poems by Wellington poet Anna Jackson. I first discuss the problems raised by intertextuality in her work, which itself proceeds from "translation": her 2014 collection *I, Clodia, and Other Portraits* can be described as "hauntological" translation (Derrida). I then outline my strategies when confronted with difficult fixed forms or wordplay. Despite the expertise required, formal constraints are often less problematic than the rendering of the poetic voice, especially in the context of Jackson's predilection for multidirectional voices experimenting with tone and registers. Working on a case-by-case basis, I question the concepts of equivalence and fidelity and mostly apply Christiane Nord's functionalist model (1997) by prioritising the notions of skopos, loyalty and balance.

Introduction

As part of my doctoral project on the translation of New Zealand poetry into French, I have selected the work of Anna Jackson to carry out an in-depth exploration of issues related to the translation of poetry. I focus on three main points here. First, there is the problem of the compatibility of intertexts between the two cultures' repertoires and contexts. I take the example of Jackson's first collection *The Long Road to Teatime* (2000)[1], in which Dante's *Inferno* (14th C) is re-contextualised in a contemporary setting typical of New Zealand. The *selva oscura* becomes a grove of cabbage trees near Karekare Beach; the eponymous creatures of Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963) echo the beasts of *Inferno*'s *Canto Uno*; and the sinners of lust and gluttony are relocated to the red-light district of Ponsonby, in Auckland. How might a poem be translated, then, that is already a "translation" – or adaptation – based on another translation? Given that Jackson's poems are regularly layered with other poets' works – either as a subtle wink or as the poem's backbone – I aim to make the intertextual substrate as visible for target readers as it is for source readers.

I next focus on more conventional issues in poetry translation. For instance: what strategies might be adopted when dealing with fixed-form poems, or poems centred on wordplay? Jackson's verse shows a great formal variety. Traditional iambic pentameter meets syllabic experimentation in the style of Modernist poet Marianne Moore, for instance. In "I, Clodia", a sequence based on Catullus (and a follow-up to the 2003 selection *Catullus for Children*) one finds classic metres such as the dactylic hexameter or the Sapphic stanza. Translating these forms requires a questioning of the concepts of equivalence[2] and fidelity: the impossibility of rendering the source poem's fixed forms and exact meaning perfectly leads

[1] Jackson's œuvre consists of seven collections since 2000; her most recent book *Pasture and Flock* was published in March 2018.
[2] The concept of 'equivalence' was largely dominant in earlier translation theories (Nida, 1966). It has recently been brought back into focus, for instance by Sergio Bolaños Cuellar and his "Dynamic Equivalence Model" (2016) or by Anthony Pym in *Exploring Translation Theories* (2nd Ed. 2014).

me to embrace the functionalist model, and I aim to create translations that work as poems in the target language-culture. Christiane Nord's emphasis on loyalty as opposed to fidelity is key here:

> Translators, in their role as mediators between two cultures, have a special responsibility with regard to their partners, i.e. the source-text author, the client or commissioner of the translation, and the target-text receivers, and towards themselves, precisely in those cases where there are differing views as to what a "good" translation is or should be. As an interpersonal category referring to a social relationship between people who expect not to be cheated in the process, loyalty may replace the traditional intertextual relationship of "fidelity," a concept that usually refers to a linguistic or stylistic similarity between the source and the target texts, regardless of the communicative intentions and/or expectations involved.
>
> (Nord "Loyalty and Fidelity in Specialised Translation", 33)

The challenge is therefore to employ a skopos that is loyal to Jackson's writing intentions, acknowledging that reproducing form often requires semantic adjustments.

Third, despite the high level of expertise required, the translation of these forms can be less problematic than translating the poetic voice. Roland Barthes writes: "La voix est un phénomène proprement inthéorisable, dans une logique du supplément, de l'entre-deux, entre corps et discours. La voix est le lieu privilégié de la différence qu'aucune science n'épuise" [Voice is properly an untheorisable phenomenon, in a logic of supplement, of in-between, between body and speech. Voice is the privileged site of difference: a site which escapes all science] (247). Jackson's focus on tone is a key characteristic of her work. Never formal but always elegant, her verse also plays with sociolects and orality in a number of poems where contrasted characters replace the poet persona. The ease with which she switches between registers, codes and genres can be disconcerting for the translator. From lyrical abandonment to prosaic matters, from metaphysical sentiments to mundane concerns, she creates a polyphonic collage that may be either harmonious or a rapturous mix of tonal mismatches. This strategy raises the problem of interpretation – on what should the translator base his/her interpretation of a voice that is always resonant, sometimes multiple, never ordinary?

Problematic intertexts and a plea for balance

Of *The Long Road to Teatime*, Jackson writes: "the stories I tell and am told translate and are translated through stories I read, in the newspaper, in the library, in prose and poetry" (*The Long Road to Teatime*, back cover). Her creative process might recall Octavio Paz: "language itself, in its very essence, is already a translation – first from the non-verbal world, and then, because each sign and each phrase is a translation of another sign, another phrase" (154). The concept of poetry as a translational process is not unknown in French poetry, from Stéphane Mallarmé and his "transposition" (3) to Yves Bonnefoy recovering his "expérience de présence" (66). However, Jackson's sequence can only be called a translation in a wider, metaphorical sense. She retains Dante's famous incipit "In the middle of the journey of our lives" and the chorus "When he moves on, I move on close behind," which translators Henry Longfellow, Allen Mandelbaum or John Ciardi all kept, but the plot is condensed and edited, the *terza rima* transformed into septets or octets. While Jackson has since published some translations of poetry[3], it is best to consider this earlier work as an adaptation, as George Bastin

[3] In 2017, Jackson published *Last Stop Before Insomnia / Dernier Arrêt Avant l'Insomnie*, a selection of translations of the work of French poet Marlène Tissot.

would define it: "a set of translative operations which results in a text that is not accepted as translation but is nevertheless recognised as representing a source text" (3).

This, in fact, is a recurrent trait in Jackson's work, which relies on intertexts as varied as the works of Ovid, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Emily Dickinson, Charles Perrault, William Carlos Williams and Virginia Woolf (among others). These references transfer relatively easily into French because they are already part of the French intertextual repertoire, whereas New Zealand references are more problematic. When the presence of Robert Sullivan ("16 Pākehā Waka", *The Long Road to Teatime*), Kendrick Smithyman ("Departmental Cats", *Catullus for Children*), Ursula Bethell ("Detail", *Catullus for Children*) or Paula Green ("Cookhouse", *The Long Road to Teatime*) is felt in Jackson's verse – whether by allusion, in a dialogue, or in a game of invitations reminiscent of Green's *The Baker's Thumbprint* – I have little choice but to add a gloss to explicate their function. As an exercise in creative writing, Jackson's project in *The Long Road to Teatime*, further developed in *Catullus for Children*, is therefore part of a tradition of 'loose' translations, versions, imitations, adaptations that has existed since the Renaissance (for Dante, and *a fortiori* for Catullus).

In the sequence "I, Clodia," Jackson gives voice to Clodia, Catullus' lover, and imagines her version of their love story, reconstituting the dialogue and conjuring a ghost from the past: "Who am I, Clodia, but a ghost once loved by a poet?" (*I, Clodia, and Other Portraits* 33). This process might recall Jacques Derrida's concept of 'hauntology', albeit without its political dimension:

> [T]he "scholar" of the future, the "intellectual" of tomorrow should […] learn to live by learning not how to make conversation with the ghost but how to talk with him, with her, how to let them speak or how to give them back speech, even if it is in oneself, in the other, in the other in oneself: they are always there, spectres, even if they do not exist, even if they are no longer, even if they are not yet.
>
> (Derrida *The Spectres of Marx*, 221)

If one perceives "I, Clodia" as a tentative resurrection/resuscitation of a woman's voice with a poetic and feminist focus, then Jackson's imaginative translation/adaptation is 'relevant', to reuse Derrida's pun: it is "a version that performs its mission, honours its debt and does its job or its duty" ("What is a Relevant Translation?" 177). Jackson's poems are hypothetical and 'hauntological' translations of "better poems in the original Latin, that these versions only gesture towards but can never quite touch" ("An Interview with Anna Jackson: *I, Clodia and Other Portraits* by Joan Fleming" 2).

How, then, one may translate poems that are based on translations and that already proceed from a specific kind of translation/adaptation? First, any intertext in the poems must be thoroughly researched to uncover the layering of texts. In the case of Jackson's rendition of Mayakovsky, reading the source poem influences my choices. Her leitmotif "sto ste sto ste" is a mimetic adaptation of the Futurist poet's onomatopoeia, which originally evoked the sound of hoof beats ("Гриб. Грабь. Гроб. Груб")[4]. Jackson's onomatopoeia, on the other hand, suggests cicadas singing in summery Wellington. This prompts me to offer "tso tse tso tse", conveying the cicada's stridulation to French ears.

Second, if I were to replicate Jackson's writing intentions in an 'equivalent' manner, in the sense of Jean Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet (38-39), I could rewrite her New Zealand adaptation of the Italian masterpiece using French references. Karekare Beach might become St Tropez, Ponsonby might become Pigalle, and the iconic cabbage trees, *platanes* (plane

[4] Translated as "grib, grab, grob, grub" by Dimitri Obolensky (373).

trees). In Lawrence Venuti's terms, this would mean "re-domesticating" (1995) what is already a kind of domestication[5]. Such an approach would not result in a translation *stricto sensu*, and in addition it would undo Jackson's adaptation of *Inferno* to a New Zealand context. In this case, my skopos is to focus on the fresh perspective offered by her poetry of place, and keep the New Zealand setting of the text.

However, I do not systematically steer in the opposite, "foreignising" direction, as implied by Venuti (1995). I propose instead to operate on a case-by-case basis, in a pragmatic and heuristic way, choosing one or the other option and, at times, one *and* the other option in the same line. I either borrow topographic references (Karekare or Ponsonby) or use a more or less satisfactory equivalent ("cordyline" for cabbage tree), with the aim of striking a balance between the two options.

At Karekare Rose and I	A Karekare, Rose et moi avons
left the children to walk	laissé les enfants pour marcher
the length of the beach.	jusqu'au bout de la plage.
"What was it like?" she asked.	Elle a demandé: "c'était comment?"
It was like a dark wood.	C'était comme un bois noir.
We walked across sand	Nous avons marché sur le sable,
next to water, under sky.	près de l'eau, sous le ciel.
We walked back to the car	Nous sommes revenus à la voiture
across the dunes and through	en passant par les dunes
a wood of cabbage trees.	et un bois de cordylines.
Johnny said, "Be quiet	Johnny a dit: "faites pas de bruit,
or the wild things will hear."	les bêtes sauvages vont entendre."
There might have been a leopard.	Il y aurait pu y avoir un léopard.
There were dogs.	Il y avait des chiens.

Translating fixed form poems and wordplay

I will now consider some issues of form, taking examples from "Just a Mineral Water with Marianne Moore" (syllabic metre) or "The Coming on of a Maths Brain" (a "fib")[6] or "A God in his Way" (Sapphic stanzas). Translating a poem based on a formal experimentation without respecting its form would be questionable. In the first text, a literary game occurs that may recall Sudoku or crosswords, yet this game has narrative significance and poetic resonance in a sequence where the poet imagines 'inviting' illustrious authors and contemporary influences to everyday New Zealand scenes. She savours fish and chips with Virginia Woolf, shares breakfast with Katherine Mansfield, has tea with Paula Green. Jackson is influenced by the stylistic signature of her guests, and in the case of Marianne Moore, this verges on pastiche. As well as Moore's characteristic attributes (her tricorn hat), Jackson caricatures the American poet's "strict use of quotes" and copies her syllabic metre and rhyming pattern. The four octets all follow the pattern: 7 / 6 / A3 / B6 / C10 / B11 / C 9 / A 2. In this case, my skopos is to reproduce the scheme because form is a constitutive feature of an inspired and amused portrait, as the eccentric character is challenged: "I'm not afraid of getting my head bitten / off by this American treasure".

[5] About her work on Catullus, Jackson writes: "My domestication of Catullus has involved not just a rendering of his work into a contemporary idiom, or a New Zealand setting, but a bringing home of the poetry into my own life and the lives of my children" ("Catullus in the Playground" 105).

[6] A poetic game invented by Greg K. Pincus, the "fib" uses the Fibonacci sequence to determine the syllable length.

Just a Mineral Water with Marianne Moore
who would have had ‘orange zuice,
farina, banana’,
earlier
and then would have written
several poems in syllabic measure.
Well I’m not afraid of getting my head bitten
off by this American treasure,
her purse

clasped in her lap, head shadowed
by her hat, her great hat
framing that
face all smiles and wrinkles
as she disagrees with what I haven’t said.
‘No indeed, no not I, not at all,’ she twinkles,
nor am I much too disconcerted
by that

stone sharp poet laureate.
Phrase by phrase she decon-
structs each one
of the principles she
expounds. She’ll say once again, ‘why paraphrase?’
A ‘collection of lies in amber’ gaily she
refers to the particular ways
she makes

her own so strict use of quotes
but I could swear I caught
sight of at
least a fly paralysed
if not paraphrased in her quotation.
She left. I poured an orange juice, sighed,
poured and drank instead a Sapphire gin.
Then wrote.

Juste une eau minérale avec Marianne Moore
qui prendrait “un zus d’oranze,
floraline et banane”
avant ça
puis écrirait après
plusieurs poèmes en mètres syllabiques
mais je n’ai pas peur de me faire mordre la tête
par ce trésor venu d’Amérique
son sac

sur les genoux, tête à l’ombre
sous son chapeau splendide

encadrant
ce sourire tout de rides
quand elle réfute ce que je n'ai pas dit.
"Non, mais non, mais non pas du tout", elle pétille,
non que je sois vraiment déconfite
par tant

d'acuité chez cette Poète.
Phrase par phrase, elle décon-
struit chaque
principe qu'elle énonce.
Elle répètera : "pourquoi paraphraser ?"
Un "amas de bouches prises dans l'ambre", gaie réponse
sur le moyen strict, particulier,
qu'elle a

de faire siennes les citations
mais je jurerais avoir
vu, prise,
une mouche paralysée,
non paraphrasée dans sa citation.
Elle est partie. J'ai versé le jus, soufflé,
puis bu un Gin à la place, j'ai donc
écrit.

This is very much a balancing act with compensation, modulation, and transposition. In the first line, retaining the syllabic pattern requires changing the conditional perfect ("would have had") to conditional present ("prendrait"). I also try to respect the source tone, rhythm, and paronomasia. In the third and fourth stanzas, I offer the pair "mouches-bouches" to render the pun "lies / flies" subverting Moore's quotation. While most rhymes are turned into near-rhymes ("ça/sac", "rides/pétille", "citation/donc"), some more 'ostentatious' examples ("syllabiques/Amérique", "énonce/réponse", "paraphraser/particulier") compensate for the double rhymes "wrinkles/twinkles" or "bitten/written". Regarding the rendering of rhymes, Peter Low encapsulates the problem by warning that often: "the rhyme at the end of the line plays such an important role in shaping a line that the tail indeed wags the dog" (94). This artificiality was targeted by André Lefevere, the translator of Philippe Jaccottet's poetry: "the reason why most translations, versions, and imitations are unsatisfactory renderings of a source text is simply this: they all concentrate exclusively on one aspect of that source text only, rather than its totality" (99). I take into account a multiplicity of factors and instead of obtaining a rigorously faithful equivalent, I turn to linguistic, prosodic and semantic transformations, hoping to achieve a translation that works in parallel with the source poem but also by itself.

The importance of form is even more visually obvious in the playful "The Coming on of a Maths Brain." As a game recalling *Oulipo*, the syllabic pattern follows the Fibonacci sequence with cascading stanzas:

1 The
1 world
1+1= 2 unfurled
1+2= 3 unfurling

2+3= 5 all over again –
3+5=8 for a real mathematician
5+8=13 a walk round the block must be a symphony swirling

The Coming on of a Maths Brain
The
world
unfurled
unfurling
all over again –
for a real mathematician
a walk around the block must be a symphony swirling,

all
those
perfect
ratios.
Though also I guess
there must be ratios that clash –
where I see the green lawn clashing with the blue windows,

he
sees
what would
be good squares
of window and lawn
ruined by the wrong proportion
of the (I think) beautifully cream-coloured front door.

Here is my translation of the first three stanzas (of nine):

L'Avènement d'un cerveau matheux
Le
monde
déferle
déferlant
encore et encore –
pour un vrai mathématicien
le tour du quartier c'est symphonies et tourbillons,

de
si
parfaits
ratios.
Quoiqu'il doit aussi
y avoir des ratios qui jurent –
où je vois l'herbe verte jurer avec les fenêtres bleues

il

voit
là de
beaux carrés
de fenêtres et d'herbe
gâchés par la fausse proportion
de la si belle (je trouve) porte d'entrée couleur crème.

The fixed form poems of "I, Clodia" provide unique examples. Their classic metres have an intrinsic musicality – Catullus translator Peter Green describes the hendecasyllabic as "dancing and perky" (33) – but also a narrative function. The Sapphic stanzas of "A God in his way" replicate Catullus's own elaboration on the basis of Sappho's fragment 31, where he addresses his lover as "Lesbia" (Catullus 51). Jackson imagines Clodia's answer, also in the metre of Sappho, as part of a dialogue and using a rhythm that is 'mimetic' of the Latin rhythm: "I have used an English stress-based version of the Latin metres, which can be heard as rhythm in a way metres based on vowel-length simply can't be heard, I don't think, in English" ("Jessica Wilkinson Interviews Anna Jackson" 3). The metre's musical and narrative functions therefore justify my skopos reproducing the Sapphic stanzas in French. Here are the first two stanzas (of four):

A God in his way
I am Sappho, you like to say – it's you, though,
body burning, thundering heart, your eyes blind,
ear drums ringing, who's mute at last, no more talk
leading to kisses,

all your focus on someone else, not on me
but on he who can talk to me, who when you
drift off homewards will, you suppose, be all mine,
husband forgotten…

Un dieu à sa façon
Je suis Sappho, comme tu aimes dire – c'est toi, non,
le corps brûlant, cœur qui tonne, les yeux aveugles,
tympans qui sonnent, enfin muet, plus un mot
pour d'autres baisers,

toute ton attention sur un autre, pas sur moi
mais sur lui, qui sait me parler, qui, quand tu
files chez toi, sera, tu supposes, rien qu'à moi,
mari oublié…

In these examples, the aim is not to create a translation that is semantically faithful or rhythmically equivalent; Green notes that "What is sacrificed is the linguistically unattainable ideal of true metrical equivalence" (30). The aim is to be loyal to the poet's intentions in terms of narrative and music on one hand, and to balance these with the interpretation of the form's functions on the other hand. This hermeneutic stance is key as one cannot lose sight of the elusive nature of poetry, as Allen Curnow reminds us: "The best poems should not leave one with that 'been there, done that' feeling, there's something there that you will never get, they

will remain teasing, and their essence, whatever their essence is, will elude one" (quoted in Johnston 16).

Translating the poetic voice: a tall order

While formal issues are technically challenging, these are less problematic than translating the voice in a poem. Edwin Honig suggests that a poet's voice is an "arbitrary locus made out of pressured words, the projection of some imaginative possibility vocalized, as the self is, to stand for the individual" (8). Jackson's poetry often gives room to a polyphony of voices, reminiscent of Bill Manhire's 'code-switching', as described by Terry Sturm: "the deployment of multiple voices, multiple registers, producing texts crammed with voices, locations and perspectives, in order to break down, move beyond the control of a single homogenising voice" (302). In the poem "Sparrow (as told by Elvira)" (2003), the vocal signature is such a striking feature that Jackson's experimentation somewhat questions the concept of the 'poetic' – is it a poem? Readers are given the transcription of a little girl's story in quotation marks. The girl's awkward syntax and confusing narrative significantly echo Carmina 2 and 3, in which Catullus emphatically mourns the death of his lover's pet bird. Here are the first lines:

> **Sparrow (as told by Elvira)**
> "I found a couple of some feathers
> from a bird. I pretended
> it was a real bird. But we saw
> it was a pretend bird. It looked
> like a real bird but it was a pretend
> bird. So we put it in my breadbin.
> It looked like it was a real bird. […]"

About the poem, Jackson writes:

> There was nothing I could write that would be better than using Elvira's own words. My own role as a "seer" here is less important than her role in "domesticating" the most foreign of concepts to a small child, the concept of death.
> (Jackson "Catullus in the Playground", 114)

For target readers to grasp the most profound levels of this poem (allegory of death, echoes to and subversion of Catullus) the translation must first convey the surface level, and render the naive and awkward touch in a credible manner. Children's literature translation expert Carina Gossas explains:

> The rendering of a childlike tone and features of orality in general has been identified as a major topic in the realm of translation studies that deal with children's literature. In translation, the childlike tone is also influenced by the translator's image of children, her/his ideals for the mimetic rendering of that tone.
> (Gossas 185)

My interpretation of the voice can therefore only be based on an intuition of this voice, an image of what a child sounds like in my imagination. As strategies, I choose repetitions, grammatical errors, and clumsiness in style:

> **Passereau (raconté par Elvira)**
> "J'en ai trouvé deux des plumes
> d'un oiseau. J'ai fait semblant que

c'était un vrai oiseau. Mais on voyait
que c'était un faux oiseau. On aurait dit
un vrai oiseau mais c'était un faux
oiseau. Alors on l'a mis dans ma boîte à pain.
On aurait dit un vrai oiseau. […]"

In the middle section of *The Gas Leak* (2006), the voice of a teenager, with typical rebelliousness and effrontery, is heard. Here too, shrewd wordplay enables several layers of significance. In "The Gas-Fitter's Daughter's Recurring Solution," the poet plays with the slang expression 'to get totally written' taken in its figurative sense (to get drunk) and its literal sense (lexical field of literature: 'written'). Here are the final lines:

The Gas-Fitter's Daughter's Recurring Solution
When we can talk we agree
we *obviously* are going
to have to get *out* of here
go somewhere where we can
get totally *written*.

Rendering the bottom line requires creativity, and noting that the writer's voice doubles up with her juvenile character. Amid the plethora of French slang expressions referring to drunkenness ('se prendre une caisse', 'se mettre une mine', 'se picher la calebasse' for the most inventive) not one refers to writing, and I essay a few neologisms in compensation – 'se réécrire la page', 's'écrire une cuite', 's'en écrire une bonne', 'se mettre une écriture', 's'écriturer', 'se scribouiller' – before settling on 'se mettre carrément hors d'état d'*écrire*'. Here I subvert the idiom 'mettre hors d'état de nuire' (literally 'to put one out of the state of causing harm') implicitly suggested by rhyming association with *écrire*. I therefore somewhat invert the source meaning but retain the idiom play and the idea of writing; that is to say, the voice of the writer 'floating over' the page. As for the voice of the adolescent, I use the typically hyperbolic vocabulary of teenagers with the emphasis adverb 'carrément' for 'totally'.

La Solution récurrente de la fille de l'installateur du gaz
Quand on peut parler on est d'accord
qu'*évidemment* il va falloir
qu'on *sorte* d'ici,
aller quelque part où on puisse
se mettre carrément hors d'état d'*écrire*.

Regarding tonal shifts, a poem like "Doubling Back" offers a metaphysical reflection on time relativity on the basis of a shopping list at the supermarket. This is representative of Jackson's work, where the mundane casually meets the profound. "Salty Hair" evolves gradually from a dramatised domestic scene (waking up with the pillow "wet through to the sheets" by tears) to a crescendo of intensity with a lyrical effusion of the self ("not a hope of lying still when you are overflowing") and ends with a linguistic pirouette, a word of thanks for an enigmatic "you." In retrospect, as Jackson points out, there is also humour and derision: "I think one of my funniest poems is 'Salty Hair', in *Thicket*, which really is about being prostrate with grief" ("Jessica Wilkinson Interviews Anna Jackson" 4).

Salty Hair
In the morning my pillow is wet through
to the sheets. I have to wring out
the salt from my hair before
I can lift my head
and drink five cups of coffee
before I can speak – but when I open
my mouth an ocean pours out
from my eyes. I know
just how glaciers must feel
when spring comes on, loosening
from the inside out, leaking all
those hard-won centimetres
out in a rush to the sea,
and the *sea*, oh I know how
the *sea* feels, swallowing more and more
with more still coming at it, not a hope
of lying still when you are overflowing, your
own insides turning endlessly over
and beaching themselves on each
and every shore.
You wish the *shores* would go away.
But thank you, all the same,
for holding out your sands.

Maintaining a credible voice and distilling a highly strung emotion is a matter of finesse and sensitivity. I reproduce the play on idioms ('sands' instead of 'hands' in the final line) and the lyrical sentiment, while modulating the syntax and transforming strict meaning to do this. At the end, I keep the wordplay and the rhyme, and aim to play with readers' expectations with suggested collocations, while extending the marine metaphor present throughout.

Cheveux salés
Le matin mon oreiller est trempé jusqu'aux
draps. Je dois essorer
le sel de mes cheveux avant
de pouvoir lever la tête
et boire cinq tasses de café
avant de pouvoir parler – mais quand j'ouvre
la bouche un océan se déverse
de mes yeux. Je sais exactement
ce que les glaciers doivent ressentir
quand arrive le printemps, quand tout lâche
de l'intérieur, quand tous
ces centimètres durement gagnés fuient
d'un coup dans la mer,
et la *mer*, oh je sais ce que
la *mer* ressent, elle qui avale, avale et
avale encore tout ce qui coule vers elle, pas d'espoir
de calme plat quand tout déborde, quand ton

intérieur chavire sans cesse
et s'échoue sur chacun
de tes rivages.
Tu voudrais que les *rivages* s'en aillent.
Mais merci, c'est bien aimable,
de m'avoir tendu tes sables.

My process for "No Rough Verses" (2014) illustrates that the rendering of form – the poem is in hendecasyllabics – is a mere technical issue when compared to the reproduction of voice. The rocky rhythm conveyed by hendecasyllables justifies to render the metre: readers should feel tossed about by the waves in a 'storm of curses'. However, finding the right mix of vindictive attitude and deceiving vulnerability in tone with Jackson's ease is truly testing. In the final line, I stress the contrast between elegance in tone (the distinguished "imputé", "allégations", "sous mon joug") and orality with "on s'en ficherait." I rely on my perception of the voice as I hear it in the poem, and the voice in my translation can only be my own for the poem to work as a poem, and the emotion be expressed.

No Rough Verses
No rough verses, but like a surf-tossed sailor
wielding wisely his gaff-rigged fore-and-aft sail,
so shall I keep your favourite of Greek metres
to steer my way free of your storm of curses.
What I owe you – these claims you make are madness –
but to counter them one by one in order:
first, consider, what we owe Aphrodite –
your voyage here, as plunder of my husband,
your change of plans, your brother left unaided,
none of this can be laid as charges on me,
all was fated, and I merely received you.
Oh, I loved you, and being loved by me did
you not take more than you could ever give me?
Your 'exile' here – to live in Rome is *living*,
I don't see you, in thrall to me no longer,
rushing back to your farmhouse in Verona, or
setting sail to do business in Bithynia.
Had you stayed put, a poet of the provinces,
not one person would know your name – or care to.

Pas de vers agités
Pas de vers agités, marin ballotté
maniant sagement sur les flots sa voile aurique,
je reprendrai tes mesures grecques préférées
pour naviguer hors de ta tempête d'injures.
Ce que je te dois – tes folles allégations –
mais pour les contrer une par une et dans l'ordre:
d'abord, vois ce que l'on doit à Aphrodite –
ton voyage ici, butin de mon mari,
ton changement de plans, ton frère abandonné,
rien de tout cela ne peut m'être imputé,

c'est le destin et je t'ai seulement reçu.
Oh, je t'aimais, et aimé de moi, ne crois-
tu pas avoir pris plus que tu n'as donné ?
Ton "exil" ici – mais vivre à Rome c'est *vivre*,
je ne te vois plus sous mon joug désormais,
pressé de rentrer dans ta ferme de Vérone,
ou de faire voile pour affaires en Bithynie.
Si tu y étais resté, poète de provinces,
personne ne saurait ton nom – on s'en ficherait.

Conclusion

I conclude by returning to Nord. Although she has written little on poetry translation, she has thoroughly described the connection of empathy and trust linking writer and translator, or poet and 'meta poet' as James Holmes puts it: "The relation of the metapoem to the original poem is as that of the original poem to 'reality'" (10). Nord writes:

> Let me call "loyalty" this responsibility translators have toward their partners in translational interaction. […] It must not be mixed with fidelity or faithfulness, concepts that usually refer to a relationship between the source and the target *texts*. Loyalty is an interpersonal category referring to a social relationship between *people*. […] Only if [authors] trust the translator's loyalty will they consent to any changes or adaptations needed to make the translation work in the target culture.
>
> (Nord *Translating as a Purposeful Activity*, 125)

Jean Anderson underlines the translator's responsibilities in terms of reading but also listening:

> You just have to read a lot, and listen carefully, and make these kinds of critical notes to yourself, it's the kind of awareness of language that you need to be able to do this halfway properly. I don't think anyone ever claimed that they translated anything literary perfectly but you like to give it a good go, like a challenge.
>
> (Anderson 2011)

In my process, the challenges raised by intertextuality, fixed forms, wordplay and voice have led to a variety of solutions. However, I observe that aiming exclusively for textual equivalence or semantic faithfulness proves to be a poor strategy, merely because of the impossibility of achieving a perfect translation. Systematically 'foreignising' or 'domesticating' would also make no sense in my project. It is best to follow a case-by-case, heuristic and pragmatic approach based on loyalty, balance and hermeneutics, and leave the 'metapoems' open to a plurality of interpretations. Beyond the challenges encountered, the solutions found and the principles invoked, it is overall the building of a trusting relationship, a human adventure almost tacitly intimate, "a secret transaction", as Jaccottet puts it (drawing from Virginia Woolf), that constitutes the wealth of my experience.

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Translating Emotion from Italian to English: A Lexical-Semantic Analysis

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Abstract
Literary translators are often faced with the challenge of transferring emotions across cultural and linguistic boundaries. While translation-specific research has been carried out within the scope of cross-cultural and cross-linguistic expressions of emotion (Doi; Gerber; Goddard; Hiatt; Leff; Levy; Marsella; Pavlenko; Rosaldo; Russell; Scherer) as well as culture-specific emotions (Chan; Ekman and Friesen; Niiya et al.; Tanaka-Matsumi and Marsella), limited research has been carried out on translating emotion words. This article focuses on transferring emotion words from Italian to English, employing the Italian novel *La festa dei limoni* (2015) by Marco Braico as the case study. Using examples from the text, I demonstrate that there are often multiple possible English translatants for a given Italian emotion word, depending on the context. I analyse the textual context, the linguistic context and the sociolinguistic identity (age, gender, geographical location, social class etc.) of the speaker to illustrate how these features influence the choice of translatant. Incorporating a language-independent method such as the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM; Wierzbicka) is useful to highlight the semantic nuances between possible translatants, thus determining how to select the most accurate term. This article offers insights applicable to other lexical domains, language pairs and literary texts.

Introduction

In translation theory and practice, finding the closest possible equivalent term (Nida) across languages is one of the major challenges presented to translators. Translation is a complex act of understanding and interpreting which goes beyond the surface of words; it also carries significance across linguistic, cultural and geographical boundaries. It requires going beyond merely replacing the lexicon of one language with that of another, for language is never an isolated element, but rather an intricate system that coexists with its surroundings. Since translation studies is interdisciplinary, insights and findings can be gained from various research areas. Little research has been carried out focusing on the issue of translating emotions (see below). Furthermore, few studies analyse the translation of emotion within the language pair of Italian and English, thus creating the gap in the literature that my research fills.

While emotion has been widely researched in the field of linguistics and emotion studies (Chan; Doi; Ekman and Friesen; Gerber; Goddard; Hiatt; Leff; Levy; Marsella; Niiya et al.; Ortony, Clore et al.; Pavlenko; Rosaldo; Russell; Scherer; Tanaka-Matsumi and Marsella; Wierzbicka), it has not been integrated within translation studies, a field that can provide valuable insights into cross-cultural and cross-linguistic analysis. This article thus draws together the fields of translation, linguistics and emotion, in order to explore the issues that arise in translating expressions of emotion from Italian to English in literary translation. I propose that multiple translatants are possible for a single emotion term, yet the context must determine which word is the most accurate. I aim to discover how the specific context influences this choice and whether feasible criteria can be designed to demonstrate which English emotion word is best suited for the particular context of the Italian term. I use the Italian novel *La festa dei limoni* by Marco Braico as a case study to analyse how the textual

context, the linguistic context, and the sociolinguistic identity of the character governs the choice of one particular lexical term over other possible translatants. I aim to achieve dynamic equivalence, which has the goal of "seeking the closest natural equivalent to the source-language message" (Nida 166), as opposed to formal equivalence, which "focuses attention on the message itself, in both form and content" (Nida 159).

This text has not been published in an English translation and is based on the real-life journey of the author, narrated by his alter ego Gabriele. The thirty-five-year-old shares his challenging physical, mental and emotional experiences as he is diagnosed with leukaemia and then undergoes (successful) treatment. Braico's ability to convey a range of emotions using concise, direct and relatively simple language makes it an interesting case study for my research. For the analysis, it must be highlighted that this novel is a work of autofiction (a combination of autobiography and fiction); therefore, although the language use is based on authentic events, conversations, and people, it has simultaneously been edited and developed by the author. For the purposes of the present study (and for reasons of space), I have selected three emotion terms to discuss – *gioia*, *ansia* and *rabbia* (roughly corresponding to 'joy', 'anxiety' and 'anger' respectively). I have chosen these three words firstly because they represent both positive and negative emotions; secondly, as they are employed in a wide variety of contexts; and lastly, since they include both unproblematic and problematic words in terms of their translation in *La festa dei limoni*.

The Connection of Language, Emotion and Culture

Language, emotion and culture do not exist independently of one another, they interweave on various levels. When researching emotion words, exploring findings from linguistics and cross-cultural studies is inevitable. Although emotions are not linguistic entities, the most convenient way to express them is through language (Ortony, Clore et al. 342).

> Thoughts have a structure which can be rendered in words, but feelings, like sensations, do not. All we can do, therefore, is to describe in words the external situations or thoughts which are associated in our memory or in our imagination with the feeling in question and to trust that our reader or listener will grasp what particular feelings are meant.
>
> (Wierzbicka, *Semantic Primitives* 59)

However, linguistic manifestations of emotion are not readily translatable, as they reflect the culture in which they are employed. Issues arise when we consider that "emotion terms of one language do not neatly map onto the emotion lexicon of another" (Pavlenko, *Emotions* 77). When translating emotion words, it is thus necessary to analyse the connection of language, emotion and culture to understand the depth of such a task, and to produce a faithful translation.

Cross-cultural and cross-linguistic differences

Research analysing cross-cultural elements, whether from a linguistic, anthropological or psychological perspective, inevitably involves facing the complexities involved in translation, and the notion that so-called equivalents do not always result in something that is culturally equivalent (Goddard, *Explicating Emotions;* Pavlenko, *Bilingual Minds*). For instance, Klaus Scherer's large intercultural study of emotion focused on assessing the frequency and quality of emotion experience represented in multiple languages. The emotion words were selected in English, then translated and back-translated in order to create a list of affect states across five languages: English, German, French, Italian and Spanish. This list does not aim to express dynamic equivalence, it simply intends to find the closest available label in each language (Pavlenko, *Bilingual Minds*). Scherer does not deny the impossibility of expressing exact

(formal) equivalence in meanings across all languages, as many emotion terms have strong connotations which are normally disambiguated by the context; he emphasizes that the list is not definitive, but rather a starting point. Linguistic knowledge, in particular semantics, can test the feasibility of such research, by analysing and stating meanings in a clear, intelligible, and testable way (Goddard, *Explicating Emotions*). Findings from ethnographic studies on the emotion lexicon of various languages have also provided insight into this issue.

Ethnographers' analyses of emotion words and concepts across languages prove that many emotion terms are semantically non-equivalent. The standard view is that emotion as a concept is universal, with the differences being in the context in which they occur, such as the frequency, causes, expression, importance, attitudes, beliefs and regulation (Russell). While the word "emotion" is widespread, this does not guarantee that all languages have the same boundaries and meanings for the term. Moreover, there are languages with no word for 'emotion'such as Tahitian. Although Tahitian lacks a linguistic element for 'emotion', it is still an implicit class in Tahitian thinking (Levy, *Tahitians*). Even if we put this issue aside and focus on emotion words, we find English emotion terms with no equivalent expression in other languages. For example, Gidjingali, an Australian Aboriginal language, does not have the English emotion words 'terror', 'horror', 'dread', 'apprehension', and 'timidity' to specify different types of fear. Instead, they employ the single word *gurakadj* to cover them all. This term also expresses the (Australian) Aboriginal English notion of 'shame' (which is closer to 'shy' than the Standard English notion of 'shame'), as there is no distinction between the concepts of 'fear' and 'shame' in Gidjingali (Hiatt). Many languages do not make the distinction between 'shame' and 'embarrassment', employing just one term to express both Standard English meanings; other languages simply do not have an adequate translation for the standard English concept of 'shame'. Further to lacking an equivalent, there are some English emotion words missing entirely from the lexicon of other languages, most frequently those used for psychiatric classification. There is no term for 'depression' among many non-western cultural groups, nor a word for 'anxiety' among the Eskimos and the Yorubas (Leff; Marsella). In many Asian and Pacific languages, there is an absence of an equivalent term to 'guilt' (Gerber). Contrarily, various words in other languages lack equivalent terms in English, including the German word *Schadenfreude* (taking pleasure in someone else's pain) to differentiate from other types of pleasure, the Japanese word *amae* (depending on another person's love) and the Ilongot word *liget* (a feeling of anger and pride) (Doi; M. Rosaldo, *Ilongot Notions*; Russell, 431). These examples of cross-linguistic differences highlight the challenges of translating emotions specific to a particular culture.

Translating culture-specific emotions

Little analysis has been carried out on the equivalents of emotion, yet it is embedded in various studies. Junko Tanaka-Matsumi and Anthony Marsella undertook their research on cross-cultural variations in the feeling of depression among Japanese and Americans, where they had the challenge of finding a Japanese word which most resembled the English concept of 'depression'. They initially consulted dictionaries, and carried out a translation and back translation, resulting in the word *yuutsu* (one possible translation for 'depression'). However, the free associations of this word given by Japanese speakers were rather different from those of 'depression' given by English speakers. A similar issue occurred in David Chan's research on Chinese translations for 'depression'. After finding the closest translation, *you-yu* (related to the Japanese translation *yuutsu*), he obtained free associations of this translatant from Chinese participants and concluded that the English word 'depression' and the Chinese word *you-yu* appeared to be quite different. There are, however, two flaws with this translation method. Firstly, it implies that for any given word there is one ideal or universally accepted translatant, and secondly, while back translation can find the most suitable translation, it will

not necessarily be formally equivalent (Russell, 433). Paul Ekman and his colleagues (1971) made a breakthrough in the study of emotion by suggesting that people from different cultures were able to experience the same emotions, and a more recent study by Yu Niiya, Phoebe Ellsworth and Susumu Yamaguchi (2006) supports this claim. They have researched the culturally unique Japanese term *amae*, which lacks a formal equivalent English term but can be associated with a desire to be cared for in any relationship. Their aim was to evaluate the cultural specificity of this term and to discover the degree to which English speakers can feel this emotion despite its lack of equivalent. To maximize cross-cultural equivalence of the emotion-eliciting stimuli and to substitute the absence in the lexicon, a series of images displaying scenarios that reflected the Japanese word *amae* were presented to the participants. The Americans responded in the same way as the Japanese, demonstrating that they can still feel *amae* despite the lack of lexical element to express it. Therefore, it is not necessary for a culture to have a label for an emotion to be able to feel or describe it. The emotion words of these studies were analysed in isolation, using the entire language as the framework. I propose that in translating emotion words within a selected framework of language, such as a novel, there are various equivalents available for a given emotion word. I suggest that the choice of translatant is determined by the context of the lexical term, as I explore below, using the most recent version[1] of Italian novel *La festa dei limoni* (Braico) as the context of my research.

Emotion words in *La festa dei limoni*

La festa dei limoni is based on the real life experiences of the author Marco Braico. Born in Turin in 1968, Braico currently lives in a nearby town, Volvera, where he is a maths and science teacher in a *liceo scientifico* (a type of secondary school in Italy dedicated to scientific studies). *La festa dei limoni* is the first of his four novels and was originally published in 2011 by Effatà Editrice. More than twelve thousand copies were sold that same year, and the text received various literary awards (Braico, "racchiude l'essenza"). Following this success, the novel was edited, chapters were added, and it was subsequently re-published in 2015 by Piemme in both paperback and e-book editions. The novel currently exists only in Italian, but my research on the most recent edition forms the foundation for an English translation I am working on in an upcoming project.

Understanding the novel's broader context provides the foundation for an accurate analysis of its linguistic features. The novel derived from Braico's experience of being diagnosed with a severe form of leukaemia in 2003 and undergoing treatment over a period of some months, which led to him making a full recovery. He then wanted to find a way to spread the joy of living and help people affected by illness; hence, he started collecting money in order to buy equipment to donate to hospitals in Italy. He still felt that there was more he could do, which is how the idea of publishing his personal journey evolved. The book does not stand in isolation: *La festa dei limoni* is at the heart of a project with an identical name. This project consists of an online community in which people can donate to the cause and follow what the money is being used for (Braico, "Onlus"). While it is not an autobiography but rather an autobiographical novel narrated from the perspective of his alter ego, he clearly states that the facts, events and people included in the story are not "*puramente casuali"* (Braico, *Festa dei Limoni* 218), meaning that they are not there by chance. The novel is not written for an audience in search of a text with high literary status or containing complex language. It is written from the heart and is intended to be read in the same manner, using language as a means to share what he learned from his experience, and to help those who are now affected by illness (217). Braico's unique writing style provides a fascinating case study for my research, as he writes

[1] The most recent version, published by Edizioni Piemme in 2015, is an edited version of the original text which was published by Effatà Editrice in 2011.

concisely and directly, conveying a range of emotions using a relatively simple vocabulary, yet at times he uses unlikely metaphors and very colloquial language. The author's voice is informal and reflective, as if he were writing a diary. The tone is generally witty and sarcastic, which contrasts with the heavy themes that are addressed.

Methodology

The first stage consisted of a source text analysis in which I identified all Italian emotion words in the text. I considered it necessary to draw from a list of emotion words in Italian, in order to avoid contradicting the intention of my study by basing the selection on translated English terms. The corpus of emotion words created by Vanda Lucia Zammuner (267-272) in her research on exploring the 'emotionness' and the dimensional ratings of Italian emotion words offered a valuable starting and reference point. She based her selection on other English and Italian empirical and theoretical studies, including the work of Beverley Fehr and James Russell, Andrew Ortony, Gerald Clore and Mark Foss, and P.N Johnson-Laird and Keith Oatley, along with research on the variety and structure of the Italian emotion lexicon by Dario Galati, and E. Gius et al. I believe Zammuner's list of 153 emotion words is the most valid and comprehensive corpus for Italian to date; therefore, it is applied in my study. Although Zammuner provides an English equivalent for each Italian emotion term, she notes the difficulty involved in finding a one-to-one correspondence between the words of two languages. Therefore, after identifying the occurrences of the 73 emotion words present in the novel, I examined whether the translatants proposed by Zammuner were suitable for each context in which the words appeared in *La festa dei limoni*. My judgement as a native English speaker was investigated and verified by a native Italian translator. I analysed all instances of each emotion term and divided them into words that can be adequately translated using Zammuner's proposed terms, and those that require another translatant in at least one of the instances. In this article, the context of the inadequately translated group of words is further investigated, and I demonstrate how to select the most accurate English word. In order to maintain a language-independent perspective in the description of the context, I employ the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) created by prolific linguist Anna Wierzbicka and colleagues.

Below are two examples; the first case (*gioia*) is an example of Zammuner's suggestion being an adequate translatant in all contexts of Braico's novel, while the second case (*ansia*) is a term that requires more than one translant.

gioia (joy)

i. "[…] a cui non ho avuto il tempo di chiedere se le avevo fatto passare dieci minuti di **gioia**." (56)
ii. "Andiamo a dormire con la **gioia** nel cuore e non mi sembra vero, visto il pomeriggio passato tra lacrime e bancari." (134)
iii. "[…] noto sua sorella, che non si è mai mossa dal suo capezzale, piangere di **gioia** vedendolo mangiare." (143)
iv. "[…] qualunque persona sana di mente avrebbe reagito con un saltino di **gioia** […]" (188)
v. "[…] sorridendo e mostrando i suoi occhi brillanti di **gioia**." (146)

Zammuner's proposed translatant 'joy' for the Italian word *gioia* is suitable for all contexts in the novel. 'Joy' can be employed to describe an emotional state across a specific time frame, as in (i) ('ten minutes of joy'; my translation), or to describe an action, whether it be crying, such as in (iii) ('crying with joy'), or jumping, as expressed in (iv) ('leap of joy'). It is adequate for contexts that make reference to a part of the body, the heart in (ii) ('joy in our hearts') and

eyes in (v) ('eyes shining with joy'). 'Joy' is appropriate for the emotion as expressed inwardly, as in (i) and (ii), yet also as expressed outwardly, such as in (iii), (iv) and (v).

ansia (anxiety)

i. "Mi guarda curioso ma **ansioso** di dire la sua." (15)
ii. "Sono un po' in **ansia** per la visita e proprio non riesco a starmene lì da solo con intorno questo spettacolo." (55)
iii. "Questa è un'**ansia** tipicamente femminile, noi uomini teniamo meno all'acconciatura." (113)
iv. "Minchia che **ansia** che mi fai venire socio, stai rego, mo' pensi a Capodanno?" (171)

In the first instance (vi) ('eager to say his [piece]'; my translation), the English term 'eager' achieves dynamic equivalence, and is used in the positive sense of feeling excited or enthusiastic. By contrast, in (vii) ('I'm a little worried about the check-up'), *ansia* is used to express nervousness about an upcoming medical consultation. Due to the informality of the conversation, I propose that the English translatant 'worried' achieves dynamic equivalence. Given that the subject causing the emotion of *ansia* in (viii) ('typically a female concern') is a hairstyle, and the significance of *ansia* relates to the interest that women generally display towards their hairstyle, I suggest 'concern' as a more appropriate translatant. In the final example (ix) ('you're stressing me out'), the language is very informal and colloquial; *ansia,* in this context, is part of the collocation *che ansia*. 'Anxious' is not suitable here (two school boys smoking outside during class time) as it is of a more formal register and is not part of a collocation. I propose 'stress' as a more adequate translatant in this context.

The above examples illustrate that, while certain emotion words can be translated uniformly across the variety of contexts in which they appear in the novel (e.g. *gioia*), others require additional consideration (e.g. *ansia*). After further analysing the contexts of the inadequately translated group of words, it is clear that a guideline is needed to determine how to select the most accurate English word. This is where the NSM is valuable. It will be discussed in more detail below and the process of using the NSM to determine the most suitable translatant will be illustrated using a third emotion word from the novel – *rabbia* – as an example.

A tool for translating emotion words: natural semantic metalanguage

When carrying out cross-linguistic and cross-cultural research, the issue of language dependency and ethnocentrism arises. This refers to how the description of other languages and cultures is inevitably carried out within the limited parameters of one's own language (Wierzbicka, *Primes and Universals* 22). In cross-cultural research centred on English language concepts (such as the studies mentioned earlier analysing 'depression' amongst Japanese and Chinese speakers), researchers must be aware of how their own cultural and linguistic identity may influence the study. Anglocentrism can be avoided by viewing and explaining the differences in language and culture through a language-independent perspective, such as NSM.

> To compare meanings expressed in different languages and different cultures, one needs a semantic metalanguage independent, in essence, of any particular language or culture – and yet accessible and open to interpretation through any language.
>
> (Wierzbicka, *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics* 6)

NSM is based on the principle that all languages have an irreducible semantic core, a finite list of basic words which can be used to describe complex meanings (Goddard and Wierzbicka, "Semantic Fieldwork"). The semantic core has a language-like structure, including a lexicon of indefinable expressions, terms that cannot be described in a non-circular fashion, and are essential for explaining numerous other words. The semantic core also has a grammar, or set of principles determining how the lexical elements may be combined (Goddard, "NSM"). Through decades of research, Wierzbicka, along with Cliff Goddard, has developed a set of 65 semantic primes proposed to be the smallest set of lexical universals; these have been confirmed by NSM researchers for more than 30 languages of greatly diverse linguistic types and cultural settings (Goddard, "Semantic primes"). Semantic primes are the lexical and semantic foundation of language; they are indefinable concepts, essential for describing the meaning of other, more complex words. For instance, the words SOMEONE, THINK, NOW and GOOD are semantic primes in English as they cannot be directly explicated, indicating that their meanings are conceptually simple and they are necessary for the definition of other words. One of the fundamental aspects of these findings is that semantic primes can be expressed in all languages, and thus are directly cross-translatable (Farese, "Cross-linguistic Pragmatics" 3). In translation research, NSM allows an analysis of source items and potential translatants that is, theoretically, free of cultural bias or language dependency. Furthermore, it ensures a high level of accuracy is achieved in the target text. In the sphere of emotion research, Farese adopts NSM to conduct a cross-cultural semantic analysis of specific Japanese emotion terms *haji* and *hazukashii*, often translated into English as 'shame' and 'embarrassment' respectively ("Cultural Semantics"). For example, his explications of *haji* and the English equivalent, 'shame' (below), demonstrate crucial semantic differences between these terms.

Someone X feels *haji*

- someone X feels something bad,
  - because this someone X thinks like this:
    - "people can know something very bad about me
    - they can't not think something very bad about me because of this
    - some people can feel something bad like I feel because of this
      - this is bad"

("Cultural Semantics" 42)

X feels 'shame'

- X feels something bad because X thinks like this:
  - "people can know something bad about me
  - they can't not think something bad about me because of this
  - when I think about it, I can't not think the same"

("Cultural Semantics" 47)

Despite the fact that the widespread and interdisciplinary use of NSM in recent literature demonstrates its validity and broad applicability in cross-linguistic research, cross-cultural research and translation studies, it is not without criticism. The aim of the NSM approach is to maintain an objective perspective when analysing specific lexical elements, and semantic explications are based around the premise that the interpretation does not change for each individual. However, this assumption ignores the inevitable interpersonal variation that underlies the fact that speakers of a language do not necessarily have the same understanding of any given word; thus, subjectivity is still present (Riemer 357; Blumczyński 265-268).

Another common criticism is that the over-simplicity and vagueness of the semantic primes creates more effort for the reader, along with being counterproductive, and potentially misleading and ambiguous in the explications. Instead, familiar meanings should be employed (Riemer 357-367; Blumczyński 271-272). In translation studies, dichotomies are often discussed in terms of a continuum with "fuzzy boundaries" and overlaps (such as Venuti's foreignization vs domestication and Nida's formal vs dynamic equivalence). Translation theory and practice also provide substantial evidence for a graded model of meaning, understanding and communication, thus suggesting that the translatability of a word is explained in terms of "degree or more-or-less" (Blumczyński 264-265). NSM, on the other hand, postulates conceptual untranslatability between languages, yet categorizes words based on an "either-or" approach, and this binary distinction contradicts the claim of untranslatability (Blumczyński 264-265). Despite these criticisms, I believe NSM provides the most valid methodology for this research project on emotion words in a specific literary context. Explicating the nuances of English translatants for Italian emotion terms in *La festa dei limoni* using NSM ensures I maintain a non-ethnocentric and a language-independent perspective on the analysis while also pinpointing small but significant differences in meaning. In the following example, I create semantic explications to illustrate the subtle differences between the contexts of two possible translatants for *rabbia* (anger/upset), which is another word belonging to the 'inadequately' translated list.

***Rabbia* (anger)**

The term *rabbia* is used in a variety of different contexts in the novel, including a written letter, a reflective thought, and a dialogue. Some instances are forms that are derived from the noun; these include the adjective *arrabbiata* and the verb *arrabbiarsi*. Nevertheless, a coherent method using NSM to determine the suitable translatant is possible. The first explication demonstrates that Zammuner's suggested equivalent 'anger' is suitable for a context such as the following:

a) *rabbia* is the same as 'anger' if:

- this is something bad
- someone can feel like this because of someone/something else
- someone can think like this at the time:
  - "I feel something bad
  - I don't want to feel like this
  - something bad happened
  - I don't want things like this to happen
  - I want to do something because of this"

> (x) "Grazie al cazzo" mi viene da risponderle "e adesso che me l'hai detto ti senti meglio, fighetta dal camice bianco?" La mia, in realtà, è solo **rabbia**, perché lei con me è molto carina. Sto cambiando in peggio, devo ritrovare il sorriso e l'umorismo, altrimenti non guarirò mai.
>
> (129)

> (xi) In quest'ultimo periodo mi sono un po' **arrabbiata** con lei, le spiegherò tutto quando tornerà, quindi si sbrighi, anche perché io non posso studiare la matematica senza di lei. Inoltre mi aveva promesso di portarmi alla facoltà di matematica, il tempo stringe e senza di lei sarebbe diverso. Maura.

(170)

In both instances, the term ‘anger’ or ‘angry’, depending on syntactic form, is an adequate translation. The first example is Gabriele’s reflection regarding what he feels like saying to the nurse as she delivers bad news to him. Gabriele’s negative emotions reflect his illness and the effect it is having on his attitude. He wants to take his feelings out on the nurse yet is aware that she is not what is causing this emotion, and he makes a conscious effort to lift his spirits.

Suggested translation for (x):

> “Thanks a fucking lot” I feel like saying to her “and now that you’ve told me do you feel better, little princess in a white coat?” In reality, it’s just my **anger** coming out, because actually she’s really sweet to me. I’ve changed for the worse, I have to find my smile and sense of humour, otherwise I’ll never recover.

The second example is from a letter written to Gabriele by one of his students, Maura. Gabriele’s illness is affecting her, and she expresses this by stating how annoyed she is with him because she is not coping without him as a teacher.

Suggested translation for (xi):

> I’ve been a bit **angry** with you lately, I’ll explain when you come back, so hurry up, also because I can’t study maths without you. Besides, you had promised to take me to see the maths faculty, the clock is ticking and without you it would be different. Maura.

b) *rabbia* is the same as ‘upset’ if:

- someone feels something bad because of someone else
- someone thinks of this someone else
- someone wants this someone else to feel good

> (xii) Carmine ha un’altra complicazione: soffre di ragadi al sedere e non può dormire o stare sdraiato supino. Lo trovo sempre col sedere all’aria e un cuscino sotto la pancia, con braccia e gambe allargate come il quattro di bastoni e quello che più mi fa **arrabbiare** è che non mangia niente e fuma come un turco.
>
> (142)

> (xiii) Quello di sinistra è molto silenzioso, di nuova nomina, quello di destra è impegnato in una telefonata col Sudamerica, è presumibilmente peruviano e il tono di voce mi porta a pensare che sia incazzato. Infatti attacca e commenta. “Hijo de puta madre” che non mi sembra un complimento, poi si gira e mi saluta con garbo. Gli sorrido e ironizzo: “Non volevo farti **arrabbiare**, mi hanno detto loro che devo mettermi in questo letto…”
>
> “No, scusame, è il mio fratello che mi fa incazzare del Perù. Piacere, Conan.”
>
> (193)

Both of these occurrences of *rabbia* are most faithfully translated with the term ‘upset’, as they correspond with the explication given for this term. The first occurrence is from Gabriele’s

thoughts about his fellow patient, Carmine. It is evident that Gabriele cares about Carmine's wellbeing; he is worried because Carmine does not eat and constantly smokes.

Suggested translation for (xii):

> Carmine has another problem: he suffers from fissures on his bottom and can't sleep or lie on his back. I always find him with his bottom in the air and a pillow under his stomach, with his arms and legs stretched out like the four of clubs [in an Italian card set] and what **upsets** me the most is that he doesn't eat anything and he smokes like a chimney.

The second instance is from a dialogue between Gabriele and another patient, Conan. Gabriele has just been assigned into the same room as Conan and hears him speaking on the phone in an irritated tone. Gabriele makes a joke by pretending to think that Conan was talking to him in an annoyed voice, despite being fully aware that he was talking on the phone; therefore, *rabbia* is being used ironically.

Suggested translation for (xiii):

> The one on the left is very quiet, he's newly arrived, the one on the right is busy on the phone with South America, he's presumably Peruvian and his tone of voice makes me think that he's pissed off. Indeed, he hangs up and comments "*Hijo de puta madre*" which doesn't seem like a compliment to me, then he turns around and politely says hi to me. I smile and ironically say: "I didn't mean to **upset** you, they told me that I have to take this bed…" "No, sorry, it's my brother from Peru that's pissing me off. I'm Conan, nice to meet you."

These examples demonstrate how the context of a particular Italian emotion word in *La festa dei limoni* can determine the choice of translatant. The context refers to multiple aspects, namely the textual context, the linguistic context, as well as the sociolinguistic identity of the character using the term.

The methodology of creating semantic explications for each translatant is applicable for all emotion words in the text, but it is not possible to list them all here for reasons of space. NSM is an invaluable approach for my research as it successfully pinpoints the cross-linguistic semantic differences between lexical expressions of emotion. It is the translator's task to identify the subtle differences between both the source and the target language, and while Italian and English are typologically related, there are substantial distinctions between them, resulting in many words not being cross-translatable. As demonstrated, emotion terms can be a problematic group of words for translators, and I have shown how NSM is a valuable linguistic resource that creates a plausible portrait of the cognitive scenario associated with certain feelings. While the meanings of emotion words are often related to culture-specific assumptions and conceptualizations, meaning that exact equivalence is unlikely to occur, by adopting a language-independent model such as NSM, and striving for a non-ethnocentric perspective, we can focus on finding the closest equivalent in any language. In the above analysis I have highlighted such slight nuances between emotion words in Italian and English, and have suggested how to maintain these variations and thus achieve closer equivalence.

Conclusion

Variation across languages and cultures means that accuracy is inevitably brought to the foreground in translational activity. Cross-linguistic and cross-cultural differences are

particularly evident within expressions of emotion, creating a challenging task for translators who are required to find the closest possible equivalent term in the target language. The context in which emotion words are used plays a crucial role in determining the most accurate translatant. The analysis undertaken in this article will provide a foundation for *La festa dei limoni* to be translated into English, a task I am currently undertaking. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of this study, both the methodology and the results could be applied to a range of future projects within the three areas it encompasses: translation, linguistics and emotion. From the perspective of translation studies, my approach of using NSM to illuminate translatant choice could be further explored using other lexical domains, such as humour or metaphors. While the case study presented here is a specific Italian novel, the findings may be useful for investigations of other literary texts or language pairs. Future research in this direction could widen the context and draw upon Italian and English corpora, as well as other texts, to provide a broader scope and to test the feasibility of this approach on a larger scale.

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Translating Pastiche: The Example of Proust

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Abstract
Literary pastiche is spoof, part banter, part literary criticism. To succeed as both, it presupposes in its reader an appreciation of the style being parodied. In translation, for lack of that appreciation, pastiche may fall flat. I consider some of the pastiches of Proust, as they have been translated, with varying degrees of success, by various translators. My main focus is on the celebrated parody of the Goncourt *Journal* which appears in the last part of *À la recherche du temps perdu*. I suggest that a way of coping with the problems posed by the translation of pastiche is to apply to it, as to other forms of word-play, the principle of compensation.

Can pastiche be translated? Does it pose insoluble problems to the translator? Why would one translate a pastiche? What qualities should a translated pastiche have? First, let us define pastiche, from the *OED*, sense 2a: "A work, esp. of literature, created in the style *of* someone or something else; a work that humorously exaggerates or parodies a particular style". This seems little different from sense 1a of 'parody' as defined also by the *OED*:

> A literary composition modelled on and imitating another work, esp. a composition in which the characteristic style and themes of a particular author or genre are satirized by being applied to inappropriate or unlikely subjects, or are otherwise exaggerated for comic effect.

In these two definitions, I think four key terms are "satirized", "exaggerate", "humorously" and "comic effect". If a parodic text failed to meet these criteria, its quality as pastiche would be minimal. A more colloquial term applicable to 'pastiche' and 'parody', which I sometimes use, is 'spoof'. Other words used by specialists in the genre to define the point of a pastiche are: *raillerie* ("scoffing", "banter", "joke", Milly 45), *âpreté*, *ironie*, *enjouement* ("pungency, irony, playfulness", Deffoux, quoted by Dyer 53), and "charm" (Dyer).

Many writers of prose have been attracted to the genre of pastiche, from James Joyce in *Ulysses* (1922) and Thomas Mann in *Doktor Faustus* (1947) to David Lodge's *The British Museum is Falling Down* (1965). Among French writers, pastiche has been widely practised. Balzac, for instance, in his *Contes drolatiques* (1827), spoofed the early sixteenth-century style of Rabelais. Flaubert, too, another great fancier of Rabelais, did something similar in letters to particular friends of like mind. In the twentieth century, Jean-Louis Curtis, a virtuoso in the parodic manner (his spoofs of André Gide and Jacques Chardonne, for example, out-Gide Gide and out-Chardonne Chardonne), produced two collections of witty and inventive pastiches, *La Chine m'inquiète* (1972) and *La France m'épuise* (1982). Before him, it was the name of Marcel Proust which had been most closely associated with this playful activity. And it is with the pastiches of Proust, most notably his version of a supposedly unpublished extract from the *Journal* of the Goncourt brothers, that I am concerned here. That pastiche figures in *Le temps retrouvé*, the last

part of Proust's great infinished novel, *À la recherche du temps perdu* (1913-1927). I say 'the Goncourt brothers', which is how Proust sometimes refers to the pseudo-author of this piece, but since he also uses the singular form and the pseudo-author of the parody itself mentions *je* and *mon frère*, it makes more sense to speak of the author not as both brothers Goncourt but as Edmond, who outlived Jules by twenty-six years.

In 1904, some years before starting to write what became the *Recherche*, Proust had a first pastiche published by the literary supplement of *Le Figaro*. He later composed a series of very accurate, very amusing, very revealing pastiches, nine of which were also published in *Le Figaro*, between February 1908 and March 1909. Each of them was a take-off of the manner of an important writer of the nineteenth century, novelists, critics and historians, including Balzac, Flaubert, Sainte-Beuve, Michelet and the Goncourts. In 1919, he collected them and published them in a much appreciated volume, *Pastiches et mélanges*. A few others, written about the same time as these, were published after his death. This gift for stylistic mimicry is evident too in many of his letters to friends and lovers, especially the musician and composer Reynaldo Hahn.

A variant of my initial question (can one translate a pastiche?) was answered by Scott Moncrieff, Proust's first translator, whose publisher had suggested he might translate some of the novelist's lesser works. Moncrieff's tongue-in-cheek reply was that *Pastiches et mélanges* consists of "a series of parodies of French stylists which it would be utterly impossible to render even into Belgian" (letter to Joseph Conrad [?], quoted in Findlay 219). So the project went no further. However, that has not stopped other translators from attempting the task: many amateurs have published their versions on the Internet, and an American translator, Charlotte Mandell, has even won a prize for her translations of Proust's pastiches (*The Lemoine Affair*, Melville House, Brooklyn, 2008). So, in a sense, my question is superfluous: it has been done. But that raises at least two further questions. How well has it been done? How well can it be done? Generally speaking, I must say that the voices which Mandell gives to her pseudo-Balzac, her false Flaubert and the others, pass muster. But in the detail, they raise more questions than they answer. They strike me by their occasional mistranslations, a tone which jars at times and by their literalism. In a genre that is playful and creative by definition, might not literalism appear to be a hindrance rather than a help? I revert to my key terms 'satirized', 'exaggerate', 'humorously', 'comic effect', 'charm', 'joke', 'banter', 'scoffing', to ask whether there is, in Mandell's versions, comic effect, humour, exaggeration or satire? For readers to appreciate satire or exaggeration, do they not need to know something of what is being exaggerated and satirized? How many of Mandell's readers have that appreciation of the styles of Balzac, Flaubert, Sainte-Beuve, Henri de Régnier and the others? On reading her versions, one may even wonder whether Mandell herself has such an appreciation. All jokes that work are by definition in-jokes. Is not pastiche the in-joke *par excellence*? As Dyer says, about pastiche, "For it to work, it needs to be 'got' as a pastiche. [. . .] Every pastiche has its particular group that gets it" (Dyer 3). Without that complicity between writer and reader, the joke falls flat; without it between translator and reader, there is no joke. The pasticheur is an impersonator, a mimic of text. If a reader has little or no knowledge of what is being impersonated or mimicked, one of the most important aims of pastiche is misserved. In a related context (the impersonations that the duchesse de Guermantes is so good at), Proust compares such people to rabbits: "parce qu'ils n'avaient jamais su remarquer le défaut ou l'accent que la duchesse cherchait à contrefaire" (*Recherche* II, 752).

There is, of course, another aim of pastiche which might be seen as more important than amusement. For a serious pastiche is also an exercise in literary criticism, what Proust calls "de la critique littéraire « en action »" (*Correspondance* VIII, 61). In order

to imitate a style and to amuse by exaggerating its features, its felicities and infelicities, a parodist must be a very familiar judge of them, able to draw them to the attention of other readers who may thereby have a more acute appreciation of the author being impersonated.

In the translation of a literary pastiche, what may be missing may be pastiche itself. The risk of this is, of course, high. Perhaps so high as to cast doubt upon the whole enterprise of translating pastiche. How can one parody in English, say, a style which does not exist in English? Every translator of Proust meets a mode of this daunting difficulty when attempting to translate not pastiche but the speech that he gives to his characters. For Proust is a caricaturist of genius, and caricature is one of his main modes of characterization. A caricaturist proceeds by isolating two or three features of his model and exaggerating them. In Proust, one of those features is always mannerisms of speech. All his main characters, Swann, Odette, Françoise, Bloch, Charlus, Albertine, etc., have individual spoken styles, an idiolect, which enables Proust to lampoon a voice, a vocabulary, a pronunciation. As the narrator says,

> …ce que racontaient les gens m'échappait, car ce qui m'intéressait, c'était non ce qu'ils voulaient dire, mais la manière dont ils le disaient, en tant qu'elle était révélatrice de leur caractère ou de leurs ridicules.
>
> (IV 296)

With Françoise, it is her uneducated speech forms, her below-stairs malapropisms, her ungrammatical peasantries, which constitute the character and make her comic. As has been said, "De manière assez évidente, Françoise ne doit son existence et sa forte caractérisation qu'à sa parole" (Pierron 47). Without them, Françoise is devoid of character and Proust loses much of his claim to be seen as a comic writer. Take some familiar English comic character endowed with broad accent, vulgar attitudes and absurd speech forms, Shakespeare's Mistress Quickly for example, Fielding's Mrs Slipslop, Sheridan's Mrs Malaprop, Dickens's Mrs Gamp, Meredith's Mrs Berry, and imagine their speech shorn of broad accent and absurdities. There would be little character left, and no comedy. Sad to say, readers of most of the existing translations of Proust into English encounter a Françoise without this flavour of character, a Françoise with little comic content.

In the spoken style of the young Bloch, the translator faces a mode of the same difficulty: Bloch is given to spouting long periods, pedantic, bookish and affected, flavoured by the style of Leconte de Lisle, a poet of the Parnassian school who also translated Homer. It is especially with a character such as Bloch that one can see Proust's characterization by caricature as a mode of pastiche. The spoken style of each of the major characters is akin to a pastiche. As Jean Milly says: "Le langage des personnages du roman […] est une sorte de pastiche du langage de personnages réels et parfois de modèles littéraires" (Milly 43). With some features of Bloch's voice, the translator faces exactly the problem posed by a pastiche: how to parody, in English, a style, Leconte de Lisle's version of Homer, which does not exist in English? In translating *Du côté de chez Swann* forty years ago, one of my solutions to this dilemma was to replace the Homeric echoes by Shakespearean, especially in using vocative expressions such as "good my lord" (for *cher maître*) and the archaisms "thy", "hath" et "doth", instead of "your", "has" and "does", etc. I was criticized for this choice; but it still seems not an uninspired solution to the problem of lampooning a literary style perceptible to the readers of the original but not available to readers of the text in translation. Such Shakespearisms at least let the

reader savour something of the literary, archaic and exotic mannerisms making up so much of the character of Bloch. That they should also amuse, one assumes, was among my aims: since Bloch's speech is amusing, by definition pastiche of it should also amuse. In this respect, the exaggerated voice given to Goncourt makes him one of the characters of the *Recherche*.

It is especially in translating idiosyncrasies of speech that the translators' principle of compensation is very useful. Compensation has been defined as follows:

> […] procédé qui vise à garder la tonalité de l'ensemble en introduisant, par un détour stylistique, la note qui n'a pu être rendue par les mêmes moyens et au même endroit.
>
> (Vinay and Darbelnet 189)

In dealing with speech that is racy, colourful, colloquial, non-standard, as every translator knows, you cannot restrict yourself to a point-for-point reproduction of each and every feature or flavour of the original voice. It is here that one relies on compensation, building into the new voice features which belong to an apt register, which feel right, which are part and parcel of the spoken style one has adopted for this or that character, even though they may have no identifiable equivalent in the wording of the clause or sentence that one is translating. Here more than anywhere else the translator becomes a creative writer. I shall return to this principle, which I believe applies also to the translation of pastiche, that other mode of idiosyncratic speech.

Other similar traces of pastiche appear in the *Recherche*, such as the letter written by the young footman, with its faulty spelling and punctuation, its semi-educated respect for cumbrous formalities of speech (III 854-855) well translated by Mark Treharne (Penguin, III 566). Then there are the *charges* of Oriane, her liking for doing imitations of others (III 752-757), showing again what one sees in Bloch: that at times the voices that Proust gives to his characters are inseparable from pastiche. According to Milly, pastiche, for Proust, was:

> [une] activité permanente […] une tendance permanente de son esprit. Tous ses amis parlent de son habileté à imiter la voix et le geste de ses contemporains, notamment du plus original d'entre eux, Robert de Montesquiou.
>
> (Milly 13)

With the pastiche of the unpublished Goncourt *Journal*, which plays such an ironic role in reinforcing the narrator's belief that he will never become a writer, the language of Shakespeare being of no avail, we may have to turn to the language of Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall and Rosa Nouchette Carey. I shall come back to these and other minor authors of the late nineteenth century and to their taste in what Robert Louis Stevenson called 'tushery'.

The Goncourt pastiche occupies some eight pages in Pléiade (IV 287-295). It is twice as long as most of those in the set published as *Pastiches et mélanges*. It purports to be an extract from an unpublished part of the famous *Journal*, *Mémoires de la vie littéraire*, the lengthy diary kept between 1851 and 1896, first by both brothers, then after the death of Jules in 1870, by the surviving Edmond. To appreciate the virtuosity of the pasticheur, one must have a familiarity with the Goncourt manner. They themselves defined their way of writing French prose, narrative and descriptive, which they developed in their novels and other works, of art criticism, cultural history and biography,

as well as in the *Journal*, as *écriture artiste*. If, as Hemingway says, "Prose is architecture, not interior decoration", then the Goncourt style is not prose. For *l'écriture artiste* is little other than interior decoration. It is precious, it is twee, it is affected, as though the writers' purpose were to cram into each sentence as many archaisms, mannerisms, personalized devices, neologisms and *recherché* turns of speech as possible. Many of its features are as difficult to define for an English-speaking readership, since they have no analogues in our language, as they can be to translate, for the same reason. Take the Goncourts' *syntaxe nominale*, noun syntax, one of the most salient aspects of this way of writing, in which the brothers often use adjectives and verb infinitives as nouns, and replace common adjectives and verbs by abstract nouns formed from them. Concomitants of this syntax are that many sentences take the form of lists of noun structures and that the verbs which it requires are often expressively weak, among the commonest being *il y a* and *c'est*, *faire* and *mettre*. One is often struck by the disparity between the highfalutin manner and the ordinariness, even the sordidness, of the matter. In small doses, some of these usages can have dramatic and descriptive effect; taken as a whole, which is how the reader of a Goncourt text takes them, they smack of the indigestible. If late-Victorianism means ornate and finicky ugliness, which to some it does, then this is it writ large. As for the problems this poses the translator, here is one minute example of noun syntax, a simple sentence from the novel *La fille Élisa* (1877) about a black cat crawling on a carpet: "Une chatte pleine mettait un rampement noir sur un tapis usé" (literally "A pregnant cat put a black crawling on a worn carpet" Goncourt 35). The noun *rampement* joined with the verb *mettre* replaces the more straightforward verb *ramper* ("to crawl"). A feature of such sentence structuring is that *noir*, an adjective of colour, qualifies an abstract noun, thereby lending it a concrete quality. For all its expressiveness, how one translates such a sentence, attempting not only to convey the basic meaning but to retain some flavour of style must be an acute difficulty. It was a difficulty not faced by translators in the late Victorian years, as what the Goncourts wrote was deemed too sordid, too associated with Realism and Naturalism, dirty words in the English-speaking world, for publishers to risk being prosecuted under the repression of obscenity laws.[1]

Before inspecting how Proust's pastiche of this style in *Le temps retrouvé* has been variously translated, I give here a minute example of the immense problems with which it confronts the translator, some of them crammed into just a few lines of syntax which risk becoming too tortuous for English to cope with:

> […] des assiettes des Yung-Tsching à la couleur capucine de leurs rebords, au bleuâtre, à l'effeuillé turgide de leurs iris d'eau, à la traversée, vraiment décoratoire, par l'aurore d'un vol de martins-pêcheurs et de grues, aurore ayant tout à fait ces tons matutinaux qu'entre-regarde quotidiennement, boulevard Montmorency, mon réveil […]
>
> (IV 289)

This pastiche of the Goncourt style has been translated four times. Scott Moncrieff having died without being able to complete his version of the whole *Recherche*, the final part of the novel, which did not appear in French until 1927, five years after the death of Proust himself, was first translated, in England, as *Time Regained* (1931) by Sidney Schiff (under the pen name of Stephen Hudson) and in America as *The Past Recaptured* (1932) by Frederick Blossom. The text of *Le temps retrouvé* from which both these translators

[1] Classe, containing no entry under Goncourt, makes a single allusion to their not being translated, ambiguous at that (I 475).

worked was so defective that this final part of the novel, not properly edited till 1954, was eventually retranslated, by Andreas Mayor in 1970. The fourth version was done as part of the wholly new Penguin translation (2002) by Ian Patterson (under a title disliked by many, *Finding Time Again*). I propose to review each of these four versions.

The first thing to strike the reader of the Hudson version is the generalized weirdness of the language. Is it, one wonders, unintentional, a sign of ignorance, incompetence or understandable inability to see the wood for the trees of the textual defects? Mind you, even if unintentional, it is conceivable that the strangeness of the language could convey to a reader something of the bizarre French of the pseudo-Goncourt. Whether it would amuse, be taken as stylistic satire, work a comic effect, is another matter. I suspect that it would, instead, perplex, confuse and mislead. There are certainly two literary allusions that Hudson fails to see as such: the reference to the *Madeleine* of Fromentin (287) and to the *Fables* of La Fontaine (288). To translate *le faire* (roughly, the manner of a painter, 709) as "the doings" suggests that Hudson was unfamiliar not only with basic tics of style of the Goncourts but with the incongruous associations of this word. A common idiom, *de fil en aiguille* (meaning roughly 'bit by bit', 'gradually'), he translates literally "from thread to needle". The state of the text he was working on can be gauged by two details: what he makes of the name of a Russian princess *au nom en of* ("a golden name"), either having misread *of* as *or* or because the text was misprinted; and the definite misprint in *portrait de la famille Collard*, a clear reference to Dr Cottard and his wife, which he fails to notice. Admittedly, at times he uses an old-fashioned word or two, "verily" or "matutinal". However, such a tone is so close to that of Scott Moncrieff's own prose that few readers would notice a difference between the bulk of his *Remembrance of Things Past*, liberally sprinkled as it was with archaisms ("I fain would", "the ague", "lo and behold", "purpureate", "bedizened", "twain", "'twas"), and this spoof, supposedly in a very different voice. This Hudson version of the Goncourt pastiche must have bamboozled readers of Proust over the forty years between its appearance and the newer version by Mayor. The perplexity of the translator became that of the readers. That they were reading a text *au second degré* must have been unapparent to them, as the translator floundered among obscurities which prevented both him and them from seeing what Proust was jocularly implying about the Goncourt manner. So he tried to transmit to his reader the basic sense of the words, in itself something of an achievement, though this he did almost without heeding the convolutions of syntax and the affectations of style which are the sole point of the words. There is no comic effect, no satire, none of the hilarious send-up of the original. The whole effect is close to unintelligibility.

As for Blossom, he managed to produce a clearer, more intelligible text than Hudson, though he makes some of the same mistakes. He does this by simplifying the complicated syntax of the pseudo-Goncourt and writing more fluent English. However, it is difficult to detect much difference between the prose of the pastiche and the prose of Proust's narrator amid which it is set. This homogeneity of the two styles, Proust's own and the one he gives to the Goncourt *Journal*, robs the pastiche of its key ingredient, hilarity. For one can say of a pastiche what has been said of a work by Stravinsky: "its style is its subject" (Thomson 107). Without that consubstantiation, a pastiche without a style is a pastiche without a subject; and a pastiche without that subject is a pastiche without a point.

In 1970, Andreas Mayor could benefit from much that was unavailable to his two predecessors, especially the three-volume Clarac-Ferré edition of the *Recherche* (1954), and solid scholarship on Proust which had shed light on many obscurities. Also, knowing something of his predecessors' difficulties, he was able to avoid them. In general, at the

semantic level, his is an excellent translation; and in detail, too, he occasionally manages to pull off a small success with single words which match words of the pseudo-Goncourt: "the *prettinesses*" (728) < "les *joliesses*" (IV 287) or the verb "to *re-love*" (729) < *raimer* (IV, 288). That said, Mayor's version of this pastiche, like those of his two predecessors though in a different degree, lacks one of the features which most strike the reader of the original, the virtuosity in ventriloquism that is the mark of the gifted parodist. So we have once again a pseudo-Goncourt almost without personality that is without particular characteristics, without mannerisms or bizarreries of style, without the qualities stressed among others by Deffoux, *ironie* and *enjouement*, in a word a Goncourt who is rather colourless, close to insipid. In a text which is by definition ironic, what one most senses the absence of is irony.

In Ian Patterson's version of the pseudo-Goncourt, one can see, as in Mayor's, occasional direct reflections of the French text, such as the verb "to *re-love*" < *raimer*; individual words that are rare or recherchés, "matutinal", "laciniation", "verticillated", "porcelained", "effulgence"; a vulgarism, "nosh", consistent with one of the mannerisms of the Goncourts; and other small features of English usage of the time, "By Jove", "dashed if it had ever occurred to me". All of which gives evidence of a serious effort to transmit to an Anglophone readership something of an echo, albeit a weak one, of the tone of the original. But at the same time, one encounters many more passages where the Goncourt style becomes by comparison a rather colourless English, for example "arousing in me an irascible despondency" < *et c'est en moi un découragement colère*, "sadly" < *mélancolieusement*, "trinkets" < *jolités*, and many others. With all four of these versions, one can have the impression that their authors have translated the pseudo-Goncourt in two stages: first, by mentally transposing the French text into a more standard French, and then by translating that version. Obviously, just as with the idiosyncrasies of the speech of this or that character, such as Françoise or Bloch, which are impossible to reproduce word for word in the immediate context where Proust has placed them, the stylistic characteristics with which he lampoons the Goncourt manner have no direct equivalent in English. The analogy with the speech of these characters is striking. One might also object that what is of greatest importance in this passage of parody is the thematic role of the narrator's reading of the extract from the Goncourt *Journal*, namely that, by its idiosyncratic description of the very characters among whom he has spent much of his social life, showing him aspects of their personalities that he has never seen, it confirms him in his notion that, by not being a gifted observer, he can never become a writer, and that this lesson is what is of greatest importance in the scene, not the manner in which he learns it. As has been pointed out:

> Proust could have had Marcel tell us what the diary entry says without actually giving us the passage itself [. . .]. The point could have been made by referring to the Goncourts, without recourse to pastiche.
>
> (Dyer 60)

No doubt. But that is not what Proust does. So we must suppose that it was not just the thematic function that mattered, but the way in which the narrator comes to learn his dispiriting lesson. And that way and that lesson are inseparable from the Goncourt style. And if the Goncourt style, parodied, is full of fun, full of literary delights for fanciers both of the writer parodied and of pastiches, to accept that the ventriloquist must forgo making his doll speak is to deprive the text of too much, to amputate the parodist of one of his richest comic resources.

But is the comedy of the impersonation untranslatable? I decline to accept that. After all, pastiche is a word game. Defined as such, it differs only in degree from other word games (punning, malapropisms, spoonerisms, lipograms, general drollery, wit, etc.); and with such word play, there are often resources of inventiveness that a translator can draw upon. On the translating of word play, Bellos says this:

> Humorous remarks, shaggy-dog tales, witty anecdotes and silly jokes are only untranslatable if you insist on understanding 'translation' as a low-level matching of the signifiers themselves.
>
> (Bellos 290)

To Bellos's list, I suggest we add pastiche. Any literary translator may have to be at any moment, if not a genius, at least ingenious, no great imposition for a translator worth his or her salt. In such cases, one does what one can to exploit the inventive resources inherent in one's own language, resources which are as like as not unrelated to those of the other language. One of these resources available to the pasticheur, is, I maintain, a mode, perhaps an extreme one, of compensation. After all, another extreme mode of it can be seen in the various translations of Perec's lipogram, *La disparition*, the Spanish one, for instance, in which, instead of the vowel *e* being omitted as in the French original, it is *a*, or the Japanese one, which omits the vowel *i*.

I hold to my idea that the translator's task is first and foremost to convey to the reader, in active mode, a lesson in style. If the style of the French passage is such that this lesson cannot be conveyed through conventional translation, if conventional translation results in a pastiche which is a non-pastiche, then it follows that something less conventional must be attempted. Hence the value of compensation, the basic purpose of which is to enable the translator to place dynamic equivalences not in those parts of the text where there is no immediate possibility of using them, but in other parts which are not those of the original. If, as Proust says, "Le devoir et la tâche d'un écrivain sont ceux d'un traducteur" (IV 469, "The duty and the job of a writer are to be a translator"), I take the view that the duty, the job of the translator of a pasticheur is to be a pasticheur. But a pasticheur not of a French style, an exercise barren in amusement, but of an English style.

That being so, I wonder whether a future writer of a pseudo-Goncourt in English might not find a fruitful source of comedic wordage in a curious style which, in the later years of the nineteenth century, roughly contemporary with the Goncourts in French, was much practised by many an author, mostly minor and nowadays unread, such as the two I mentioned above, Marmaduke Pickthall and Rosa Nouchette Carey. Aspects of this style, often derided by Oscar Wilde, can be detected even in writers as major as Walter Pater, Carlyle, Ruskin, Matthew Arnold, Robert Louis Stevenson and George Meredith. But it was used by authors who, in their day, were more widely read than these major authors, on both sides of the Atlantic, though more in Britain than in America. I name but a few of them: Rhoda Broughton, Marie Corelli, John Strange Winter, Mrs Humphry Ward, Mrs Henry Wood, Henry Seton Merriman, Edgar Evertson Saltus, Thymol Monk, Fortuné Du Boisgobey, E. Phillips Oppenheim, Charlotte M. Yonge, George Augustus Sala, S. Squire Sprigge, Tinsley Pratt, James Runciman and many more. Among these authors, there was a tendency to write not novels, but 'romances'. It was with such authors in mind that Wilde ridiculed "poetical prose", saying: "the lack of good prose is one of the chief blots on our culture" (*Queen* 8.12.1888); for they "crowd their page with gorgeous epithets and resplendent phrase, [. . .] pile Pelions of adjectives upon Ossas of description [. . .] abandon themselves to highly coloured diction and rich luxuriance of imagery" (*Pall Mall Gazette* 11.12.1888); "in these latter days [. . .] violent rhetoric does

duty for eloquence and vulgarity usurps the name of nature" (*Pall Mall Gazette* 11.6.1887); in such writers he dislikes "unnecessary archaism" (*Pall Mall Gazette* 15.1.1886), "ostentatious ornament [. . .] ineffective surplusage" (*Speaker* 22.3.1890).[2] It is a style which derives in part from Meredith who, rather than say in three monosyllabes "He kissed her", prefers "The rosy gate from which the word had issued was closed with a seal", and who, instead of "he hung his head" speaks of "arresting his head in a melancholy pendulosity" (Meredith 265, 354).Wilde may never have used the word I quoted before, "tushery", invented in 1883 by Stevenson and defined as follows by the *OED*:

> a conventional style of romance characterized by excessive use of affected archaisms such as 'tush!'; *gen.*, sentimental or romanticizing writing.

It is a style which, with some care and much creativity, could be adapted to the so-called *style artiste* of the Goncourt brothers. Not that it is, in all things, the same style. There is no same style, which is the nub of the problem. But to give a reader an analogous impression, to provoke if not laughter at least a smile, to lard the text with *joliesses*, nay, with *jolités*, there is, in my view, only one solution to that problem: to pastiche through abundant compensation. And the style to be pastiched must be a French style, not an English one, a style of which Hazlitt could have said that it was "fustian in expression and bathos in sentiment" (Hazlitt 336). The ideal English pastiche of the pseudo-Goncourt, still virtual and imaginary, could be put together by using the finicky mannerisms of late-Victorianism tushery, the pseudo-poetic, the over-ornate, the overblown, the over-rich, the magniloquent, the archaic, the precious, in such a way as to bring out its inherent ridiculousness.

I offer the following as a small tongue-in-cheek illustration of how such a pastiche might be achieved. It is, indeed, a pastiche, most of it cobbled together from sentences or bits of sentences taken from some of the forgotten authors named above; and every sentence, whether borrowed or imitated, contains at least one feature indicative of their outdated manner, some less evident than others, but, I trust, perceptible to the aware literary eye. These features do not correspond to those of the Goncourt style; they compensate for the absence of these in English. Whether it amuses is for its reader to say. Its subject matter is not that of the pseudo-Goncourt; but perhaps a better pasticheur than I am may be able to adapt its manner to that matter.

> O fatal obscurity of the deepening twilight! O proximity of the imperfumed shade of the conservatory! Is there not a something in the very name of a conservatory that suggests flirtation? Save in a yellow-back of De Mâleplaisant, in every novel that Miss Humphry had ever read, it was at this hour, in this place, that heroes were accustomed to kiss heroines, specially those of the former who had just become affianced to the latter. She, who had been once kissed by her mother, often by her father, and ever and again by nurses and aunts, wondered in which particular the kiss of a hero might be deemed to differ from those of these others, of which none would have seemed worthy, had she been the writer describing them, of the metaphors whereby fictional young ladies were endowed, as other lips pressed theirs, with revelations of queenship, with precocious admittance to paradise, with

[2] Wilde, 63, 174, 142, 179, 146.

> metamorphosis, from the drab stasis that is the caterpillardom of the unkissed, into that glorious soaring figment of polychromous filaments, fluttering free amid perfumes and envies. She, breathless she, and Dr Wilkes, the Master of Lazarus, the best-dressed philosopher in the history of thought, had now reached the tennis-lawn. She, ever more breathless she, counted the seconds and paces that yet separated her and that gentleman from the conservatory, and from the corresponding likelihoods of today's being the twilight which should transform the tepid, torpid quotidian of her existence into the ineffable frenzy, the transfiguring furor of the kissed.

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Note: James Grieve's translation of *Du côté de chez Swann* (*Swann's Way*, Canberra, 1982), long out of print, can now be read, with Afterthoughts, at http://hdl.handle.net/1885/143006.

American Parmigiano and the Translator's Visibility

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Abstract
In this paper I compare two English translations of Wu Ming's Italian short story *American Parmigiano* (2008). I seek to demonstrate that the translators can be made visible in their work. My premise is: while a careful analysis of any translation can render the translator visible, a comparison of two translators' work is able to provide a particular insight into an individual translator's style. N.S. Thompson's translation, *American Parmesan* (2013) and my own translation, *American Parmigiano* (2016) are discussed through a lens of the translation strategies foreignization, domestication and explicitation. They are then further explored via a detailed analysis of some components of style – the translator's style, not the style of the original author. In this case the components examined are swear words, contrasting word choices and degree of formality. I argue that the translators are visible because of their translation choices and this comparison has made that identification possible.

Introduction

In *The Translator's Invisibility* (1995/2008), Lawrence Venuti contested the then prevailing view that an 'acceptable' translation must read fluently, appearing as if it is not a translation but an original, with the translator rendered "invisible" (1). While his discussion focused on the so-called "fluency ideal" and he argues that translators should resist this temptation (Wagner and Chesterman, 33) my interest is the question of visibility. However fluent a translation, is the translator ever really invisible? If, as Rita Wilson suggests, all translations are the product of the translator's "interpretative perspective", then "the translator as interpreter **should** become visible in the translation" (emphasis is mine, 121). While a careful analysis of *any* translation can render the translator visible, a comparison is able to provide a particular insight into an individual translator's style.

American Parmigiano is a short story of approximately 12,350 words by the Italian collective Wu Ming. Wu Ming was born out of an anonymous collective called the Luther Blisset Project, which was retired in 1999. Founded in Bologna in 2000 as a group of five, they are a writing collective of Italian artists. In 2015, they became a group of three. They prefer to remain somewhat anonymous, and while their individual names are known, they choose not to be photographed or filmed by the media as they object to the "celebrity-making, glamorizing machine that turns authors into stars" (Baird 250; Thoburn 124). The group is interesting because they write as a collective and after a period of marketing, they make their work publicly available online, using a Creative Commons License. They appear to have consistent and recurring themes to their stories and, as Baird observed, they use the "spaces left empty" in history to create their imaginative fiction (255).

American Parmigiano was first published in 2008 as a supplement in the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera*. The story revolves around an Italian researcher, who is asked to investigate claims that Benjamin Franklin had successfully imported into America, not only a recipe, but the raw materials and the know-how for making parmesan cheese. What is at stake is the right to use the Italian name *Parmigiano Reggiano*, which a large American dairy

company is attempting to appropriate. The name not only encapsulates the place of origin (the province of Reggio Emilia), but in Europe is controlled under the European Union's Protected Designation of Origin scheme (DOC). The story incorporates real historic events and people, and through the eyes of the narrator and central character (Carlo Bonvicini) explores themes of national pride, the protection of brands, the phenomenon of the brain drain, heroism and a comparison of two cultures, hence the bi-lingual title *American Parmigiano*.

The story was first translated from Italian into English by N.S. Thompson in 2013 and published in the book, *Outsiders: Six Italian stories* (Saviano et al.). There is very little information available on N.S. Thompson, although I discovered that he is an experienced English translator, poet and writer. Smokestack Books, the publisher of his book, *Letter to Auden*, has the following information on its website:

> N. S. Thompson was born in Manchester in 1950. He worked in Italy for several years as the curator of Casa Guidi, the Florence home of Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. His publications include *Chaucer, Boccaccio and the Debate of Love*, several chapbooks of poetry and a full-length collection, *The Home Front.*
>
> (Smokestack Books, 2014)

Thompson is also a regular contributor to *Able Muse*, an American literary journal and its website provides the following:

> N.S. Thompson lives outside Oxford, UK. He has contributed essays and poetry to *Able Muse* and many other publications in the UK and USA, including *Agenda, Ambit, Modern Poetry in Translation, New Walk, Stand,* and *The American Scholar.* His books include the verse epistle in rime royal *Letter to Auden* (Smokestack, 2010) and he has coedited a collection of fifteen cantos in ottava rima chronicling the lively adventures of a twenty-first century version of Byron's hero: *A Modern Don Juan: Cantos for these Times by Divers Hands*
>
> (Five Leaves, September 2014).

My interest was piqued when I saw that the title had been translated as *American Parmesan*. At the time, I did not have access to Thompson's translation, only the title (available on the publisher's website). Given the source text (ST) title has one word in English and one word in Italian, I questioned Thompson's choice of target text title (TT). In my view, the ST title in two languages captured perfectly the essence of a story that bridges two cultures and comments on the differences. It led me to ponder Thompson's other translation choices. Leading me to consider translating the story myself, choosing to maintain the original title.

My approach (or 'skopos', as discussed below) was to render a version that was as close as possible to the original story as I had interpreted it. In the back of my mind was Andrew Chesterman's hypothesis that translators "tend to start from a literal version of the target text and then work towards a freer version" (23). My intention was to try to refrain from being 'too free'. As Umberto Eco states, "there is an implicit law, that is, the ethical obligation to respect what the author has written" (3). My process involved multiple drafts incorporating feedback from various readers. These were colleagues and friends, some only read my English version while others also read the original text. At the same time, I kept a journal of the difficulties encountered and the internal debates and negotiations involved in the problem solving that the translation required. While the challenges encountered would provide considerable material for discussion, it was the comparison to N. S. Thompson's version, which I first read after I had completed mine, that I found far more revealing – and will be the focus of this paper. Through a lens of translation strategies such as foreignization and domestication ("The Translator's Invisibility", 15) and explicitation (in Baker and Saldanha 104), and an examination of the swear words, contrasting word choices and degree of formality, I will

highlight some of the differences between the two translations which, in my view, make the translators visible.

However, prior to making any comparison there are two overarching considerations. Firstly, I am a second generation Australian. As such, I consider my translation to be an Australian English version and from what I know of Thompson, I have assumed his translation is into British English. We both bring our own "cultural capital" to bear – a term borrowed from Pierre Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus', "which is the broad social, identitary and cognitive make-up or disposition of the individual" (Munday 237). In other words, culture, upbringing, education, financial status and environment are among the things that have a bearing on a translator's work. Hence, my translation will inadvertently reflect the fact that I grew up in Australia and Thompson's, in turn, would reflect his English upbringing, in other words our backgrounds influence and are apparent in our work (this will be discussed further under 'Style'). Although, with the little information I have on Thompson, I must refrain from commenting further on his background. Secondly, Thompson's translation was destined for publication whereas mine was an academic exercise. Therefore, our skopoi, from the Greek meaning 'purpose', also has a bearing on our work. Skopos theory was first adopted by Hans Vermeer, in 1978, to reflect the shift away from linguistic approaches to translation, to a more functional approach, taking into consideration the audience of a translated text and the agent who commissions it (in Baker 235). As already mentioned, the purpose of my translation was a purely academic pursuit. It was only after the fact that Wu Ming published it, unchanged, on their website. The reason for including an English version on their site, along with translations into other languages, follows their ethos of making their work freely available after a period of time. One could argue mine was a general Anglophone approach, as I was not bound by publishing or editorial guidelines and my hope, once it was published, was that it could be read by any English language reader. On the other hand, I can surmise that Thompson's skopos was determined by his publisher, that his audience would, at least initially, have been a British one (given his publisher is London based, MacLehose Press). While changes requested by the publishing house and/or editor may have had a bearing on the TT, in an email correspondence Thompson confirmed that "there was minimal editorial change … perhaps the odd word here and there, nothing more". Hence, one could argue that our differing purposes had some influence on our work.

Translation strategy

Venuti gave us the terms "foreignization" and "domestication" ("The Translator's Invisibility" 15), which he developed from Friedrich Schleiermacher's dichotomy; that "[…] either the translator leaves the author alone as much as possible and moves the reader towards the writer, or he leaves the reader alone as much as possible and moves the writer towards the reader" ([1813], 49). A strategy of domestication means that the translator endeavours to produce a text that is fluent in the target language without any trace of what might indicate that it is a translated work and not itself an original. A domesticated translation is more adapted to the target culture, with traces of what is foreign minimized so that the reader can more easily relate to the text. On the other hand, foreignization means that the translator has chosen to retain elements which clearly identify the fact that the work is a translation and not an original text. The reader is more exposed to the foreign culture including elements they may not understand (Venuti, "The Translator's Invisibility" 15-16; Yang 77). While not wanting to reduce the careful negotiations made in rendering our different versions to a dichotomy of foreignization and domestication, they are opposite ends of a continuum and were useful in demonstrating mine and Thompson's differing strategies (Baker, "Reframing Conflict" 152). These can, for example, be evident through my examination of our treatment of honorific titles as seen in the examples provided in Table 1 below. The following examples are taken from the beginning of

the story, when Carlo Bonvicini (the narrator and protagonist) is escorted to a meeting by the receptionist.

Table 1: Comparison of honorific titles

Source Text (ST)	**Target Text 1 (TT1) Thompson**	**Target Text 2 (TT2) Maniacco**
- Venga, dottor Bonvicini, … (2)	"This way, Dottor Bonvicini, … " (152)	"Come through, Dr Bonvicini, … " (3)
- L'avvocato ci stava dicendo proprio adesso che il professor Lolli gli ha parlato molto bene di lei, dottor Bonvicini. (2)	"Avvocato Melchiorri was just telling us that Professore Lolli speaks very highly of you, Dottor Bonvicini." (153)	"Our lawyer was just telling us that Professor Lolli has spoken very highly of you, Dr Bonvicini." (3)
Lancio un'occhiata all'avvocato Melchiorri, piuttosto incartapecorito, … (3)	I shoot a glance at Avvocato Melchiorri's rather wizened features, … (154)	I throw a glance at Melchiorri, he's rather shrivelled, … (4)
- Prego, avvocato. (3)	"Please, avvocato, go ahead." (155)	"Please, Mr Melchiorri. (5)"

In Italy, the use of honorific titles is commonplace and professionals are often addressed with, and referred to by, a combination of their professional title and their surname, or just the title. For example, the professional titles *avvocato* (lawyer), *ingegner* (engineer), *architetto* (architect) and *ragionier* (accountant) often precede a person's surname, if that person is so qualified, and *dottor* is used for anyone who has a degree. The use of honorific titles in Italy is to "convey respect, demonstrate recognition of hierarchies and social positions (inferior, equal, superior), and express an attitude towards power" (Caniato et al. 182-184). Thompson has chosen to carry across the Italian honorific titles *Dottor*, *Avvocato*, *Professore*, as they appear in the original text, treating them as if part of the addressee's name. He has even included the final letter 'e' in *Professore* which would normally be dropped in front of a name in Italian, as it is in Wu Ming's text. I assume this is to ensure that his readership does not mistake this Italian *Professore* for an English Professor. Given their surnames, and the context, there can be no doubt the characters Thompson is portraying are Italian. Therefore, it is clear that his use of the Italian honorific titles reflects a foreignization strategy.

The form of address where a person's profession is evidenced by their title does not exist to the same extent in most English speaking countries. Medical practitioners and those who have completed a university doctorate can use the title 'Dr' and university professors can use the title 'Professor' (Peters, "The Cambridge Australian English" 291-293; Peters, "The Cambridge Guide to English" 216). Certainly, the use of a title such as lawyer does not exist in Australia. As can be seen in Table 1, my strategy was one of domestication. *Dottor* becomes Dr and *Professore* becomes Professor, while *Avvocato* required particular attention. In some of the dialogue, I have used the words our lawyer, or Mr Melchiorri, to render the formality of the interaction. However, when the honorific is part of the general narration, I have dropped the title altogether in keeping with the way they are not used in English speaking countries. Further evidence of Thompson's foreignization and my domestication is in the use of place and product names. Other than *Parmigiano Reggiano*, *panettone* and *Asti Cinzano*, I only use an Italian word once in my TT. This is the word *via*, Italian for 'street', which appears at the beginning of the story and I retain because the setting at this point is in

Italy and *via* is part of the street name, hence a proper noun. On the other hand, as well as the use of Italian honorific titles and the same place and product names, Thompson includes several other Italian words; for example, *via* (151), *spumante* (153), *ciao*, which appears three times (190; 194) and *Archivio di Stato* (State Archive], which appears twice on the same page (193). The abundance of Italian names, titles and words scattered throughout Thompson's translation supports my suggestion that he has adopted a foreignization strategy. Venuti presents the difference between foreignization and domestication as a dichotomy and the discussion above puts Thompson in the foreignization camp ("The Translator's Invisibility" 15). However, his use of explicitation in other instances demonstrates the weakness of the dichotomy, as explicitation can be viewed as a domesticating strategy (Schmidt 541).

The strategy of explicitation is often used in order to provide extra information to borrowed words or terms in translations that have adopted a foreignized approach. Vinay and Darbelnet first introduced the term explicitation in 1958, defining it as "a stylistic translation technique which consists of making explicit in the target language what remains implicit in the source language because it is apparent from either the context or the situation" (qtd. in Baker and Saldanha 104). Explicitation is a strategy used when the translator feels that the readers belonging to the target culture might not have certain knowledge inherent in the source culture and makes additions for clarification purposes. Thompson used explicitation frequently where I did not, as can be seen by the examples in Table 2.

Table 1: Comparison of explicitation

ST	**TT1 Thompson**	**TT2 Maniacco**
più il titolo di dottore si svaluta … (2)	the more a Ph.D. degree loses its value … (153)	the more a degree is devalued … (3)
A dispetto di Trenitalia, … (4)	In spite of the Trenitalia railway network, … (158)	Despite Trenitalia, … (7)
- Il Panettone? (6)	"Panettone, our seasonal Christmas cake?" (163)	"Panettone?" (11)
Si presenta come l'avvocato Eileen Stone, ma ci tiene che la chiamiamo Eileen. (8)	She introduces herself as Eileen Stone, but insists we call her Eileen, without any formal title. (167)	She introduces herself as Ms Eileen Stone, but prefers that we call her Eileen. (13)
In quattro anni di vita coniugale … (10)	After four years of living together with a partner … (172)	In four years of living together … (18)

The first example in Table 2 is from narration by the protagonist Carlo Bonvicini. One can glean from the context of the story that Carlo Bonvicini has a doctorate and therefore the use of the title *dottore* has the same meaning as *Dr* in both the Australian and English contexts, but the term *dottore* can cause confusion because, in Italy, the title *dottore* can be used by anyone with an undergraduate degree (Caniato et al. 185; Kouwenaar and Dalichow 33). Given the original text uses *dottore*, the reference could be to an undergraduate, a Masters or a PhD degree.

I can only hypothesise as to why Thompson explicated. It may have been an assumption that his target readers would not have been able to decipher the meanings for themselves (Saldanha 32). Or, his decision could have been a risk-management strategy. Pym argues that the process of solving translation problems can be seen as the generation of possible options and then the choosing of a solution that presents the least risk of misunderstanding (7). By choosing to explicate, the translator can "minimize the risk of an undesired interpretation"

(Pym 7). In my early drafts, I had also been more explicit and in the case of 'panettone' and 'Trenitalia', I had added words in a similar vein to those of Thompson, whereas in later revisions I removed them so that the result was less explicit and closer to the ST. I did this because I felt that my readers would be able to discern the meanings from the context. When Carlo mentions *panettone*, he is describing the process of making the Italian cake at home, and when he speaks about *Trenitalia*, he is sitting on a train that is stopped just before it reaches the station at Bologna. In Thompson's case, it is possible that he chose to balance his foreignization strategy with explicitation in order to show his readers that, while his story is clearly a translation, he wants to help them understand words that may be too foreign. Again, our differing strategies are features that make us visible in our translations.

Style

One may question how much of a translator's own writing style can be reflected in their translations. Mona Baker (2001) explains that "there has been little or no interest in studying the style of a translator" (244). She does not intend to address the style of the author of the ST and to what degree the translator has been able to capture that style in their translation, she is speaking of whether the style of the translator can be evidenced in their work and tries to develop a methodology which entails reviewing multiple translations produced by the same translator ("Towards a Methodology" 241). I did not have a corpus of Thompson's translations to analyse, nor a corpus of my own, so my analysis is very limited, but on first reading Thompson's translation there was something not immediately obvious about his style that piqued my interest. A more detailed analysis revealed a particular approach to elements of his translation that I consider had more of an affinity to style. There are many elements that could be examined when considering style, but for the purposes of this paper, style is explored via: the choice of swear words, the level of formality, and some very culture specific word choices. As Baker states, "identifying linguistic habits and stylistic patterns … is only worthwhile if it tells us something about the cultural and ideological positioning of the translator" ("Towards a Methodology" 258). This indeed ties back to Bourdieu's concept of habitus and the "cultural capital" mentioned earlier (Munday 237). The elements of style identified and discussed below not only make our presence more apparent, they demonstrate some of the cultural elements we bring to our work.

Swear words

Swear words are renowned for being difficult to translate (Maher, "Taboo or Not Taboo" 367). In representations of contemporary characters, writers need and want to include the swear words that form part of everyday dialogue (Fernández-Dobao 222-223; Pinker 370). There are several instances of swearing in the dialogue of *American Parmigiano*. Dr Carlo Bonvicini, the story's narrator, is an academic and bookworm. Swearing is not part of his normal speech and he only swears once in the story. Max Ardito, on the other hand, is a well-dressed, witty and rather suave lawyer who uses swear words, not for their shock value but as part of his everyday language. While the two characters are of similar age (early thirties) and both university educated, in terms of personality they are quite different.

Brigid Maher explains that "translators are often advised to seek target language swearing of similar strength to that of the source text" ("Taboo or Not Taboo" 369). The word 'strength' may be subjective, yet Table 3 highlights some considerable differences.

Table 2: Comparison of renditions of swear words

	ST	TT1 Thompson	TT2 Maniacco
Max	Invece è roba nostra, l'abbiamo inventato noi, cazzo. (6)	But it's Italian, it's ours, we bloody invented it. (163)	But, this is our stuff, we invented it, for fuck's sake. (11)
Max	Questa gita ha mandato tutto a puttane. (11)	This trip's made the whole thing go tits up. (175)	This trip has fucked everything up. (19)
Carlo	Senti Max, vaffanculo. (16)	Listen, Max, fuck off, will you? (188)	Listen Max, fuck off! (30)
Max	Li ho mandati a fare delle pugnette. (19)	I told them politely to go and play with themselves. (195)	I told them to go fuck themselves. (36)

Thompson's choices in rendering the swear words show a frequent reduction in terms of 'strength' when compared with mine. I suggest there may be three possible explanations for this. The first is that Thompson's editor or publishing house may have requested modifications prior to publication and this relates to Thompson's skopos (the purpose of his work). The publishing house who assumedly commissioned the work had a British target readership in mind. However, when I contacted Thompson via email, to ask whether he had been directed by his editor to tone down the swear words, he clarified that "there was never a problem with my choice" and that he had an excellent editor who knew Italian and they had worked closely together.

The second possibility is that Thompson may have censored himself, either consciously or sub-consciously. José Santaemilia explains that "self-censorship may include all the imaginable forms of elimination, distortion, downgrading, misadjustment, infidelity, and so on" (224). If Thompson did self-censor in relation to swearing, I would argue that the effect is a markedly softer tone and this has an impact on the characterization of Max. Several case studies analyse the effect of toning down the swear words in translation. In separate works, Maher and Ilaria Parini studied Jonathan Hunt's English translation of Niccolò Ammaniti's *Ti prendo e ti porto via* (2004/1999). Maher focused on how the reduction of swearing affected the voices of the characters, resulting in a change in their personalities ("Taboo or Not Taboo" 371-374). In much the same way, by choosing to tone down Max's swearing, Thompson has rendered him a more measured and 'proper' young lawyer, not the forthright and passionate character I perceived. Parini focused on the foreignization and domestication strategies in Hunt's translation yet identified the toned down language as well (154). She states that it would have been "interesting to investigate the reasons underlying the choices made by the translator, to see … whether they [were] the result of reasoning based on solid theoretical grounds, or rather of his **personal style** and intuition" (emphasis is mine, Parini 154).

A third possibility is that the swear words chosen reflect their relative potency within our respective cultures. Thompson clearly has no problem using the word *fuck*, as he has rendered *vaffunculo* as *fuck off*. This is Carlo's only instance of swearing and a strong rendition in translation was required. In all other cases Thompson's choices have been milder. Thompson chose the word *bloody* for a situation where Max is stressing a point and at the same time venting frustration. In Australia the word *bloody* is hardly considered a swear word. Yet in Britain, the 2006 Tourism Australia commercial *So where the bloody hell are you?* was banned as a result of the inappropriate use of the adjective 'bloody'. While this is contrary to research which shows that only a small percentage of Britons find the word offensive (Allan and Burridge, "Swearing" 375), it may be that Thompson considered *bloody* more offensive

than I do, as an Australian. This makes me reflect on our backgrounds and how our individual formations have an impact on our work. For him the Italian word *cazzo* is apparently similar in strength to the English word *bloody*. I consider that the word *fuck* has more affinity to the word *cazzo,* as it captures the "emotional force" that I attribute to Max's character (Pinker 352). This is supported by Lorenzo Vannucci's (2014) analysis of the translation challenges presented by the novel *Trainspotting* where *fuck* is often rendered as *cazzo* (LXI-LXVII). Ana Fernández-Dobao (2006) provides a succinct explanation of the versatility of *fuck* and related words, describing the use as:

> […] a noun, fuck or fucker, a verb, to fuck as well as to fuck up, to fuck about or to fuck off, an adjective, fucking, fucked or fucked up, an adverb, fucking, and … a compound, motherfucker and motherfucking (225).

Given this versatility, it is no surprise that *fuck* is a preference of mine. It may also be a reflection of the fact that in Australia swear words of the sexual variety have lost their potency and not everyone regards them as vulgar now (Allan and Burridge, "Swearing" 380; Allan and Burridge, "Forbidden Words" 35; Maher, "Taboo or Not Taboo" 370). It could be that the degree of use and acceptance of swearing in Australia is similar to that in Italy. This would enable me as an Australian translator to capture the strength of the swearing more readily than Thompson. This in turn has a bearing on my characterization of Max.

In the case of the idiomatic expression *ha mandato tutto a puttane* [literally, 'it has sent everything to the whorehouse'], Thompson chose to use the English idiomatic expression *go tits up.* While it has a similar meaning, in my opinion it does not carry the same level of vulgarity. I had considered *it's all gone to the dogs* or *gone to pot*, although the Italian expression is more vulgar, given the use of the word *puttane* [whores]. Hence, neither of those expressions would have rendered the vulgarity of the original. In my opinion, *this trip has fucked everything up* seemed to capture the strength and conviction of Max's words. The expression *fare delle pugnette* [make little fists], provides a clear image of the action intended, an up and down fist pumping action. In my opinion, Thompson's choice of *play with themselves* does not quite capture the coarseness I have perceived or the graphic quality of the action involved. While his use of the word *politely* may have been to convey sarcasm, in my mind, Thompson's words do not marry with my image of Max. *Fare delle pugnette* is synonymous with telling someone to *go wank themselves*, and in Australia this is simply *go fuck yourself*. There are many possible reasons for Thompson's toning down of the swear words, he could argue that they are not toned down at all, but his choices make his presence noticeable, and may be representative of his personal style.

Formal vs informal language

Given that Australians are characterized by their use of informal language, I explored whether this could be evidenced in my translated text (Butler 160; Peters, "Corpus Evidence" 176). Susan Butler states that "Australians pitch the border between formal and informal language at a point that seems relaxed and colloquial to the rest of the world" (160). Similarly, Pam Peters argues that Australians distance themselves from "behaviour which seems unnecessarily formal or stuffy" and that this is reflected in their writing ("Corpus Evidence" 176). I believe that my informality is noticeable when read alongside Thompson's more formal style, and that it is most apparent in the minutiae of the dialogue. There is a consistent addition of words in Thompson's version and the choice of those words has the effect of making the characters appear more formal. Consider the following example of Max's speech:

Thompson: "What world are you living in, cloud cuckoo land? The free market doesn't exist. It's a utopian concept, like communism. It's not the quality of a thing that sells it, but the marketing. And the Americans have marketing down to a fine art, investing sums in it with so many noughts you'd go grey counting them all. It's already pretty damaging to us that they can call their shitty cheese 'Parmesan'. If they could sell it as 'Parmigiano' you'd even be able to find it in the South Pole. But it's Italian, it's ours, we bloody invented it. Let them stick to Coca-Cola and hot dogs." (163)

Maniacco: "Where do you live, in Wonderland? The free market does not exist. It's a utopia, like communism. It's not quality that sells, it's marketing. And the Americans know how to market, they invest numbers with so many zeros that you get old counting them. For us, it's damaging enough that they can call their shit cheese *parmesan*. If they could sell it as 'Parmigiano', you'd even find it at the South Pole. But this is our stuff, we invented it, for fuck's sake. They can keep their Coca Cola and hot dogs." (11)

My version is noticeably shorter (92 words to Thompson's 106) and, I think, sharper and more colloquial, which makes Max seem terser and more confident. In my opinion, this reflects Max's personality more accurately and is consistent with his behaviour in the story. He is a smart, savvy, no-nonsense man, who speaks his mind, especially to Carlo who he considers an equal. This short passage exemplifies the consistent difference in levels of formality between the two translations and, I contend, reflects my Australianness and Thompson's Britishness. Table 4 provides some additional examples of Thompson's language and mine, to illustrate this effect.

Table 4: Comparison of style reflecting formality

ST	**TT1 Thompson**	**TT2 Maniacco**
Fa le presentazioni troppo in fretta … (2)	He makes the introductions in so great a hurry … (153)	His introductions are way too fast … (3)
… che annuisce appena e prende la parola (3)	… who nods slightly and starts to hold forth. (155)	… who nods subtly and takes the floor. (5)
Non dovrebbero essere la domanda e l'offerta a regolare il mercato? (6)	"Shouldn't it be supply and demand that rules the market?" (163)	Shouldn't supply and demand regulate the market? (11)
Non ho detto una parola. (9)	I'd said not a word. (169)	I hadn't said a word. (15)
… ho troppa poca esperienza. (18)	"…I've too little experience" (195)	"…I don't have enough experience." (35)

While there is barely a difference in the length of the sentences in Table 4, one only needs to read the lines aloud for an Australian ear to hear the difference in formality. Thompson's choices seem more deliberate and refined. In contrast, mine are more prosaic and down to earth.

The choice between the words *perhaps* and *maybe* lends additional support to the case regarding formality. In Thompson's translation, the word *perhaps* appears sixteen times and the word *maybe* does not appear at all. In comparison I have used *perhaps* once and *maybe* thirteen times, mostly where Thompson has used *perhaps*. *Maybe* is considered informal in both British English and Australian English possibly because of its "frequent occurrences in conversation" (Peters, "The Cambridge Guide to Australian" 499; Peters, "The Cambridge Guide to English" 341). The two words are synonymous, yet the *British National Corpus* (BNC) has *perhaps* appearing three times as frequently as *maybe* (Peters, "The Cambridge Guide to English" 341). While the *Australian Corpus of English* (ACE) has a similar ratio,

Peters argues that "the affinity between *maybe* and less formal writing may be seen in the fact that more than half the instances […] are found in the fiction samples which make up only a quarter of the corpus" ("The Cambridge Guide to Australian" 499). I attribute this distinct pattern in the use of *perhaps*, on Thompson's part, to his more formal style, and my use of *maybe* to my more informal style.

Word choices

A further distinction between the two translations is due to other word choices that reflect our varieties of English; that is, Thompson's use of British English and my use of Australian English. According to Peter Trudgill and Jean Hannah, it is "usually not possible to tell if a text has been written by an English or Australian writer – unless by the vocabulary" (18). In the case of Thompson's translation, several of his word choices made him visible to me, as they are words more commonly used in Britain than Australia. Here I will explore a small sample – *rush hour, lads, knackers* and *supper* – and offer my contrasting choice where appropriate (see Table 5). I have referred to the following resources in order to explore my claims and must acknowledge that, while both dictionaries are based on several large corpora, the two Australian-specific corpora are limited in size:

The *Oxford Dictionary of English* online (OED).
The Australian English *Macquarie Dictionary* online (MD).
The British National Corpus (BNC).
The Australian Corpus of English (ACE).
The International Corpus of English-Australian (ICE-Aus).
The corpus of Global Web-based English (GloWbE).

Table 5: Comparison of word choice

ST	**TT1 Thompson**	**TT2 Maniacco**
E' lunedì, è l'ora di punta, piove. (2)	It's Monday morning rush hour and raining. (151)	It's Monday, it's peak hour, it's raining. (2)
… è chiaro che nei supplementari i ragazzoni in maglia gialla … (7)	… if it goes to extra time the big lads in yellow jerseys … (164)	… it's clear that in extra time, the big blokes in the yellow jerseys … (11)
I miei maroni che girano. (12)	My knackers getting in a twist. (178)	My balls whizzing around. (22)
… e che torno a casa per cena. (19)	… and will be back home for supper. (196)	… and that I'll be home for dinner. (36)

Rush hour versus peak hour

The OED defines rush hour as "a time during each day when traffic is at its heaviest", but it has no entry for the term peak hour. In contrast, the MD provides a succinct definition of rush hour, simply peak hour. It would seem that rush hour is the more common term in Britain, whereas peak hour is more common in Australia. This is supported by data from the BNC, which reports rush hour with a raw frequency of 114 as compared to peak hour with a raw frequency of 10. GloWbE also supports this claim with rush hour appearing 1.9 times per million words in its British corpus versus 0.5 times per million words in its Australian corpus. On the other hand, peak hour appears 0.1 times per million words in its British corpus compared to 1.6 times per million words in its Australian corpus.

Lads

The OED and MD provide similar definitions of the word lad. Yet, for the plural lads, the OED includes the additional usage indicator of British. The various corpora are also revealing. The BNC indicates that lads is used 0.1483 times per 10,000 words while the ACE and ICE-Aus both show the frequency of 0.01 times per 10,000 words. The GloWbE corpus also reveals that lads is more common in Britain than Australia with a frequency per million words of 13.8 compared to 3.9. Therefore, I surmise that the word lads, as used by Thompson to describe a sporting team, is much more common in British English than Australian English.

Knackers

Again, while the OED and MD provide similar definitions of the word *knacker/s*, the OED includes the usage indicator of *British*. There are only twelve instances of *knackers* in the BNC, of which only two are referring to testicles (which is the way the word is used by Thompson). There are no instances of the word *knacker/s* in either ACE or ICE-Aus. GloWbE reports that *knackers* appears with a frequency of 0.2 times per million words in its British corpus, versus 0.1 in its Australian corpus. Of the instances in the raw frequency data that I was able to observe 28 of the 60 in the British corpus were clearly references to the use of knackers meaning testicles. Whereas, of the 14 instances in the Australian corpus only 1 was a reference to testicles. Hence, I conclude that the word knackers meaning testicles is much more common in Britain than Australia.

Supper versus dinner

The OED describes supper as an evening meal, while the MD describes it as a "very light meal", consisting of, for example, "a biscuit and cup of tea, taken at night". The second definition in the MD adds the usage indicator Chiefly British and US, and describes it as the "evening meal, the last major meal of the day", which is similar in meaning to the MD's definition of dinner. The names used for meals can be a source of confusion in English speaking countries, with the midday meal called lunch or dinner and the evening meal dinner, tea or supper (González 47). Australians tend to have their main meal of the day in the evening and it is called either dinner or tea while the term supper only ever refers to a snack taken late in the evening (Peters, "The Cambridge Guide to Australian" 218).

If, as Edith Grossman states, translators are the "speakers of a second text" then the words chosen for that second text must be the translator's own (10). The word choices described above are a small example of many that identify Thompson's linguistic repertoire and cultural background. In other words, his Britishness is reflected in his style, much as my Australianness is revealed in mine. Our word choices reflect our varieties of English and therefore they reveal our presence in the text.

Conclusion

The differences in mine and Thompson's translation made for a revealing analysis. Most notable were the different translation strategies chosen, in line with the varying skopoi. In handling honorific titles, Thompson favoured a strategy of foreignization while I chose to domesticate. In other instances, Thompson opted to explicate whereas I elected to refrain. We chose different strategies. Yet there was something more, and further scrutiny revealed a difference in styles. We were not merely reflecting the style of the original author – our translations reflected our own. Thompson's translation had a noticeably different flavour to mine and this was evidenced in a number of ways. There was a difference in the strength of the swear words and I argued that there were two possibilities for this. Thompson may have either consciously or sub-consciously self-censored, and/or swear words in British English carry a

different significance to those in Australian English. The toned-down swearing, combined with a more formal register in the dialogue, had the effect of rendering Thompson's characters more British, reflecting Thompson's own cultural background and variety of English, while my characters seemed more Australian and informal, a reflection of my world view. All reflections of our individual 'cultural capital'. Of course, some of our word choices consolidated the effect. All things combined to reveal us in our work: neither of us is invisible. Thompson has left his metaphoric fingerprints all over *American Parmesan*, much as I have left mine on my version of *American Parmigiano*. It is simply not possible to produce a work of any length without injecting something personal (Baker, "Towards a Methodology" 244). This comparison and process of analysis brought me a deeper and more nuanced understanding of my own visibility in the translation and with it a heightened sociolinguistic awareness. This awareness will certainly inform my next translation and I hope that the nuances observed are helpful to others on their translation journey. In light of these findings, it would seem that the topic of the translator's visibility, particularly in terms of style, might warrant further research.

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Helen Stevenson on Translating Alain Mabanckou's *Broken Glass* (2009)

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For readers of Francophone African literature, Alain Mabanckou is a household name. The author, who hails from Congo-Brazzaville, has penned eleven novels, six volumes of poetry and numerous essays on language, literature, and identity. In addition to being a prolific writer, Alain Mabanckou is Professor of French and Francophone Studies at the University of California in Los Angeles. His popularity amongst readers and students is such that he is affectionately called "Mabancool" — a nickname used by former French Cultural Minister, Frédéric Mitterrand, when presenting the author with a Legion of Honour in 2011 ("Prince of the Absurd").

Among the estimated three percent of all books translated into English (Steemers 107), Mabanckou's fifth novel *Verre Cassé* (2005) was published under the title *Broken Glass* by UK publisher Serpent's Tail in 2009. The novel, which has since been adapted for the stage, was translated by British translator and writer Helen Stevenson, with whom I exchanged a series of emails in 2016 for my doctoral research on humour translation. Of particular interest to me was Stevenson's experience translating the novel's roughly three hundred literary and cultural references, many of which are woven into the narrative without any typographical emphasis.

Whilst scholars Kathryn Batchelor (2013) and Vivan Steemers (2014) have examined some of the challenges that Mabanckou's references engender for readers and translators of his novel, Helen Stevenson is of the opinion that "[t]he richness of his cultural references may make [his] books difficult to sell, but not to translate" (translators must read with their ears). In the following email interview, the translator of *Broken Glass* speaks of the game-like experience of translating Mabanckou's hidden references, the responsibility she feels in being a translator, and the value in drawing from what she calls "your best library" – the material that is already in your head.

Sarah Martin (SM): Where are you from?
Helen Stevenson (HS): I'm British, white, female, from Yorkshire, in the North of England. I've lived in France for long periods, in the Pyrénées-Orientales and more recently in the Lot region, near Cahors. I live in Somerset now, in the South West of England.
SM: What are your language pairs?
HS: I translate from French into English. I have also done some translation from German into English.
SM: How did you learn these languages?
HS: I learned German and French at school, then did my degree in Modern Languages, at the University of Oxford. I have worked in France as a tourist guide and also lived in Munich for a year. I always enjoyed translating into English. I'm a pianist – I also teach piano – and I have always felt that playing music and translating went together well. Even as a child my ambitions were to be a pianist and interpreter.
SM: How long have you been practising as a translator?
HS: I have been translating now since 1985 when I left university, and before that, but the first novel I translated was *Naissance des Fantômes*, by Marie Darrieussecq, in 1998. I loved her work, and was delighted when I was approached by Faber to translate one of her books. I've also translated Alice Ferney, Antoine Bellos, though more recently I've only done works by Mabanckou.

SM: Apart from literature, do you translate other types of documents?
HS: Occasionally I translate letters as a favour, but not really. My husband translates poetry into and from Italian and French and we enjoy doing that together. I expect I'd get paid much better to translate the publicity for Eurostar, but no one's ever asked me!
SM: In your opinion, what makes a 'good' translation?
HS: That's a big question! I know I do it instinctively. I don't have a technique. I've always felt I just knew how it should go. I absolutely believe that there is a musicality to good writing, and that you have to render that. Obviously you have to be accurate and not fanciful or self-indulgent, or correct the writer's thought. It's important to be able to write good English, that people want to read, that flows and is alive. If you can't do that you can't possibly translate, because while translation is a process of transposition, it's also a process of composition. You are composing sentences which correspond to the sentences of the original but which aren't mirror images of them. I have no confidence that a machine can translate well. The dictionary part is the smallest element of translation – knowing what the words mean. You have to know how to balance them. And then there is register – the right degree of formality or informality; and understanding the writer's style, and reflecting it. I get quite irritated when people suggest that machines could do the work of translators. So much of the work is in the understanding of the spirit of the writing. Once you've grasped that it's relatively easy to find the words in your own language. It's a bit like being an actor sometimes. You have to get inside the role.
SM: What advice would you give to an aspiring translator?
HS: Don't do it unless you're passionate about it. It's not well paid, though it is very rewarding, so to be a literary translator is usually something you do alongside other things, not as your main means of earning a living. The publisher at Serpent's Tail once said to me that he thought I was a good translator because I was also a writer and therefore didn't feel I had to express myself personally through my translations as some people do! He said it makes it easier for the editors. I'd say only translate books you enjoy, though that's not always possible, but at least books you respect, anyway. I need things to get my teeth into, with complexities of style and meaning, and lots of nuance – humour is nuanced, so that's always interesting. You need to be meticulous and inspired at once, and thorough and consistent. It's a very big responsibility, to translate someone's precious work.
SM: Because of the subjective nature and creative constraints of translating humour, do you ever feel *powerful* or *powerless* when recreating it for your readership?
HS: Power isn't a word I'd use, not in this context. As I say, I feel responsible. I often feel surprisingly free, creatively, in the way I do when I write – there are so many ways of rendering a sentence. To know that, and to have confidence that you have chosen the best one – that's a nice feeling. I might feel powerless if I found myself having to translate something I didn't admire or respect because I needed the money but I would try not to have to do that as I would probably do it badly and unhappily.
SM: When faced with a challenging humorous element, what tools/options do you have recourse to?
HS: In the case of Alain, my greatest resource is knowing him. I don't really think about humorous elements in any different way to the rest of the text. He did say to me once that he thought it was really helpful that I had children and could write their voices. I don't think that with Alain you need much more context than I have – after four – or is it five books? – I rarely meet things I don't understand. With *Broken Glass* that was a big challenge, especially with the titles, which were embedded throughout, but once I realized what was going on it became like a game. I developed an eye/ear for the embedded titles – there was always something about them that caught the eye or the ear, and I don't think I missed any. I hope not! It made it more interesting for me. Alain's irreverence towards authority, the fact that politically we see eye to eye, I think, and that he is so funny about pomposity and hypocrisy – I like all that, so I guess

I have recourse, in a sense, to our common view of the world, despite the fact that he is a huge black African and I am a blond English woman! Occasionally I've googled references to the Congo and political and social events there, of course. Sometimes when he makes word plays I have to wrestle for a while till I get the right equivalent. He will take an idiom in French and subvert it, substituting other words, so I have to find equivalents in English – that can be tricky sometimes, but you just have to let your brain wander till you find it. I draw on what's in my head almost always. That's where your reference material is, your best library. That's why you're a translator. It just so happens that you speak both languages, but the language work isn't really the nub of it. It's the dismantling and the reconstruction that is so interesting and vital.

SM: Humour is often used to construct or display identity. To what extent do you feel that you display your own identity when translating humour? Is this a conscious decision?

HS: I try not to display my white English female educated middle classness. To do so would surely be a total failure. I want people to believe that this is written by Alain Mabanckou, it just happens to be in English. So I aim for total invisibility – and that's a delicious kind of freedom, particularly for a writer.

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Review of Marcel Proust's *Un amour de Swann*
(trans. Brian Nelson)

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Proust, Marcel. *Un amour de Swann*. Paris: Gallimard, 1987[1].
———. *Swann in Love*. Translated by Brian Nelson, with an Introduction by Adam Watt. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Brian Nelson, Emeritus Professor of French and Translation Studies at Monash University, has been translating for years, mainly novels in Émile Zola's Rougon-Macquart series. Here he turns his hand to *Un amour de Swann*, a detachable component of the first major section of Marcel Proust's great novel *À la recherche du temps perdu* (1913-1927). Usually printed as the middle part of *Du côté de chez Swann* (1913), it has, at different times, been published separately, filmed (by Volker Schlöndorff), dramatised, adapted for voices and recorded on a cassette for Radio France. For it is all but self-contained, focuses mostly on two characters, and requires of the reader little acquaintance with the rest of the work. Adam Watt's Introduction is excellent, authoritative, informative and wide-ranging. A bibliography of works in English is also excellent (though it repeats the half-truth that Tadié's Pléiade edition (1987) is 'the' authoritative one, despite its at times unsatisfactory solutions to editorial problems and the fact that there are other equally reliable French versions). Nelson thus joins a handful of translators who have Englished this and other parts of Proust.

In a Note, Nelson endorses a statement by one of the team engaged by Penguin just over twenty years ago to translate the whole of the *Recherche*: "I have worked very much in the shadow of these previous translators and with much gratitude towards them". That is evident to anyone who compares Nelson's text with his predecessors'. He appears to have often worked with an eye on their versions.

On the matter of syntax, Nelson discusses a principle espoused by one predecessor, Lydia Davis, doubting the wisdom of her "retention of the precise order of elements in a sentence" (xxx). Often, however, he reproduces Proust's structures and the "order of elements in a sentence". One wonders where is the advantage in designing the order of the clauses on a more French, less English, model? To some readers, such ordering will feel aptly French, nay, 'Proustian'; to others, too French, awkward or stilted. It gives a slightly foreign feel to much of the prose, placing some of the longer, more complex sentences within what we might call 'the Venuti spectrum', after the American traductologist most associated with a notion of 'foreignisation' (1995). That any degree of foreignisation gives a more Proustian experience to reading Proust in English is, like many things in translation, debatable. Understandably, this fidelity to the "order of elements" quite often determines the choice of punctuation, which can feel clumsy.

Similarly, Nelson quite often chooses to translate the *« si » d'opposition* by the contrastive or concessive 'if', rather than, say, 'whereas', 'while' or 'though'. This 'if' is of course used in English, albeit at a much lesser frequency than the *« si » d'opposition* in French. But, partly because of that infrequency and because English 'if' tends to suggest hypothesis, it can make a reader hesitate. Especially in sentences like these:

[1]First published by Grasset in 1913, then all subsequent editions by Gallimard. Edition translated, Gallimard 1987.

> If he was obliged to make his excuses to people in society for not visiting them, those he made to Odette were for not staying away from her;
> If she was now frequently away from Paris, even when she was there she saw very little of him.
>
> (116)

There, many readers, having assumed until halfway through that each 'If' introduces a hypothesis, will have to re-read to disambiguate structures which turn out to be contrastive.

Imitation of French may perhaps be seen too in a tendency towards the literal in choice of word or phrasing. Speaking of frequencies, Nelson uses forms which, though morphological equivalents of French terms, seem improper in context, for instance the Latinism 'a priori' ("her a priori excellence", 117) favoured by some of his predecessors, despite the fact that in English (2,892 = 1.3 per million, according to the corpora of the University of Bologna) it is ten times less frequent than in French (21,034 = 13.00 p.m.). This does not necessarily disqualify it, but the English contexts where it is used, largely philosophical or theological, do. Would a character who is neither philosopher nor theologian use it in indirect speech, describing a woman? Also favoured by a predecessor is "peripeteias" (179), a word known, I suspect, to few readers: Bologna's frequencies are 0 in English and 4,298 for *péripéties*, a word well known in French. Similarly, defensible though it may be to render *une petite ouvrière* as "a little working-class girl" (30) and *une petite bonne* as "a little servant-girl" (56), it might be preferable to call them 'young', as that is why Swann the sexual predator fancies them.

Imagery can enable a translator to be creative without being unfaithful. Here too Nelson, like most predecessors, often prefers literalism, though it makes for weak or obscure images. Two examples: Proust implicitly compares Swann's *âme*, in the throes of his jealousy, poisoned by Odette's confessions, to a stream contaminated by corpses. Implicitly, because the idea of flow is conveyed only by the verbs *charriait*, *rejetait* and *berçait*, commonly used in watery contexts. But "His soul bore them along, cast them aside, cradled them" (170) – all terms used by Moncrieff and Davis, by the way – weakens the evocation of a river and loses the force of the metaphor. To describe melody emerging from a violin as "like a devil in a baptismal font" (149) is to calque an old but still vivid expression (*comme un diable dans un bénitier*) into its literal equivalents, although in English these have little association with seething frenezy.

It is good that some of the dialogue which Proust embedded inside paragraphs is indented for each character, making those parts of the text more reader-friendly. There could have been more of it. Proust's paragraphing of dialogue was an afterthought, intermittent and inconsistent, arising not from aesthetic considerations but from a concern to reduce the length of the volume and hence the price to the buyer, none of which argues for retaining his arrangements with dialogue.

Speaking of dialogue, I do think the translator's ear lets him down at times. I give three examples, one a cumbersome Frenchlike mouthful: "I was about to make one of those judgments of you of a severity that love cannot long endure" (97). The second, spoken by a prostitute in a brothel, "If you'd been boring me, I'd have said so" (173), ignores the semi-educated speech-form of the French, *Si vous m'auriez ennuyée, je vous l'aurais dit*. Par for the course for translators of Proust's satirical voices; but that's no excuse. The third is "if you would stop by for a moment" (136). The speaker being the Marquise de Gallardon, this apparent borrowing from Davis's American version makes this aristocrat of the 1880s sound like a character in *Seinfeld*. Why not 'drop in' or even 'pop in'? The dialogue, just before, of male characters is markedly English ('old chap', 'my dear fellow') and apt for the period.

There are more than 100 endnotes, many giving helpful information about things which Proust assumed his first readers were familiar with. Some which seem superfluous, such as the

one explaining 'Eurydice', could have been replaced by others on *cocotte*, *demi-monde*, 'table-turning', on 'the Châtelet', 'the Musée Grévin' or 'the Luxembourg', or the sociographical significance of 'the Faubourg Saint-Germain', which will be apparent to few readers. At least three, to pages 70 (see below) and 119, and the first note to page 174, give perplexing misinformation which any attentive reader can see is incorrect. That to page 119 also prematurely divulges the shocking outcome of the affair, thus spoiling one of Proust's most ironic and off-hand revelations.

There is another unfortunate consequence of footnoting certain things: to date exactly the *fête de Paris-Murcie*, Gambetta's funeral, or the first performance of *Francillon*, etc., giving more information than original readers had, probably than Proust had, for he was only approximately suggesting the 1880s, is to make too precise the timing of the affair between Swann and Odette and contradict what the narrator says of it. If we are to believe these dates, it had been going on for about eight years between December 1879 and 1887, whereas, by the chronology of the narrative, unannotated, it takes place in the rough compass of a few seasons, little more than a winter, the spring following, then the summer of Bayreuth. The first kiss seems therefore to date from 1879; and soon after, at the moment of Swann's banishment from the Verdurin salon, he reflects that Odette has *vécu plus de six mois en contact quotidien avec moi*. This further perplexes the reader who tries to make sense of Proust's chronology, which suffers from a design flaw or two: two pages after the banishment, Swann looks at photographs of Odette and remembers how she was two years before, suggesting that the non-sexual phase of love between a womanizer and a woman of easy virtue had lasted for an implausibly long time, or that the photos date from before the start of the affair, equally implausible. Towards the end of the affair, Proust mentions Swann's love of music, through his rediscovery of the Vinteuil sonata, dating it to *depuis plus d'une année*; yet, not much later, he says *cette existence durait déjà depuis plusieurs années*.

There are, as one would expect, few mistranslations, though "corridor" for *couloir* (p. 48) is probably, in this context, one of them. Another is "because it was good for her peasants" (70), an error common to most of Nelson's predecessors (*cela faisait bien pour ses paysans* = 'it made a good impression on her peasants'). Other mistakes I class as slips; and if the volume is to remain in print for a long time, I would hope that, before reprinting, Oxford will make good several small errors (which I have communicated to the translator). Some of these slips, though noticeable to the knowing eye, may not confuse an unknowing reader who reads only this part of the *Recherche*. However, they make one wonder how attentive was the eye doing the revising or the editing.

One of these oversights (actually several in one) shows how confusing tiny things can be in a translated text. The aristocratic name "La Trémoïlle" (67), misprinted as "La Trémouïlle" (68), reverts to "La Trémoïlle" (69), confusing enough. This is soon compounded by Brichot's mispronunciation of it as 'La Trémouaille'. Or rather it is not compounded, because here the name, mistakenly again, is given as 'La Trémouille'. To this a footnote adds misinformation: that Brichot's faux pas lies in not pronouncing the diaeresis. But that diaeresis is never pronounced by those in the know, and neither of Brichot's solecisms is that. His first is that the form *ces de la Trémouaille*, intended by Proust as a faulty hypercorrection of *ces la Trémoïlle*, suggests that Brichot is not just a pedant but an ignorant pedant, the use of the *particule nobiliaire* being, in French, much less common in such collocations than in English (Proust, commenting on Mme Verdurin's ignorance of such niceties of social discrimination, refers to it as a *vicieuse façon de parler*). More importantly, Brichot's other solecism is to mispronounce the name with his discrepant *a* — which this translation omits! The misinformation given in the note is contradicted by Tadié (1216). This all makes for a dog's breakfast, which is then aggravated by the addition of a third faulty variant of the same name, ending with an *s* this time ('Madame de La Trémouilles', 70).

Despite my strictures, this edition could make a commendable introduction to further reading of Proust in English, especially in the English of those of Nelson's predecessors, which is the majority, who cleave close to the syntax of the original.

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Review of Sok-yong, Hwang. *Familiar Things*
(trans. Sora Kim-Russell)

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Familiar Things is the latest work by South Korean author Hwang Sok-yong to be published into English by translator Sora Kim-Russell. Hwang's works are distinctive for their focus on the marginalized groups called the *mitbadak*, literally meaning the 'floor beneath' or 'lower floor'. Within personal narratives of struggle, he interweaves socio-historical effects with structural metaphors. One of the most vivid illustrations of this approach is in the 1973 novella *Road to Sampo*, which tells the story of a trio of misfits wandering the newly constructed roadways commissioned by the Park Chung Hee administration (1963-1979). The story navigates the roads they walk along, and their rootless lives are juxtaposed with the smooth, unending highways. With these devices, Hwang confronts the Korean reader with the high social costs of consumer capitalism and progress. His works do not directly engage the larger socio-historical elements at play, instead depicting them through the perspectives of those most affected. As an outspoken proponent of the *Minjung* writers' movement of the 1970's and 80's, Hwang has been a critical voice towards the aggressive economic policies of the Park Chung Hee administration, and has spoken out against the regime's censorship and imprisonment of many artists, including himself.

Familiar Things is set in 1980's Seoul, where a street-wise boy nicknamed Bugeye moves to 'Flower Island', the ironic moniker for a landfill forming an island mass in the Han river, to eke out a living picking trash with his mother. The reader is introduced to a world parallel to the glamorous metropolis of rising skyscrapers. The only things in ascendance on Flower Island are trash heaps, with daily deposits hauled in from surrounding districts. For the island's inhabitants, progress is merely survival, the daily desperate scrabbling over discarded items. Bugeye, his mother, and the community of other pickers are those excluded from Korea's economic 'Miracle on the Han River', as it has become known.

Hwang's Flower Island stages the folkloric subconscious of modernizing Korean society; the place teems with ghosts, goblins, spirit possessions, and ritual. Korean shamanism figures prominently as a literary device, as in the author's previous works. Like in the 2002 novel, *The Guest*, and *Princess Bari* (2015), elements of Korean shamanic ritual and *kut* exorcism become central themes in the story. For example, the twelve chapters of *The Guest* coincide with the twelve stages of a *chinogwi kut*, a ritual meant to purge frustrated spirits from the body. In *Familiar Things*, those latent energies are symbolized by the piles of festering trash on Flower Island.

A translator of *Familiar Things* faces the particular challenge of reconciling the cultural dissimilarity between native Korean shamanism and a modern context that valorizes science over folk belief. And as is the case with any work of world literature, the novel requires a negotiation of embedded cultural references in the source text with the audience in the target language. In an interview on her translation of *Princess Bari*, Sora Kim-Russell explains how she used the approach of folding cultural references into the character's narrative. She observes, "the tricky part is revealing the overlap enough to make it easier for the reader to

picture, while still keeping that item culturally distinct" (Gowman 1). This action of folding, meant to conceal and to intermix, is also present in *Familiar Things*. Throughout the novel, Russell's domestication of cultural oddities presents opportunities to further describe the outer or inner emotion of the characters. For example, in one scene where Bugeye accidentally swallows a fly during his first meal on the island, a worker comments:

"It's fine, it'll put hair on your chest. We must've eaten a whole pint of flies this summer" (*Familiar Things* 17)	"그것두 다아 몸보신 감이다. 우리가 여름내 먹은 파리가 한 됫박은 될걸" (*Natikeun Sesang* 23)

This sentence contains two examples of adaptation. For the first, the Korean simply refers to the vitality of the body, yet the phrase "put hair on your chest," while at once characterizing the speaker, also underscores the rugged masculinity required of Flower Island's impoverished inhabitants, while also alluding to Bugeye's transition passage into adulthood. In the following clause, the translator works to localize the Korean word for a dried, hollowed gourd (됫박), which was commonly used as a decanter for rice wine. The term "pint" therefore serves as a contextual equivalent appropriate to modern readers' sensibilities.

With her continued use of such tactics, Russell achieves the basic goal of the translator, which is to render a similar effect from the source text into the target audience through a tactful use of domestication and adaptation. Translators perpetually navigate a continuum on which domestication and foreignization are two opposite endpoints, and that creative tension is often evident in the work itself. Valerie Henitiuk provides an innovative description of translation activity as a process akin to the refraction of light when shone through a prism, which reveals a myriad of colors that can be interpreted as versions of interpretations. Rather than downplay the negotiation of norms (faithful versus free or domestication versus foreignization) as merely necessary to the process, Henitiuk embraces what she calls the "creative by-products" of that bargaining process (5) Those "creative byproducts" in turn, reflect the current, synchronic perceptions of the source literature and culture; indicating at once how a translation of that moment is valued and evaluated. The international visibility of Korean culture continues to increase, along with the esteem and recognition accorded to Korean literary products, for example among prize juries. Therefore, we can perceive Russell's 'refraction' of Hwang's original as a reflection of its current state in this matrix of world cultural exchange, and one that continues to enhance mutual intelligibility.

Sora Kim-Russell's refraction of Hwang Sok-yong's original text reads effortlessly in its target language. And just as her rendition of *Princess Bari* accomplishes, she resolves dissonances and folds cultural references throughout the narrative, helping readers to contend with cultural dissimilarities, notably with the shamanic themes. In effect, the translated version of Hwang's work reads remarkably like its source through its clever adaptations. *Familiar Things* is another such amalgam, a negotiation between the source culture and the target culture—a work of world literature which embodies both cultures and their representative values.

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In Favour of Foreignization: A Review of Tess Lewis's Translation of Kruso by Lutz Seiler (trans. Tess Lewis)

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In his review of Tess Lewis's 2017 translation of Lutz Seiler's debut novel Kruso (2014), Andrew Fuhrmann makes the following observation:

> Tess Lewis's translation is serviceable, but a bit lumpen. I wonder if the book would have been better served by a translator who is a poet, someone capable of transfiguring the prose for English.

Furhmann's review, which negatively casts Lewis's translation as "lumpen", presents yet another example of the "dominance of fluency in English-language translation", or domestication, which prevails in Anglo-American reviews of translation (Venuti 2). Fluency is prioritised above all else and Heaven forbid the translation be "lumpen". Yet this is the beauty of Lewis's translation. She takes an overtly foreignizing approach to the translation, reflecting the lengthy syntax of the source text, reconstructing the alliteration and explicating specific German terms. This reflects the highly unusual construction of the source text, which includes neologisms, word play and specific references to East German geography.

Before I introduce the text and in the spirit of Venuti's translator's visibility, let me introduce the translator in question. Tess Lewis is an accomplished translator of both German and French literature. She has been the recipient of numerous awards, including PEN USA, PEN UK (which she received for Kruso), the NEA and a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship, to name only a few. She is also Advisory Editor for The Hudson Review and Co-Chair of the PEN Translation Committee.

Although Lutz Seiler's background is in poetry, his debut novel was a bestseller in Germany and was awarded the German Book Prize in 2014, the Uwe-Johnson Prize in 2014 and the Marie-Luise-Kashnitz Prize in 2015. Set in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in 1989, Kruso is typical of the Wenderoman genre, which explores the social upheaval before and after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The story follows Ed, a student of German literature. After the unexpected and brutal death of his girlfriend, G., Ed spontaneously sets off to the Baltic Island of Hiddensee. He is taken on as a dishwasher by the Klausner, a monastery-turned-restaurant (also a metaphorical ship), and becomes acquainted with the other eccentric and intellectual fellow staff (or 'crew'). One of these staff members is a Russian-German man by the name of Kruso (or 'Crusoe' - the reference is deliberate), with whom Ed develops a close friendship. Kruso is the leader of an underground movement of 'castaways', people trying to escape the GDR regime by going to the Island. Those who attempt to swim to Denmark are shot; the Island is patrolled by guards with machine guns. But with Ed as his side-kick, 'Friday', Kruso organizes numerous events on the Island for the castaways, manages their sleeping arrangements, and preaches the freedom of the soul as opposed to freedom from the State. As the GDR regime disintegrates, Kruso starts to lose his grip on reality, hanging on to what he feels was his mission on the Island. Towards the end he says: "The seed of true freedom, Ed, thrives where man is not free" (Seiler 405). The novel ends just as tragically as it begins.

Lewis' translation strategies are equally poetic to Seiler's. Alliteration, for example, moves seamlessly from one language to another: "Kreuzspinne und Kreuzschnabel!"(73) becomes "spiders and spoonbills!" (66) and "Ratschratsch" (135) is rendered as "ritch-ratch" (126). Sometimes additional effects are created in the target text. For example, Seiler's wordplay on the "Versteck im See, geheime See, Hiddensee . . ." (32) has an additional alliteration in English, given the wordplay is on the actual English word 'hidden': "A hide-out in the sea, hidden sea, Hiddensea . . ." (25).

Lewis also retains the neologisms, which she explicates in the source text. Take for example the German word "Esskaa", rendered by Lewis as "esskay". The term is coined by Seiler in the original text, which, as he explains, relates to the itinerant workers:

> Inzwischen hatte er verstanden, dass Esskaa nichts anders bedeutete als die gesprochene Abkürzung für Saisonkraft. SK erinnerte an den Begriff des EK, des Entlassungskanditaten beim Militär, und wie es während seiner Zeit bei der Armee eine EK-Bewegung gegeben hatte, ein Konglomerat aus derben bis tödlichen Späßen, verbunden mit einem unbedingten Verlangen nach Unterordnung (alles zusammengenommen eine Art martialischer Vorfreude aus den Tag der >Freiheit<, die Entlassung), würde es auch eine Esskaa-Bewegung geben, schlussfolgerte Ed, natürlich mit eignen, ganz anderen Gesetzen [...].
>
> (80-81)

> Ed, in the meantime, had understood that 'esskay' was simply the acronym 'SK' for Saisonkraft, seasonal worker. SK reminded Ed of the term EK for Entlassungskandidaten, discharge candidates in the army, and he reasoned that, just as at the time of his military service there had been an EK culture - a conglomeration of crude to deadly jokes combined with an implicit desire for submission (all in all, a kind of martial anticipation of the day of 'freedom,' of their discharge) - there surely must be an SK culture, with it's own, entirely different set of rules.
>
> (Lewis, 73-74)

The above passage refers to the freedom cult of the itinerant workers, of which Kruso is the leader. The English passage includes German words and tends to follow the sentence structure of the original, as can easily be evinced from the long sentences, typical of Germanic syntax (the brackets are idiosyncratic of Seiler's text).

Overall, Lewis has rendered a target text equally as challenging as Seiler's source text. The source text is steeped in the former world of the GDR and is inherently strange and mysterious. Lewis captures all the complexity and beauty of Seiler's novel in a decidedly 'non-fluent' way.

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Mario Soldati's "L'amico americano" in English Translation

TIM CUMMINS

First published as "Una strana avventura" (A Strange Incident) in the newspaper *Il tempo* in 1952, then included in the collection *Storie di spettri* (Ghost Stories) in 1962, Mario Soldati's "L'amico americano" (The American Friend) is an early- to mid-career work in a career that spanned over sixty years and included film, radio, television, journalism, novels, short stories and memoir (Soldati). Both the original title of the story and the name of the book in which it later appeared frame the story as a tale of the supernatural or bizarre.

The story's opening sets up conflicting expectations: this is a true story and yet it will be difficult to believe; the events are extraordinary but would be uninteresting if they were not true; Edgar Allan Poe is invoked but this will be unlike his stories. The contradictions create suspense: is this actually a true story? What is it really about? Is it a tale of the supernatural and if so, when will the supernatural element appear?

To preserve this game of contradictory expectations, the translator must reproduce the specific tone used in each phase of the story. Within this overarching challenge, there are micro-level syntactic and lexical challenges.

The register of much of the story is that of a conversational but not overly informal (pseudo-)autobiographical story from the mid-twentieth century. Certain expressions today seem old fashioned ("per ischerzo" rather than 'per scherzo'; "giuoco" rather than 'gioco'; "non v'è spettatore che" rather than 'nessuno spettatore' or something similar), requiring analogous choices in the translation ("I had occasion to"; "the Tyrol" rather than 'Tyrol'; use of the masculine impersonal). To maintain the conversational tone, however, the translation also uses some less formal elements (some contractions when rhythmically appropriate; occasional use of "movie" as well as "film"; ending one sentence with a preposition).

This 'base' style contrasts with the more melodramatic tone when the foreshadowed supernatural element finally appears. The translation of this section seeks to match the original by similarly using cliché ("shiver […] down my spine"; "hollow-cheeked"; "to tell the tale"), the macabre ("revulsion" rather than disgust or distaste; "the high, skeletal brow") and the vaguely pseudoscientific ("what we cannot illuminate with reason"—the Latinate verb chosen over more contemporary equivalents). By strictly delineating between the two styles, the translation aims to maintain the narrative drive of the original: an extended naturalistic build-up followed by a brief but intense paranormal payoff.

The primary syntactic challenge was the translation of long sentences. As a succinct and entertaining 'ghost story', the text's purpose favours domestication (Venuti 1995): long sentences that seem primarily an artefact of Italian rather than stylistically important ("Da Ponte, per ragioni sue […]") are broken up. While the length of the sentence "La brutta tappezzeria […] sentii la mia piccolezza" is clearly intended to heighten the sense of vertigo or disorientation, it is long enough, in the translator's opinion, to achieve this effect in English even when divided into two long, rushing sentences. By contrast, "Qualche mese dopo […] ancor maggiore che non nella commedia" is kept intact because it evokes the parenthetical style of memoir and is considered to flow sufficiently well in English when appropriately punctuated.

At a lexical level, 'foreign' elements have been kept to give a sense of place where it is possible to do so while maintaining clarity. The Venetian word "calle" is kept because it maintains an exoticism that is present in the original and the meaning is clear from context. The title "Cavaliere" is anglicised to "Cavalier" because it retains specificity to Italy while

roughly as accurate as more domestic alternatives such as 'Knight' or 'Baron' (the more common word "knight" is used when "cavaliere" appears as a generic term rather than a title).

Amplification is used where considered necessary for comprehension by the general reader ("the Ridotto casino in Venice" for "[i]l Ridotto di Venezia"). By the same logic and to avoid weighing down the text, no amplification is provided where it is considered that further details are not important for the story (for example place names like the Langhe and Alba are given without elaboration even though the reader may well not be familiar with them) or where the additional information can reasonably be expected to be part of readers' background knowledge or will in any case become apparent later in the text (the reference to "Goldoni's *The Mistress of the Inn*", which does not explicitly state that this is a play).

As mentioned above in the discussion of the treatment of long sentences, one of the strengths of this story, at under six pages, is its succinctness. In order to maintain the leanness of the prose, the translation has reduced or simplified expressions that would make the text cumbersome in English: "l'Università di Harvard" and "l'Università di Columbia" become "Harvard" and "Columbia"; "il cliché di un ritratto" ('a portrait plate') becomes "a portrait"; "con l'americano e con lui" ('with the American and with him' becomes "with them". Perhaps most significantly from a stylistic perspective, the opening line "…E adesso, racconterò un fatto vero" (literally '…And now, I will recount a true fact/occurrence') was considered more effective in English without the verb as '…And now, a true story'.

A final case in particular seems worthy of mention: the use of periphrasis to refer to Poe ("[i]l poeta che morì a Baltimora", literally "the poet who died in Baltimore"). This kind of circumlocution is characteristic of a certain style of Italian writing and, while creating the possibility of incomprehension, it has been retained to preserve the uniqueness of the original and because the assumed knowledge required to understand it is equally or more available to English speakers.

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L'amico americano
By
Mario Soldati

…E adesso, racconterò un fatto vero.

So benissimo che tale preambolo è, di solito, un espediente usato da chi racconta per avvalorare una storia poco credibile, o per rimediare una prosa poco persuasiva.

Tuttavia, questa volta, sono costretto ad usarlo anch'io: perché la mia storia è, sì, straordinaria; ma, diversamente da quelle del poeta che morì a Baltimora, non sarebbe interessante se non fosse accaduta.

Non è, cioè, il fatto in sé che potrà divertire chi mi legge; ma le riflessioni che potrà farci sopra, dopo avermi ascoltato, e se avrà, ascoltandomi, creduto all'assoluta autenticità del mio racconto. Dirò tutto com'è stato. Veri anche i nomi, vere le date, vero ogni particolare.

Il settembre del 1937 mi trovavo a Venezia.

Ero ai primi passi: dirigevo uno dei miei primi film. Dirò, anche qui, la verità: non lo dirigevo: ero pagato per fingere di dirigerlo. Sarebbe un'altra storia, egualmente autentica e straordinaria di quella che vi racconterò; ma certo meno bella.

Siccome passavo la giornata a mimare senza nessuna fatica le fatiche del direttore di film, la sera ero fresco e riposato. La sera, i miei colleghi e collaboratori, che veramente facevano il film, divoravano un pranzo frettoloso, si buttavano affranti sui letti soffocati dalle zanzariere, nelle stanze buie e ancora calde del sole, che, per tutto il giorno, il vicino muro della calle vi aveva reverberato, e si abbandonavano subito a un sonno agitato dalla stanchezza. Io, invece, pranzavo lentamente, a mio agio, sulla terrazza del Grand Hôtel, poi scendevo in una gondola e facevo un giretto, fumando al fresco, all'aria libera, cullato dal ritmico sciacquio; infine, verso la mezzanotte o l'una, rientravo all'albergo e mi attardavo a bere nel bar.

Fu appunto nel bar del Grand Hôtel, tardi, l'ultima notte prima del mio ritorno a Roma, che attaccai discorso con un americano della mia età: un giovane biondo, dagli abiti e dai modi signorili, dall'aspetto simpatico e intelligente. Amante di

The American Friend
By
Mario Soldati
Translated by Tim Cummins

…And now, a true story.

I know full well that an opening like that is usually a device used by the teller to give weight to a story that lacks credibility or to make up for unpersuasive prose.

Nevertheless, this time I am obliged to use it: because my story is, yes, extraordinary, but, unlike those of the poet who died in Baltimore, it would not be interesting if it had not actually occurred.

By this I mean that it is not the events themselves that may interest the reader, but the reflections that he might make upon them, having listened, if he has believed in the absolute authenticity of what I have recounted. I will tell everything as it happened. The names are also real, as are the dates, as is every detail.

In September 1937 I was in Venice.

I was just starting out, directing one of my first films. Here, too, I will tell the truth: I was not directing it; I was being paid to pretend to direct it. That's another story, just as authentic and extraordinary as the one I will tell here, but certainly not as nice.

Since I spent all day mimicking the exertions of a director, without any actual exertion, in the evening I felt fresh and well rested. My colleagues and collaborators, who were actually making the movie, wolfed down their dinner, threw themselves, exhausted, onto beds suffocated by mosquito nets, in dark rooms still hot from the sun, which, all day long, had reflected off the wall of the narrow *calle*, and immediately abandoned themselves to the fitful sleep of the weary. I, meanwhile, took my time over dinner on the Grand Hôtel terrace then went out for a spin in a gondola, smoking in the cool, fresh air, rocked by the rhythmic lapping of the canals; finally, around midnight or one, I would return to the hotel and stay up drinking in the bar.

It was in that very bar of the Grand Hôtel, late on my last night before returning to Rome, that I got talking to an American of my age: a blond young man, refined in clothes and manners, and friendly and intelligent in appearance. A lover of

letteratura, aveva studiato all'Università di Harvard; accompagnava un suo amico e una sua amica, che erano in viaggio di nozze, attraverso la Francia, l'Italia e la Grecia. La sua città natale era Boston. Il suo nome era (non lo scrivo senza una certa esitazione e vedrete poi perché) il suo nome era Barton Smith.

Restammo insieme fino all'alba. Prima, nel bar, un whisky sull'altro; poi, fuori, per le calli deserte e sonore del nostro passo tranquillo: in poche ore, come accade talvolta anche nell'amore, divenimmo amici.

Durante la giornata che seguì, Barton venne a trovarmi sul luogo del mio finto lavoro, e facemmo colazione. Così la sera, pranzammo insieme. Dopodiché, volle presentarmi alla coppia dei suoi amici sposi. Infine, verso le undici, mi accompagnò in motoscafo alla stazione. Promise che, al ritorno da Atene, sarebbe venuto a trovarmi a Roma. Rimase a salutarmi sotto la pensilina, sventolando il fazzoletto, commosso come un vecchio amico.

Barton Smith: da quel momento non lo vidi più. Né so, ancora oggi, che cosa sia di lui.

Ma il fatto non è qui.

Qualche mese dopo, quando ormai avevo perduto la speranza di una visita a Roma di Barton Smith, trovandomi a dover scrivere un adattamento cinematografico della *Locandiera* del Goldoni per un film che poi non fu fatto, mi venne naturale di dare al Cavaliere di Ripafratta, il più serio dei tre sfortunati corteggiatori di Mirandolina, un'importanza ancor maggiore che non nella commedia.

Il film si apriva su di lui, al Ridotto di Venezia. Il Cavaliere, uomo vissuto, amareggiato, deluso dalle donne, cerca nel gioco uno sfogo alla sua angoscia romantica. Dovevo dargli, fin dal principio, per necessità di dialogo, un amico, un confidente. Immaginai che questo confidente, questo amico fosse un personaggio storico, il veneto Lorenzo Da Ponte. Da Ponte è famoso nella storia della letteratura e della musica come librettista di Mozart: ma pochi sanno che, nell'età matura, egli emigrò in America, a New York, dove, all'Università di Columbia, fu il primo insegnante di letteratura italiana. Questo dato di fatto, la sua emigrazione agli Stati Uniti, mi sarebbe poi servito per la

literature, he had studied at Harvard. He was accompanying two friends of his, who were on their honeymoon, through France, Italy and Greece. He was originally from Boston. His name—I write this not without a certain hesitation and later you will see why—his name was Barton Smith.

We stayed together till dawn. First in the bar, one whisky after another, then outside, along the deserted *calli* that echoed with our easy steps: in just a few hours, as sometimes also happens in love, we became friends.

The next day, Barton came and met me at my pretend workplace and we had lunch. And again, that night, we dined together. He then insisted I meet his friends, the newlywed couple. Finally, around eleven, he accompanied me by motorboat to the station. He promised that on his return from Athens he would come and visit me in Rome. He stayed to see me off from the platform, waving his handkerchief, emotional like an old friend.

Barton Smith—from that moment on I have never seen him again. Nor do I know, even now, what became of him.

But that is not the story.

Some months later, when I had given up hope of a visit to Rome from Barton Smith, and finding myself needing to write an adaptation of Goldoni's *The Mistress of the Inn* for a film that did not end up getting made, it came naturally to me to give the Cavalier of Ripafratta, the most serious of Mirandolina's three unfortunate suitors, an even greater importance than he had had in the original comedy.

The film opened on the Cavalier in the Ridotto casino in Venice. A man of the world, embittered and disillusioned by women, he turns to gambling as a release from his romantic anguish. Right from the start, to allow for dialogue, I had to give him a friend, a confidant. I imagined this confidant, this friend, as a historical figure: Lorenzo Da Ponte, from the Veneto. Da Ponte is famous in the history of literature and music as Mozart's librettist, but few know that, in his later years, he emigrated to America, to New York, where he was the first teacher of Italian literature at Columbia. This fact of his emigration to the United States would be useful to me for the plot: I

trama del film: scelsi Da Ponte ad amico del Cavaliere di Ripafratta.

Il Cavaliere gioca e perde gran parte della sua sostanza. Un vecchio servo, dal lontano Piemonte, sua patria, viene ad annunciargli la morte del padre. Il Cavaliere ritorna al Castello, nelle Langhe. Qui, riprende a vivere modestamente, più triste e più annoiato di prima. Finché, andando a caccia, un pomeriggio d'autunno, càpita, in un grosso borgo, o piccola città, come Alba, alla locanda di Mirandolina; e qui ha luogo tutta l'azione della commedia. Il Cavaliere s'illude, s'innamora ancora una volta, più gravemente, più fatalmente di tutte le altre. Finché, a soccorrerlo, a cercar di aprire i suoi occhi e trarlo d'impaccio, non arriva l'amico Da Ponte.

Da Ponte, per ragioni sue, anche lui fin dall'inizio male in arnese, ha pensato di emigrare: legata amicizia con un gentiluomo americano, pensa di accompagnare costui nel suo viaggio di ritorno agli Stati Uniti: si presenta alla locanda in compagnia dell'americano e, ben sapendo che, per guarire dal male di un amore sbagliato o non corrisposto, non c'è che un rimedio, la lontananza, prega e supplica il Cavaliere di venire con l'americano e con lui.

Anche nella commedia del Goldoni c'è questa alternativa, questo richiamo iterato al viaggio, alla lontananza, richiamo che là, però, ha un effetto comico: "Domani a Livorno!".

Il gentiluomo americano mi serviva per dare corpo a questa speranza di fuga, di salvezza, di libertà. E, dovendo mettergli un nome, lo chiamai, parte per ischerzo, parte per sincero omaggio e ricordo, col nome del mio fugace amico: Barton Smith.

La vicenda del film, nelle ultime sequenze, si fa più appassionante. La sorte del Cavaliere più incerta. Persino la commedia, verso la fine, trascolora irresistibilmente nel dramma: per forza di cose, oltre le intenzioni del Goldoni. Non v'è spettatore che, alle ultime scene, non odii Mirandolina, non soffra, pur ridendo, col Cavaliere, non desideri vederlo alfine libero verso Livorno. E anche il mio film finiva (dopo un duello mortale, di notte, sull'aia lucida di ghiaccio) con una fuga a cavallo attraverso i monti della Liguria, e l'imbarco da Savona. L'ultima inquadratura erano i tre: il Cavaliere, Da Ponte e Barton Smith, tra il

assigned Da Ponte as the Cavalier of Ripafratta's friend.

The Cavalier gambles and loses much of his wealth. An old servant from faraway Piedmont, his homeland, comes to announce the death of his father. The Cavalier returns to his castle in the Langhe. Here he lives modestly once more, sadder and more bored than before. Out hunting one autumn afternoon, in a town or small city like Alba, he happens upon Mirandolina's inn, and here all the action of the comedy takes place. The Cavalier is tricked and falls in love again, a more grave and fatal case than all the others. His friend Da Ponte comes to his aid, trying to open his eyes and pull him out of this mess.

For his own reasons, Da Ponte, who has also been in a bad way from the start, has been thinking of emigrating. Having made friends with an American gentleman, he plans to accompany him on his return voyage to the United States. He shows up at the inn along with the American and, knowing that the only medicine for an ill-advised or unrequited love is distance, he implores and beseeches the Cavalier to come with them.

Goldoni's comedy also features this alternative, this repeated call to set off, to get away, but there it is used for comic effect: "Livorno in the morning!"

I needed the American gentleman to bring to life this hope of escape, salvation, freedom. And, needing to give him a name, partly as a joke and partly as a sincere tribute, I named him after my fleeting friend: Barton Smith.

The film's plot becomes more thrilling in the final sequences, as the Cavalier's fate is ever more uncertain. Even the play, towards the end, becomes irresistibly tinged with drama—by the nature of the story, above and beyond Goldoni's intentions. There is no theatregoer who, in the final scenes, does not hate Mirandolina, nor suffer for the Cavalier, even while laughing, and want to see him free at last and headed to Livorno. And my movie also ended (after a duel to the death, at night, in a farmyard glinting with ice) with an escape on horseback through the mountains of Liguria before boarding a ship in Savona. The last

sartiame e le vele che si gonfiano al vento, affacciati alla murata, lo sguardo fisso a una terra che non vedranno più, e nel cuore la libera America.

Nonostante il mio entusiasmo e i miei sforzi, il film, come ho detto, non fu mai girato. Non ho mai potuto girare (mi sia lecita questa parentesi vera in un racconto vero) un film da me immaginato. Lavorai, dopo quel tempo, a tanti altri soggetti che erano ricavati da romanzi o scritti appositamente per il cinema, girai film su film. Dimenticai la *Locandiera*. Nell'accumularsi dei copioni sugli scaffali, smarrii lo spesso dattiloscritto del mio adattamento, e smarrii, nella distrazione dei viaggi e degli "esterni", nella sequela dei più vari film, negli incontri di nuovi amici ed affetti, persino il ricordo del nome del mio amico americano.

Un giorno, molti anni più tardi, ebbi ad accompagnare dal medico una signorina straniera, una olandese che avevo conosciuto appunto durante gli esterni di un film in Tirolo, e che poi si era trovata di passaggio a Roma.

Il medico aveva lo studio in Prati: un viale che non ricordo, al secondo o al terzo piano di un palazzo grigio, polveroso e malandato, uno di quei palazzoni dell'inizio del secolo, come ce ne sono tanti in Prati.

Mentre il medico visitava la ragazza, io attendevo nel salottino. Era maggio: il sole di Roma, e il frastuono della strada entravano dalla finestra già aperta, tra le persiane socchiuse.

Tappezzerie di carta a grossi fiorami verdastri. Un fitto arazzo, con cavalieri e damine in parrucca che danzano sullo sfondo in un parco. Divanetto e poltroncine Luigi XV dalla fodera sdrucita. Al centro, un basso tavolino ricoperto di riviste, e un vaso senza fiori adibito a portacenere.

La visita sarebbe stata lunga; presi a caso una rivista e la sfogliai. Era l'«Illustrazione del Medico»: racconti, saggi e articoli di varia letteratura, e che abbiano qualche connessione con la scienza o la professione medica.

Il cliché di un ritratto mi saltò agli occhi: Lorenzo Da Ponte. Era un articolo intitolato, se ben ricordo, *Medici amici di*

shot showed the three of them: the Cavalier, Da Ponte and Barton Smith, between the rigging and the sails billowing in the wind, looking out over the ship's side, their gaze fixed on a land they will never see again and free America in their hearts.

Despite my enthusiasm and all my efforts, the film, as I said, was never shot. I have never managed (if you will allow me this true aside in a true story) to make a movie based on any idea of my own. After that time, I worked from many other concepts that were based on novels or written specifically for the cinema, and I shot film after film. I forgot about *The Mistress of the Inn*. In the screenplays piled up on my shelves, I lost the thick manuscript, and, in the distraction of travelling and shooting on location, in the most varied series of different films, in meeting new friends and loved ones, I even lost the memory of my American friend's name.

One day, many years later, I had occasion to take a young foreign lady to the doctor: a Dutch girl I had met while on location in the Tyrol, who happened to be passing through Rome.

The doctor's practice was in Prati: an avenue I don't recall, on the second or third floor of a grey, dusty, rundown building, one of those big ones from the start of the century that Prati is full of.

While the doctor examined the girl, I stayed in the waiting room. It was May; the Roman sun and the din from the street came in through the open window, between the half-closed shutters.

Wallpaper patterned with big greenish flowers. A faux tapestry with bewigged knights and ladies dancing against a garden background. A little Louis XV settee with matching armchairs, the upholstery threadbare. In the centre, a low coffee table covered in magazines and an empty vase in place of an ashtray.

It was going to be a long consultation; I picked up a magazine at random and flipped through it. It was *L'illustrazione del medico*: stories, essays and articles of various kinds to do with medicine or the medical profession.

A portrait jumped out at me: Lorenzo Da Ponte. It was an article entitled, if I remember rightly, "Doctors with Writer

letterati. E, difatti, nella pagina successiva, c'era il ritratto di un medico americano, che era stato amico intimo del Da Ponte durante l'ultima parte della sua vita, a New York. Un volto magro, scavato: sotto l'alta fronte ossuta, incorniciata dal candore della parrucca, due occhi stranamente brillanti, vivissimi, quasi diabolici. Li vedo ancora. Il nome di questo medico, amico del Da Ponte, era Barton Smith di Boston. Anche lui di Boston. Probabilmente, addirittura, un antenato del mio amico di Venezia…

Un brivido, appena lessi quel nome, mi corse per la schiena. Mi parve di non essere più solo nella stanza. Qualcosa, qualcuno era la, dietro di me, invisibile, impalpabile. La brutta tappezzeria a fiorami, il finto arazzo, i mobiletti Luigi XV, il sole tra le persiane, il rumore della strada, Roma, la primavera, la ragazza di là col dottore: la vita, intorno a me, mi parve improvvisamente fermarsi, perdere realtà, farsi sogno: gli oggetti non consistevano più, i rumori non risuonavano: e in quella strana immobilità, in quel vuoto e in quel silenzio, sentii la mia piccolezza. Un'amicizia di due personaggi, un sentimento, un fatto che avevo, che *credevo* di avere immaginato nel giuoco di una trama letteraria o cinematografica, per la comodità di una vicenda fantastica, era stato, nel passato, realtà.

Ero umiliato, annullato, nella riflessione che il caso non esiste; che ci guidano forze ignote, legami lunghissimi, inconoscibili; che ogni nostro atto dipende da qualche altro atto, di altri uomini, in altri luoghi, in tempi lontanissimi.

E questa riflessione era piena di disgusto e di orrore: il disgusto di ciò che non ci possiamo spiegare, l'orrore di ciò che non possiamo illuminare con la ragione.

Leggendo poi subito l'intero articolo, vidi che il Barton Smith era stato cultore di scienze occulte e che amava dedicarsi, insieme al Da Ponte, a sedute spiritiche. Quest'ultimo particolare aumentò il mio orgasmo. Quando l'uscio si aprì, e apparve il volto ridente della ragazza, mi sentii liberato come da un incubo.

Fuggii da quella stanza, né vi tornai.

Cercai di non pensare più al caso strano.

E soltanto oggi, dopo molti altri anni, ho avuto il coraggio di raccontare.

Friends". On the next page there was the portrait of an American doctor who had been a close friend of Da Ponte in his later years in New York. A thin, hollow-cheeked face: beneath the high, skeletal brow, framed by the glow of the white wig, two strangely gleaming eyes, intense and almost diabolical. I can see them still. The name of this doctor, the friend of Da Ponte, was Barton Smith, of Boston. Boston. Probably even an ancestor of my friend from Venice…

A shiver, on reading that name, ran down my spine. I felt I was no longer alone in the room. Something, someone was there, behind me, invisible, impalpable. The ugly flowery wallpaper, the faux tapestry, the Louis XV pieces, the sun through the shutters, the street noise, Rome, spring, the girl in there with the doctor: life, all around me, suddenly seemed to stop, to lose its reality, to become a dream. Objects no longer had any substance, noises didn't resonate, and in that strange stillness, in that emptiness and silence, I felt how small I was. A friendship between two characters, a feeling, a fact that I had—that I *believed* I had made up in playing around with a plot, to make the story flow, had, in the past, been a reality.

I was humbled, undone, in reflecting that chance does not exist, that we are guided by unknown forces, by vast and unknowable connections, that all our actions depend on other actions, by other men, in other places, in far-off times.

And this reflection was full of revulsion and horror: revulsion at what we cannot explain and horror at what we cannot illuminate with reason.

When I then immediately read the whole article, I saw that this Barton Smith had dabbled in the occult and liked to participate, alongside Da Ponte, in séances. This last detail ratcheted up my agitation. When the door opened, and I saw the girl's smiling face once more, I felt liberated, as if from a nightmare.

I fled that room and never returned.

I tried to think no more about this strange case.

And only now, years later, have I had the courage to tell the tale.

Translating the Haiku of Takanori Hayakawa

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We met the poet Takanori Hayakawa at the fifth Monash Literary Translation Spring School in September 2017. Hayakawa has long held a deep interest both in the poetic medium of haiku and the study of languages, especially as a means of maintaining his ties to his homeland since migrating to Australia in 1996. In addition to being the winner of the Special Prize in the 6th Love Haiku Competition run by the non-profit organisation Kigosai in February 2017, he is actively involved with the Australian Haiku Society, promoting and broadening the public's understanding of haiku. The haiku translated into English below are twelve original works selected by the author. Our translation decisions were informed by two overarching aims: to transfer the imagery of the source texts into the target texts, and to maintain certain stylistic characteristics of Japanese haiku in English in order to convey some of the effects that exist in the originals.

In 1995, there were an estimated twenty million haiku poets in Japan belonging to at least one of twelve hundred haiku organisations engaged in producing publications and holding competitions (Kirkup 24). This popularity continues today, with twenty-three introductory guides and over two hundred haiku-related books and magazines published in 2017 alone. Annual competitions on a national scale include the International Kusamakura Haiku Competition, the NHK National Haiku and Tanka Competition, and the Association of Haiku Poets National Competition, all of which invite foreign applicants.

Japanese haiku are typically characterized by the use of a seasonal reference in the form of a *kigo* ('seasonal word'), and the principle of cutting, often manifested in the form of a *kireji* ('cutting word'), a kind of verbal caesura. The importance of these formal features cannot be understated.

Kigo serve two primarily functions. As *kigo* are words that have acquired fixed referents over the centuries through their continued use in the Japanese poetic tradition, their first function is to anchor individual poems within the larger communal body of poetic and cultural associations (Shirane 83). The second function is thematic: according to some theorists, in the aesthetics of haiku, the human world exists as part of the world of nature, symbolized in its purest shape in the form of the seasons (Ōsuga 54). The importance of nature in haiku, as embodied by the seasons, is underscored by the medium's focus on aesthetic preoccupation over human cogitation, which allows the poet to touch upon the kind of universalities that lie behind small aspects of phenomena (Ōsuga 4). Seasonal references, as symbols for wider forces of nature, help make this possible.

Kireji serve to give a haiku structure. When a *kireji* occurs in the middle of a haiku, it functions both to cut and to join, separating the two parts of the poem while at the same time implying an intrinsic correspondence, prompting the reader to consider the connection that lies between. When it occurs at the end of a haiku, the *kireji* serves to pull the reader back to the beginning, thereby leading one into a state of reflection. The *kireji* may be used to introduce playful puns and wordplay, but its primary function is to create a "thought-pause" (Yasuda 75), a verbal manifestation of the principle of *ma* ('negative space'), serving to draw the reader into a state of contemplation.

Haiku frequently describe everyday objects and experiences (Kirkup vii). Likewise, in our personal communication with the author on 21 September 2017, Hayakawa stated that his inspiration often comes suddenly, and is converted into haiku before it can fade away. As such, his poems feature a wide range of themes, from coincidental sightings during his daily commutes (no. 4), to reflections on his own state of mind (no. 3 and 6), to observations made

during his uncle's funeral (no. 10-12). While Japanese aesthetics are evident in many of Hayakawa's haiku, several of them revolve around his experiences in Australia, thus providing a unique blend of Australian imagery and Japanese poetic convention (no. 4 and 8).

The translation of poetry, especially haiku, is often considered among the most difficult in literary translation. In this vein, Satō (iii, 236-237) reflects on how Japanese haiku poets and critics have questioned whether a non-Japanese language haiku can truly be described as exhibiting the characteristics of authentic haiku, while Hagiwara (456) has argued that haiku translation is "impossible" unless the translator has developed a full understanding of the Japanese cultural and aesthetic nuances through immersion in the Japanese lifestyle. Nevertheless, many successful anglophone translators, such as Kenneth Yasuda, William Higginson, and Jane Reichhold have made significant contributions to the breadth and availability of haiku in English.

The challenges that we encountered arose from the wide range of interpretations that each haiku provides. While some haiku may initially appear straightforward, closer examination and discussion with the author offered a surprising depth into the thought processes that lay behind the word choice and subsequent imagery. For example, in poem no. 3, the poet describes his empty body, lying on a couch on a misty night. This image may suggest a weary person in a contemplative state; and yet, following discussion with the poet, we learned that the author's own interpretation is that the subject of the poem is in a state of mental disorientation after a night of heavy drinking. Similarly, poem no. 10 allows for multiple meanings: the widow may be lamenting the early death of her husband, or the early coming of summer, or perhaps both. The self-expression of the poet, how he perceives the world, and how he chooses to represent it in his poems offer the readers with multiple possibilities for interpretation, and our approach to translation hopes to offer the target audience a similar level of interpretative freedom.

Maintaining the stylistic parallelism between the source texts and the target texts also posed a challenge. In English haiku, the two principles of seasonal references (as in the case of *kigo*) and cutting (as in the case of *kireji*), remain invaluable (while the 5-7-5 prosodic scheme arguably does not). There are, however, certain significant differences in their manifestations between these two languages, particularly as the respective literary and poetic traditions of these two cultures differ significantly, to the extent that the common aesthetic qualities of one may have no functional equivalent in the other. As such, it is not so much the formal qualities of Japanese haiku that are reproduced in English, but rather their poetic effects and aesthetic functions.

Seasonal references used in Japanese haiku have acquired their meanings through centuries of use in the Japanese poetic tradition. As such, while there have been attempts to develop independent English lexicons of seasonal words in the form of specialized *saijiki* ('seasonal almanacs') designed to suit the geographical and climatic characteristics of territories outside of Japan (as in Higginson), in general, seasonal words are not always used in English haiku, and when they are, they often do not serve the same role that they would in Japanese (Shirane 85). Consequently, however, one of the key functions of *kigo*, what Shirane calls a "vertical axis" of meaning linking individual poems across time, whether to prior literary works or to other cultural memories, is largely absent in English haiku (80). For example, in poem no. 9, in which the poet reminisces about his homeland, the Japanese word *kaki* ('persimmon') carries connotations that do not exist in English: as a seasonal word, it implies autumn, and allusively conveys an astringent sense of nostalgia for things that have passed. As these connotations are not shared by the English poetry tradition, they are likely to be missed by English readers, who may approach the poem in a different manner. In order to address this, the connotations of nostalgia were reinforced in other ways, namely through the poet's description of thinking about home. In this way, specific meanings along the 'vertical axis'

may not always carry across into English, but they can be addressed in other ways, and it is of course possible for readers to ascribe new poetic experience to works entering a new culture.

Differences similarly exist in the use of cutting. In Japanese, cutting generally take the form of grammatical particles or particular verbal conjugations which have no clear equivalents in English. As such, where such caesura are marked in English haiku, it is generally through the use of punctuation in order both to indicate a verbal pause and to illustrate a juxtaposition and parallelism between the poem's constituent parts (Hiraga 468). For example, in poem no. 12, the reader is at first shown an image of pure, young hydrangeas, and only after the appearance of the cut is the funeral mentioned. This creates a parallelism which prompts the reader to go back to the preceding part of the poem and consider that the words *wakaki* ('young') and *kiyoshi* ('pure') may also be in reference to the deceased individual. Moreover, a cut may occur at the end of a haiku, in which case there may be no overt indication of its presence. Nonetheless, so long as the poem produces a negative space into which the reader may enter, the function of the cut may be said to have been retained.

To preserve the imagery and connotations that exist in the source texts in English translation, it is important to fully appreciate the poetic techniques utilized by the author and the aesthetic effects that these produce. While it may not have been possible to reproduce every nuance that exists in the Japanese source texts, it is hoped that these translations will allow the target text readership to share in and create their own interpretations of these works, and therefore partake in the aesthetic experience that is haiku.

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Selected Haiku
By Takanori Hayakawa

Selected Haiku
By Takanori Hayakawa
Translated by Lola Sundin and Haydn Trowell

1. 風船や一歳になる親孝行

a balloon in the sky—
the filial devotion
of turning one

2. 思春期のヒト科は臭し春の土

spring earth—
the scent
of pubescent hominids

3. 朧夜の寝椅子横たふ我の殻

my empty body—
laying on the lounge
this misty night

4. ロリキート鳴き過ぐる空春の空

the cries of lorikeets
shrilling past—
the spring sky

5. 朽ちし薔薇美貌の婆に似たりけり

a wilting rose—
like a beauty
past her prime

6. 空蝉や今日も昨日の繰り返し

this moulted shell—
the same today
as yesterday

7. 千羽鶴胴つき抜かれ原爆忌

origami cranes
their bodies pierced by strings—
atomic bombing memorial

8. 十字星たよりにさがす天の川

the Milky Way—
found with the aid of
the Southern Cross

9. 豪州の柿見ておもふ祖国かな

persimmon viewing
in Australia
and thinking of home

伯父他界す

On the death of my uncle.

10. 「あっけない」呟く寡婦や夏浅し

"too soon,"
the widow sighs—
summer's arrival

11. 白百合や弔衣の伯母の丸背中

a white lily—
the rounded back
of my aunt in mourning

12. まだ若き紫陽花清し通夜の庭

the hydrangeas
still young and pure—
nightlong vigil

Contemporary Polish Short Stories in English

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The two contemporary Polish short stories translated here, Izabela Szolc's "Teraźniejszość rzeczy minionych" ["The Present Time of Things Past"] and Miłka O. Malzahn's "Piękne sny" ["Beautiful Dreams"], both first appeared in the *2014 Anthology of Contemporary Polish Stories*, in the series Kwadrat.[1] This anthology showcased the thematic range and stylistic versatility of Polish short stories that draw attention to themselves through their reflections on the process of representation, and their tendency towards radical unconventionality.[2] The proliferation of such texts would seem to reflect a demand for popular literature that requires the reader to negotiate the relationship between form and content.[3]

The two texts presented here are characteristically likely to appeal to various audiences beyond Polish borders. "Present Time" and "Beautiful Dreams" recount few events, but stand out in their respective potential to nuance our traditional conceptions of family relationships and moral responsibility; to stimulate discussions on the nature of conscience and consciousness; and to spur us to a higher level of self-awareness. The point where these stories converge, which motivated my choice to translate them in tandem, is their evocation of the complexity and peculiarity of the mental life. Conservative in terms of action, the stories reflect their authors' engagement with how a mind handles life's most extreme unpredictabilities.

Szolc's "Present Time" and Malzahn's "Beautiful Dreams" are not ordinary accounts of empathy and love as they go beyond the representation of what it means to suffer pain for someone else (specifically of parents for their daughters). The former articulates more than the anxiety of aging, the duty of care, or the inaccessibility of one's inner life to another; the latter explores more than the selflessness of a parent's sacrifice, or the anticipation or even – quite astonishingly – the actual experience of one's own death. They both capture the poignant awareness of the imminent death of a loved one differently – the confrontation with the vulnerable nature of the self, which is both unprepared for loss, and always fundamentally private. To nuance the drama of anticipation, Szolc and Malzahn exploit the special capability of the narrative to disclose to us that we not only have conscious minds, but that we have minds different from those of others.

In "Present Time," the act of withholding knowledge, focalized through the thoughts and feelings of an elderly father, creates both narrative and emotional tension. This technique also reflects the story's wider interest in the construction of fictional consciousnesses. Szolc's almost plotless configuration of the father's relationship with his daughter relies on the stream-of consciousness-like episodes for its emotional impact: we enter into the mindset of these characters through a chain of interior monologues. An apparently trivial dialogue, a seemingly random account of external behaviours, and the close attention paid to surrounding objects are all additional sources of insight into the father's and daughter's mental states. Indeed, it is "the accumulation of micro-detail," Szolc has divulged, that "serves to sharpen the reader's attention to the psychological state of affairs, to engage us in imaginatively over-hearing the

[1] See, pp. 114-15, and pp. 99-104 respectively. These page numbers are cited throughout.
[2] Paweł Gorszewski's story entitled "Picie" (["Drinking"], pp. 239-40) is an extreme example of the absurd type of humour that surfaces in the flagrantly grotesque opening line: "The rumour that undies drink spread in the drawer."
[3] A sustained flow of short stories published by Forma every three years (2008, 2011, 2014 and 2017) testifies to the ongoing recent readerly interest in this genre.

characters' self-talk,"[4] as if to catch the daughter's whispered thoughts: 'He'll die and I'll finally be free;' 'Without him, I'll be totally alone;' and conversely, the father's silent cries: 'She'll die and I'll be free again;' 'How will I cope on my own when she's gone?' In the story, old age is likened to death, and a human body is configured as a storehouse of distant sensations and memories: in Szolc's own words, "You are alive, but already dead. You have become a present manifestation of things past."[5] Self-conscious awareness of being entrapped in a failing body extends age-related suffering: "we won't live through our own death, but we may live through our own infirmity."[6]

The representation of thought, likewise, seems to be the central preoccupation of Malzahn's "Beautiful Dreams," which foregrounds the voice of a semi-dead woman (speaking from a limbo-like existence), along with the representation of attributes associated with her out-of-body experience, such as the possession of an immaterial body with a conscious mind in the midst of a psychological dilemma; an ability to connect to the thoughts and feelings of others; and a free-willed decision to return to the physical world. The originality of Malzahn's story reflects gnostic notions of *being* and the associated contemplation of the self and one's own purpose in life. But the author has suggested that the story might be thought to instantiate an unusual kind of auto-reflective re-imagining and expression of her own affective responses to recalled dreams. The story's stimulus, Malzahn has disclosed, was the memory of an intense emotion she experienced in a dream, the recollection of a protective, specifically maternal, impulse. In fact, much of Malzahn's fiction is underpinned by the reality of her dreams: "Fictional emotions as I present them are not […] entirely made up or drawn directly from my own life experiences; rather, they are in a large part retrieved from the repository of my stored dream memories […] transported naturally into the narrative space."[7] Malzahn's fiction is, as a result, characterized by robust "sensuous images" derived from her dreams, which she then creatively exploits to "build some story around."[8]

The translations here offer a linguistic interpretation of the originals, via the more accepted method of a "sense-for-sense" transformation, rather than a "word-for-word" matching, with the objective of achieving a "dynamic equivalence" (Hickey 2). This perspective assumes a reader-centred rendering, whereby the translated stories are likely to evoke in the English-speaking reader similar impressions of the source-texts' styles and aesthetic qualities to those induced in a Polish-speaking reader, and also to create an equivalent emotional resonance. Whilst this approach articulates the primary aim of my translation – to produce linguistically, aesthetically and psychologically comparable texts, or simply put, a similar reading *experience* – a few words are needed about the prioritization of 'faithfulness' in translation over any other principle. Conventionally, 'faithfulness' is linked to the idea of the translator performing their duty mechanically, paying little attention to the differences in the grammatical, semantic and rhetorical architectures of the host and target languages. The quest for 'literalism' requires that there is no apparent conflict between the two versions as a result of this matching. But in this system, the translation does not necessarily fare well on readability or fluency, and the translator might not have produced a semantically parallel discourse "in as unmediated a way as possible" (Zbinden 160). Boris Pasternak once famously argued for the subordinate role of "literal exactness" and "similarity of form," privileging instead a model of translation that specifically targets a reality effect, capable of rendering "an impression of life and not of verbiage" (125), through the naturalization of language.

[4] Personal communication with author, 18/10/2017.
[5] Here, as in Szolc's story and providing her title, she invokes the words of St Augustine of Hippo: see *Confessions*, p. 235.
[6] Personal communication with author, 18/10/2017.
[7] Personal communication with author, 9/10/2017.
[8] Personal communication with author, 9/10/2017.

An associated obstacle to linguistic accuracy, according to George Steiner, is the issue of rendering national idioms (49-50). Similarly, Anna Wierzbicka and many others have convincingly shown the persistent untranslatability of these culturally specific packets of meaning, questioning the viability of any attempt to ever satisfactorily settle the issue of linguistic non-alignment.[9] Acknowledging these differences has informed my own rendering of the stories below into readable English – in particular, the transformation of grammatical structures, the negotiation of semantic meaning, the re-inscription of discursive features and the refinement of unstandardized Polish expressions. My aim is that each "translated text seems 'natural,' that is, not translated" (Venuti 5).

A few examples will illustrate this process. Those instances in which Polish idiosyncratic expressions lacked English equivalents, as in "Nie byłoby to nic wychodzącego poza ramy wysapanej formuły grzecznościowej" ("Present Time," 114), necessitated a divergent syntactic structure and oftentimes additional words for sense-making. This sentence, literally translated, means 'It wouldn't be anything beyond the limits of a breathless polite formula,' though I have rendered it more smoothly as: "It wouldn't have been beyond the limits of politeness for him to have laboured his thanks." This modification seems reasonable, given the contextual clue, which the phrase 'thank you' provides in the preceding sentence. The alteration sounds natural enough and it communicates the embodied effort of the expression, though the substitute phrase "to labour thanks" is well rid of the component of deep breathing that the Polish verb "sapać" includes. A rhetorical sacrifice has also been needed when translating the gender of persons. Grammatically, the noun phrase "wiekowe sąsiadki" (115) is clear regarding the sex of the persons in question, indicating the plural form of the feminine 'neighbour.' In the translation, since there is no feminine marker in the English noun, the word 'female' has been added to compensate, resulting in "the elderly female neighbours." One cannot avoid, however, the impression of invasive verbosity (and perhaps an unintended emphasis) as a result, especially on top of the likelihood that the implicit social comment regarding the propensity of older women to listen to Radio Maryja will be lost on most English readers.

Another challenge has involved the translation of colloquialisms. The familiar expression used by Szolc to suggest the elderly man's erection: "Tylko pod ciepłym strumieniem wody ptak mu jeszcze stawał" (115), has been cast as "Only under the warm stream of water would he still get a hard-on." At the expense of the imagistic expressiveness of the Polish "ptak" (literally, 'a bird' that could still get up), the English vulgarism nevertheless seems to express the intended Polish meaning, which is the image of an old man faced with his fading potency. Similarly, in "Beautiful Dreams," Malzahn conveys the anger of a woman at her own liminal existential condition via the common Polish expletive: "I trafiłby mnie szlag ze złości na to, co mnie spotkało, gdyby […]" (100), which I have cast as: "And I would be damn angry at what happened to me, if […]." These choices have meant losing the characteristic reverberance of the Polish vernacular, but, conversely, also preserving the low register.

A further consideration involved Polish diminutive forms, used as expressions of affection. Malzahn uses the Polish word "matka" ('mother') only once, consistently opting for the slightly less formal "mama" (used 39 times) to emphasize the close emotional connection between mother and daughter. This endearment, however, only occurs twice in translation as "mum" – when in the vocative case – and elsewhere as "mother," thereby capturing the relationship expressed rather than the term used. Likewise, Malzahn limits her usage of "córka" ('daughter') to three instances in favour of the more affectionate word "córcia" (used five

[9] See, e.g., Anna Wierzbicka, *Semantics, Culture, and Cognition*; *Understanding Cultures Through Their Key Words*; and *Emotions Across Languages and Cultures*.

times), and twice as a diminutive variation, "córeczka," for which the English phrases – "my child," "my little one," and "my darling" – have served as comparable substitutions, as contextually suitable. These choices capture the emotional charge of the original idiomatically in English, and foregrounds the maternal relationship, which is so important in this text.

Beyond these syntactic and semantic changes, the process of translation has entailed textual and editorial emendations. Notably, in "Beautiful Dreams," the semi-dead woman experiences heightened sensitivity towards other people: "Przeistaczałam się w samo sedno totalnego współczucia" (102). A conservative translation would read: 'I was becoming the epitome of absolute compassion,' which, with some editorial license, has been cast as: "I was becoming the soul of compassion." In an earlier instance, on page 99, there is talk of the granddaughters, "które zbyt wcześnie żegnają radosne dzieciństwo, skazane na brak matki, na pustkę" (roughly, "who say 'goodbye' to their happy childhood all too soon, doomed to the lack of a mother, the emptiness"). For stylistic fluidity, I have condensed this, rendering the envisaged fate of the girls as those "who would leave behind their happy childhood all too soon, doomed to the emptiness of an absent mother," thereby achieving both emotional force and effective compactness. Such editorial reconfigurations have been necessary to navigate the reader's way through Malzahn's usage of idiomatic and literary language.

The achievement of grammatical accuracy at the sentence level has also meant certain unavoidable adjustments. Crucially, unlike Polish, English usually requires that nouns be qualified either by the insertion of articles, possessive pronouns or specific differentiating names. For clarity, throughout, "wujek" ("uncle") changes into "uncle Arek," with the exception of "the girls' uncle" used once, and just "uncle" when used once in direct address; and conversely "mama" ("mother") is consistently translated as "my mother," a logical move since the daughter tells the story from her perspective.

This discussion of my translation techniques suggests that the English versions here are attuned to, rather than imitative of, the internal design of "Present Time" and "Beautiful Dreams," in that they reproduce the stories' narrative content and style within the possibilities and constraints of the English language, with readability being the chief criterion. No concrete linguistic, aesthetic or rhetorical rules, beyond intuitive and sensitive handling of the conventions and peculiarities of two languages, can tell a translator how to get the translation 'right,' or how to resolve the semantic entrapments of the source text, whilst giving that text justice. The solution, which ideally coincides with a motivation for harmony, transparency and veracity, is to accept Venuti's stance that "translations are different in intention and effect from original compositions, and this generic distinction is worth preserving as a means of describing different sorts of writing practices" (6).[10] I thereby believe my translations to be derivative products, the value of which is my own individual perception of Szolc's and Malzahn's works, which I present here for English readers who might not have access to the texts in their original language.

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[10] Edith Grossman, *Why Translation Matters*, pp. 31-2, makes a similar point.

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Teraźniejszość Rzeczy Minionych
By *Izabela Szolc*

„Nasze żywoty są rzekami
wpływającymi do morza,
które jest umieraniem".
Jorge Manrique

– Dziękuję, doktorze – powiedział i w porę się powstrzymał, żeby nie dodać: „jestem zobowiązany, panie doktorze". Nie byłoby to nic wychodzącego poza ramy wysapanej formuły grzecznościowej. Wolną dłonią przesunął po klatce piersiowej, jeszcze nie wiedział, jak ta wiadomość go zmieni. Drugą ręką próbował odwiesić słuchawkę telefonu. Zsunęła się i uderzyła o ścianę. Więc ją poprawił.

Zobaczył, jak drżą palce; zła czy dobra wiadomość wprawia ciało w identyczne podniecenie. Kiedy dotyczy to tak starego ciała jak jego, jest to już pewna atrakcja. Wykrzywił usta: jak tu zabić ten czas, który pozostał? Co zrobić? Sięgnął do policzka, aby się podrapać. Obwisła skóra, prawie bez śladu miękkiego zarostu. Pomyśleć, że kiedyś, w pełni sił, musiał golić się dwa razy dziennie. Wieczorem, takim samym jak dzisiaj, zdejmowałby już brzytwą pianę z twarzy, ściągając granatową szarość z brody i okolic. Na zacięcie nalepiłby kawałek gazety. Ręce miał pewne, ale serce nie, młody i niecierpliwy. Ha! Rozpoznawał się w tamtej zjawie, a jednak rozpoznawał.

Klucz zazgrzytał we frontowych drzwiach. Kobieta weszła od razu do kuchni, trzasnęła zakupami o blat.

Podreptał tam. Kapcie szurały po podłodze.

The Present Time of Things Past
By Izabela Szolc
Translated by Kamila Walker

"Our lives are fated as the rivers
That gather downward to the sea
We know as Death"[1]
– Jorge Manrique

"Thank you, doctor," he said, and he held himself back just in time not to add: "I am indebted to you, doctor." It wouldn't have been beyond the limits of politeness for him to have laboured his thanks. He slowly moved his free hand over his chest, not yet understanding how this news would affect him. He tried to hang up the phone with the other hand. It slid down and slammed against the wall. So he placed it back.

He noticed how his fingers trembled; bad or good news spurs the body into the same sort of awakening. When it happens to such an old body as his, it is already a kind of excitement. He grimaced: how to kill the time that is left? What to do? He reached up to his cheek to scratch himself. His saggy skin hardly had a trace of soft hair. And to think that once, in his prime, he had to shave twice a day. In the evening, just as now, he would razor the foam from his face, removing the dark-blue stubble from his chin and surrounding areas. He would put a scrap of newspaper on a nick. His arms were strong then, but his heart wasn't, he was young and restless. Hah! He recognised himself in that image, he still did.

The key jiggled in the front door. A woman came straight into the kitchen and thudded the groceries down on the bench.

He shuffled over. His slippers dragged across the floor.

[1] Jorge Manrique, *Coplas por la muerte de su padre* (in English: *The Coplas on the Death of His Father, the Grand-Master of Santiago*), trans. Thomas Walsh, in *Hispanic Anthology: Poems Translated from the Spanish by English and North American Poets*, collected and arranged by Thomas Walsh (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1920), pp. 82-105, at p. 84 (*The Introit*, lines 25-7). In this eulogy, beside the familiar conceptual metaphor of life as a river that ends in the sea (with a novel variation, where the river signifies a life of grandeur, and the stream represents a life of modesty), Manrique employs many other conventional metaphors configuring life variously as a dream and sleep, an object that is taken away, a guide-posted road to heaven, a highway of tears, a day that ends in rest, or a journey with death as the final destination, to emphasize the moral obligation to live wisely and honorably despite the challenges of an earthly existence, with the promise of a heavenly reward. Given these resonances, this quotation sets the story's theme.

– Jadłeś coś?

Nie odpowiedział. Zaczerwieniła się lekko.

– Nie możesz wziąć leków na czczo. Zjesz coś. Zrobię ci kanapkę – mówiła do niego jak do dziecka; ale niedługo, koniec z tym! I nie będzie się musiał prosić o więcej ostrej musztardy. Zakres swojej wolności mierzył tym cholernym żółtym sosem.

– Wykąpiesz się przed jedzeniem. Poradzisz sobie sam pod prysznicem? Wstawić ci plastikowe krzesełko?

– Nie – i z usprawiedliwieniem – tylko mi przeszkadza.

Manipulował przy kurkach, kiedy ona weszła, kładąc na pralce świeżą piżamę. Kabina prysznicowa była z mlecznego szkła.

Musiała sprawdzić wzrokiem, ujrzeć jego zgarbaciałą sylwetkę, jak i on zerkał na nią.

Namydlił się i znowu puścił wodę. Chwała Bogu, nie należał do tych starców, co jak psy wzdrygają się przed kąpielą. Tylko pod ciepłym strumieniem wody ptak mu jeszcze stawał. Musiał być ostrożny, bardzo ostrożny.

Wytarł się i przebrał. Na kanapie czekał wełniany koc. Będą razem oglądać telewizję. Kobieta podała mu talerz z kanapkami. W mgnieniu oka zobaczył, że i ona ma stare ręce. Stare ręce z poobgryzanymi paznokciami. Przez te wszystkie lata do tych poobgryzanych paznokci zdołał się przyzwyczaić.

– Okrutny jest ten świat – powiedziała po wiadomościach. Rozczarowała go. Przecież była inteligentna, skąd więc nagle ten banał?

– Jak się czujesz?

– Lepiej niż Sarajewo – powiedział, bo to jedno mu przyszło do głowy. – Stara wojna, identyczna jak nowe.

– Powinieneś iść do lekarza.

– Ależ chodzę. To znaczy ty chodzisz za siebie i za mnie.

Położył ręce na kocu; wnętrzem dłoni ku górze, jakby gotowy, żeby podtrzymać

"Have you eaten anything?"

He didn't answer. She turned a little red.

"You can't take your medicine on an empty stomach. You must eat something. I'll make you a sandwich," she said to him, as if to a child; but this would be over soon! And he would no longer need to plead for more hot mustard. He measured the extent of his freedom by that damn yellow sauce.

"Have a shower before eating. Can you cope in the shower on your own? Do you want a plastic chair?"

"No, I don't," and he justified, "it only gets in the way."

He was fiddling with the taps when she came in to put his fresh pyjamas on the washing machine. The shower recess was made of frosted glass.

She had to check on him, to see his hunched silhouette, just as he too had to glance at her.

He soaped himself and then ran the water again. Thank God, he wasn't one of those old fellows, who, like dogs, shrank away from a wash. Only under the warm stream of water would he still get a hard-on. He had to be careful, very careful.

He dried himself and got dressed. On the couch lay a woollen blanket. They would watch TV together. The woman handed him a plate of sandwiches. Instantly he noticed that she too had old hands. Old hands with gnawed nails. Over the years he had become used to those gnawed nails.

"It's a cruel world," she said after the news. She disappointed him. After all, she was intelligent, so why suddenly this cliché?

"How are you feeling?"

"Better than Sarajevo," he said, because it was the first thing that entered his head. "An old war, identical to the new ones."

"You should go to the doctor."

"But I do. I mean, you go enough for both of us."

He placed his hands on the blanket; palms up, as if ready to support the ceiling. He'd always been like that, she just didn't remember. Never had he been irritable whilst

strop. Zawsze taki był, ona po prostu tego nie pamięta. Nigdy, oglądając telewizję, nie był nerwowy, nie ściskał kolan, nie uderzał się po udach...

Usiadła obok. Opuścił głowę na jej ramię; a później nawet trochę się śmiali. Leciał sitcom z podłożonym śmiechem, nie pasowało więc, żeby tak siedzieć i milczeć.

– Pora spać – zaanonsowała noc. Pocałował kobietę w czoło. Herolda, który przynosi złe wieści nigdy się chyba nie zabija? Ale, czy kiedy wygłosi swoje, wciąż można go kochać?

– Nie czytaj za długo – rzuciła, w jej głosie dźwięczał śmieszek. Dobrze, że on nie musi czytać z pomocą latarki, z głową pod kołdrą. Ona też nie musiała. Teraz rewanżowała się ojcu. Dom zawsze był pełen książek. Tylko na radio powiedziała zdecydowane nie. Czy bała się, że jest tak stary, tak przerażony nadchodzącą nocą, że jak wiekowe sąsiadki zacznie słuchać Radia Maryja? Nie. Miał lepszych przewodników. Takich potrzebował, dziś i jutro. W zasadzie to targany „przeczuciem" – brał to pojęcie w intelektualny cudzysłów – przez parę wieczorów wczytywał się w słowa nawróconego hulaki, dzietnego, Świętego Augustyna:

„I właściwie nie należałoby mówić, że istnieją trzy dziedziny czasu – przeszłość, teraźniejszość i przyszłość. Może ściślejsze byłoby takie ujęcie, że istnieją następujące trzy dziedziny czasu: teraźniejszość, rzeczy minione, teraźniejszość rzeczy przyszłych. Jakieś tego rodzaju trzy dziedziny istnieją w duszy; ale nigdzie indziej ich nie widzę. Teraźniejszością rzeczy przeszłych jest pamięć, teraźniejszością rzeczy obecnych jest dostrzeganie, teraźniejszością rzeczy przyszłych – oczekiwanie"[2]

watching TV, never had he clutched his knees or slapped his thighs…

She sat down beside him. He rested his head on her shoulder; and later they even laughed a little. A sitcom with a laugh track was on, so it didn't seem quite right to just sit there in silence.

The night signalled it was time for bed. He kissed the woman on her forehead. A herald, who bears bad tidings, never gets killed, does he? Then again, once the herald has delivered what he has to say, can he still be loved?

"Don't read for too long," she chided, with a giggle in her voice. It's good that he didn't have to read with the help of a torch, with his head under the covers. Neither did she. She was returning her father a favour. The home had always been full of books. She had only ever categorically said 'no' to the radio. Was she afraid that he was so old, and so terrified of the approaching night, as to begin to listen to the Virgin Mary radio station just like the elderly female neighbours? No. He had better guides. He needed such, today and tomorrow. In fact, tormented by a "gut feeling," he was placing this concept within intellectual inverted commas – for several evenings now, he had been poring over the words of a converted sinner, and the father himself, St Augustine:

"What is by now evident and clear is that neither future nor past exists, and it is inexact language to speak of three times – past, present, and future. Perhaps it would be exact to say: there are three times, a present of things past, a present of things present, a present of things to come. In the soul there are these three aspects of time, and I do not see them anywhere else. The present considering the past is the memory, the present considering the present is immediate awareness, the present considering the future is expectation."[3]

[2] Św. Augustyn *Wyznania*, przekład Zygmunt Kubiak, Warszawa 1982.

[3] St Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions*, translation, introduction and notes by Henry Chadwick (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 235. His definition of time defies the customary division of this concept into past, present and future on the basis of the contended non-existence of past and future, with the qualification that, while conventional language usage reflects a widespread habit of thinking of time in terms of these three separate spaces, the mind can properly conceive of time only from the vantage point of the present

Jak powiedzieć córce, że to ona umiera, a nie on?

Piękne Sny
By Miłka O. Malzahn

Dzień po mojej śmierci zobaczyłam moją mamę skuloną na krześle, z suchymi ustami zaciśniętymi mocno. Cała była w smutku, zdecydowanie na nią za ciężkim.

W pokoju obok moje dwie córeczki bawiły się zbyt cicho. Tylko szurały zabawkami i rozmawiały półgłosem. Martwiłam się. Martwiłam się o nie bardzo. Martwiłam, aż do bólu mojego (martwego) ciała. Nie zajrzałam jednak do ich pokoju, ale przystanęłam przy mamie. Miała 59 lat, nie była stara, to nie ten wiek, by można się było poddawać na całej linii. Wyglądała wprawdzie na 65, bo od kilkunastu lat walczyła z chorobą, która trzy lata temu doprowadziła do operacji. Otwierano jej czaszkę. To się nazywa: kraniotomia. Taka neutralna nazwa dla osobistego koszmaru. Kraniotomia pomogła tylko częściowo, a straszliwe migreny, które kiedyś zaczynały się od potylicy i obejmowały całą mamę bardzo powoli, teraz zaczynały się od zabliźnionych szwów. Moja mama podczas migrenowych napadów najpierw wymiotowała, a potem leżała nieruchomo pod lekką kołdrą, w zacienionym pokoju. Przeważnie przez trzy, cztery dni.

Teraz przystanęłam przy niej i automatycznie wczułam się w jej obecny stan za pomocą mojego (wciąż żywotnego) 'ja'. Wiedziałam, że czeka na migrenę. Naprawdę czekała na ból tak, jakby miał jej przynieść ulgę. Świadomość, że ja nie żyję była dla niej nie do zniesienia. Jej myśli krążyły wokół wnuczek, które zbyt wcześnie żegnają radosne dzieciństwo, skazane na brak matki, na pustkę (obie były w wieku przedszkolnym). Wyobrażała sobie siebie jako starą, słabą, chudą kobiecinę umierającą

How to tell his daughter that it was she who was dying and not him?

Beautiful Dreams
By Miłka O. Malzahn
Translated by Kamila Walker

The day after my death I saw my mother curled up in a chair with her dry lips pressed tightly together. She was in sorrow, much too heavy for her to bear.

In the room next door my two little daughters played all too quietly, just shuffling their toys and speaking to each other softly. I was worried. I was very worried about them. Worried so much that my (dead) body ached. I didn't, however, look into their room, instead I stayed with my mother. She was 59, she wasn't old, it wasn't an age to give up all together. In truth she looked 65, for she had been fighting an illness for some years now, which three years ago had required surgery. She had had her skull opened up. It's called a craniotomy. Such a neutral term for such a personal nightmare. The craniotomy only partially helped, because the dreadful migraines, which had once started from the back of the head slowly enveloping my whole mother, were now starting at the faded sutures. During migraine attacks, my mother would first vomit and then lie motionless under a light duvet in a dark room. Usually for up to three to four days.

I now stood beside her and automatically tapped into her present condition through my (still living) "I." I knew she was waiting for a migraine. She really waited for the pain as if it would bring her some relief. The awareness that I was dead was beyond her endurance. She was thinking of her granddaughters, who would leave behind their happy childhood all too soon, doomed to the emptiness of an absent mother (both were preschool age). She was imagining herself as an old, weak and thin

that makes a logical and meaningful connection (in the form of "memory", "immediate awareness" and "expectation" [p. 235]) to "the past which does not now exist or the future which does not yet exist" (p. 233).

nagle przy śniadaniu, na oczach dziewczynek.

– Co to za głupie fantazje? – pomyślałam z irytacją – a mama miała nadzieję, że migrena już zaraz wypchnie wszystkie myśli z głowy.

Dziewczynkom powiedziano, że mama jest w szpitalu. Nic więcej. Nie było mnie dopiero drugi dzień. Jeszcze całkiem przyzwoicie. Mogły myśleć, że żyję. Czy w ogóle kiedykolwiek mówiłam im o śmierci – zastanawiałam się nad tym w jakimś nagłym przerażeniu. Nie, nie mówiłam.

Informację o tym, że nie przeżyłam przekazał mamie wujek Arek, lekarz, znawca gnozy, profesor o szerokich horyzontach i naturalnych skłonnościach do ascezy. To on czuwał przy mnie... wtedy gdy odchodziłam, to on się teraz spieszył, by zdążyć przyjechać do mieszkania jeszcze przed migreną. Znał symptomy i czasem potrafił mamie znosić ból. Wiedziałam jednak, że tym razem zwykły zastrzyk nie pomoże.

Poczułam przeogromne współczucie dla mamy, która skulona, przycupnięta na krześle w małej kuchni, z nadzieją czekała na pierwszą, największą falę bólu, mogącą przykryć rozpacz po utracie dziecka.

Nie mogłam jej pomóc. Nie mogłam jej pocieszyć. Nie mogłam jej powiedzieć, że w sumie nadal jakoś istnieję. Nic nie mogłam. I trafiłby mnie szlag ze złości na to, co mnie spotkało, gdyby z pokoju dziewczynek nie dobiegło szuranie. Spojrzałam na drzwi, z których wychyliły się dwie jasne główki:

– O, Boże – jęknęłam. Nie byłam przygotowana na ich widok. Tak zobaczyć je, bez możliwości przytulenia, przywitania się i przyniesienia prezentów, jak zawsze, gdy wracałam z jakiejś podróży – to było okrucieństwo. Aż się skurczyłam w sobie, w sobie nieistniejącej właściwie, w sobie – pamięci o sobie. Dziewczynki poszeptały między sobą i cofnęły się.

Wtedy zadzwonił do drzwi wujek Arek. Moja starsza córeczka wystrzeliła z

wretch, suddenly dying at the breakfast table before their very eyes.

"What stupid fantasies?" I thought with irritation, as my mother hoped that the migraine would soon push all the thoughts out of her head.

The girls had been told that their mother was in hospital. Nothing else. It was only the second day of my absence. Still quite reasonable. They could think that I was alive. Had I ever explained to them about death? I realized with sudden terror that, no, I hadn't.

The news that I hadn't survived was passed onto my mother by my uncle Arek, a doctor, an expert in Gnosticism, a professor with wide intellectual horizons and a natural inclination to asceticism. It was he who had been watching over me… at the time I was departing, it was he who was now rushing to the apartment to arrive just in time before the migraine. He was familiar with the symptoms and sometimes could relieve my mother's pain. I knew, however, that this time a regular injection would not help.

I felt immense compassion towards my mother, who, curled up, perched on a chair in the small kitchen, waited with hope for the first, and the strongest, wave of pain to drown out the grief of losing a child.

I couldn't help her. I couldn't comfort her. I couldn't tell her that I still somehow existed. I could do nothing. And I would be damn angry at what happened to me, if not for the shuffling noise coming from the girls' room. I glanced at the door, from behind which two little fair heads popped out.

"Good God," I groaned. I wasn't prepared for the sight of them. To see them like that, without the possibility of cuddling them, of saying 'hello,' or bringing gifts like I'd always done whenever I returned from a trip – it was cruelty. So much so that I shrank within myself, within myself that didn't really exist, within my new identity – the memory of myself. The girls whispered among themselves and withdrew back into their room.

At that moment, uncle Arek rang the doorbell. My eldest daughter sped out of the

pokoju jak z procy, by otworzyć drzwi. Mama wyprostowała się z trudem i, pojękując, cicho wstała, by postawić czajnik na gaz.

Wujek podniósł Agatkę do góry i pozwolił Alince wspiąć się na plecy i uwiesić na szyi, po czym obie dziewczynki zaniósł do pokoju. Z kieszeni płaszcza wyjął pismo „Promyczek" (dwa egzemplarze, żeby nie było awantur) i obiecał, że potem im poczyta.

Popatrzył na mnie, co mnie zdziwiło (przecież umarłam!) i jednocześnie nie zdziwiło mnie wcale (przecież jednak tu jakoś byłam!). Po wujku zawsze spodziewałam się niezwykłości. To, że widzi świeże trupy i inne okropne (jak wówczas sądziłam) rzeczy – od dziecka było dla mnie jasne. Tymczasem on wszedł do kuchni, pochylił się nad swoją siostrą, czyli moją mamą (był chudy i bardzo wysoki), pogłaskał ją po głowie:

– Chcesz teraz? – zapytał.

– Wolę teraz – odpowiedziała.

– To dobrze – zgodził się – ale najpierw musimy porozmawiać.

– Musimy? – Spuściła głowę, która z minuty na minutę robiła się coraz cięższa. Mama usiadła przy stole. A wujek przysunął krzesło tak, by siedzieć naprzeciwko niej:

– Wiesz, że ona nie odeszła jeszcze, tak na dobre? – zaczął, głaszcząc delikatnie mamę po dłoni.

– Moja córcia żyje? – Mama zadrżała.

– Nie żyje – powiedział Arek spokojnie – ale jeszcze nie odeszła na dobre.

– Co to znaczy? – zapytała mama, a ja nadstawiłam ucha.

– To znaczy, że jest poza ciałem i na razie oswaja się z tym stanem. Ma silną wolę życia. I niejasną sytuację karmiczną. – Wujek Arek westchnął. – Mama o coś chciała zapytać, ale jej nie pozwolił. – Poczekaj – powiedział. – Ona jest poza życiem, ale także poza śmiercią. Jeszcze istnieje możliwość powrotu, ale ma wyczerpany energetyczny potencjał

room like a shot from a sling to open the door. My mother straightened up with difficulty, and moaning, rose quietly to put the kettle on the stove.

The girls' uncle lifted Agatka up high and let Alinka climb up his back and hang on his neck, and then carried both girls back to their room. Out of the pocket of his coat he pulled the magazine "Promyczek"[4] (two copies to avoid quarrels) and promised to read to them later.

He looked at me, which surprised me (I was dead after all!) and at the same time it didn't surprise me in the least (I was still there somehow!). I'd always expected the unusual from my uncle. That he could see fresh corpses and other horrible things (as I then thought) – had been clear to me from childhood. Meanwhile he walked into the kitchen, bent over his sister, that is, my mother (he was thin and very tall), and stroked her head:

"Do you want it now?" he asked.

"I prefer it now," she replied.

"Very well," he agreed, "but first we must talk."

"Must we?" She lowered her head, which was getting heavier with every passing minute. My mother sat down at the table. And my uncle pulled up a chair to sit facing her.

"Do you know that she hasn't left for good yet?" he began, gently stroking my mother's hand.

"Is my child still alive?" My mother trembled.

"She's dead," said Arek calmly, "but she hasn't yet gone away for good."

"What does that mean?" my mother asked, as I pricked up my ears.

"That means that she is out of her body and is now adjusting to that state. She has a strong will to live. And an unclear karmic situation." Uncle Arek sighed. My mother wanted to ask something, but he wouldn't let her. "Wait," he said. "She's beyond life, but also beyond death. There's still the possibility of return, but her

[4] A popular Polish magazine for children.

istnienia. Jeśli wyrówna ten brak, będzie miała szansę powrócić.

– Jaki brak? – zapytała mama. Wyprostowała się i zaczęła niecierpliwie przebierać palcami, które dotychczas blade i nieruchome, okazały się jakby siłą napędową jej myśli.

– Brak życiowej energii – odpowiedział wujek. – Brak potencjału, który miała przeznaczony na to życie. Myślę jeszcze nad tym. Wydaje mi się, że potencjał się wyczerpał z powodu choroby i dlatego, że ktoś część życiowej energii jej ukradł. Ale ona nie dopełniła tego, co w tym życiu powinno się jej przydarzyć. Brakuje jej wielu doświadczeń... Zatem sytuacja wygląda tak, jakby mogła się w tej chwili odwołać do decyzji sądu ostatecznego i powołać na niedopełnienie obowiązków. – Wujek roześmiał się (co mu miałam za złe. Nic w tym nie było śmiesznego!). – No popatrz – powiedział do mojej mamy – jakie to w sumie proste.

Mama uśmiechnęła się niepewnie.

– Proste – powtórzyła jak echo (z tą samą intonacją nawet).

A ja wiedziałam, że skupia się wyłącznie na jednej myśli: na tej, że mogę wrócić. Że mogę jeszcze pożyć.

– Teraz powiem ci najważniejsze. – Wujek Arek wstał, odetchnął i zebrał siły do wyrażenia tego, co chciał. – Ten potencjał, tę energię do życia można zbudować tylko z innego życia, o – zakończył. – A teraz podam ci lekarstwo, dobrze?

Zapadła długa cisza, którą odczułam tym mocniej, im bardziej dotyczyła mnie samej.

Energia życiowa – pomyślałam – a niby skąd inne życie? Od kota (nie mieliśmy kota)? Z probówki? (nie mieliśmy probówki). Z kosmosu (nie mieliśmy... no zaraz, czy kosmos żyje)?

– To powiedz skąd się bierze tę energię? – zapytała mama.

– Z ludzi – powiedział wujek spokojnie i zaczął szukać strzykawki w swojej lekarskiej torbie.

existential potential is exhausted. If she can replenish that deficiency, she'll have the chance to come back."

"What deficiency?" my mother asked. She straightened herself up and began to fiddle impatiently with her fingers. Having been pale and motionless until now, they became the driving force, as it were, of her thoughts.

"The deficiency of life energy," answered my uncle. "The deficiency of that potential, which has been assigned to her for this life. I'm still working on it. It seems to me that the potential has been exhausted due to illness, and because part of her life energy has been stolen. But she hasn't fulfilled what life has in store for her. She's missed many experiences… And so, it looks like she could appeal the Last Judgement decision on the grounds of unfulfilled duties." Uncle Arek burst out laughing (which I didn't appreciate. There was nothing funny about it!). "Just see," he said to my mother, "how simple it is."

My mother smiled hesitantly.

"Simple," she repeated like an echo (with even the same intonation).

And I knew that she was focused on just one thought, namely that I could return. That I could live a little longer.

"Now I'll tell you the most important thing." Uncle Arek got up, sighed and gathered the strength for what he needed to say. "This potential, this life energy, can only be harvested from another life, that's it," he finished.

"And now I'll give you the medicine, okay?"

They lapsed into a long silence, which I felt even more strongly as it concerned myself.

"Life energy," I thought, "and where is another life to come from, pray tell? From the cat (we didn't have a cat)? From a test-tube (we didn't have a test-tube)? From the cosmos (we didn't have… hang on a minute, is the cosmos alive)?"

Nooooo – pomyślałam – jestem wampirem!

– Moja córcia jest tym, no... wampirem? – zdziwiła się (jakże sensownie) moja mama.

– A skąd! – obruszył się wujek i groźnie na mnie spojrzał. – Twoja córka tkwi między tak zwanymi światami, czy też gęstościami i czeka. I jest teraz... bezcielesną osobą.

– I chcesz dać zastrzyk w tej chwili? – fuknęła mama. – Lepiej powiedz, jak jej pomóc. Jak mogę oddać życie (co za wyświechtane określenie – pomyślałam).

Wujek nie odpowiedział od razu. Przekręcał w palcach ampułkę z lekarstwem. Kręcił głową i spoglądał na mnie spod oka.

– Muszę pójść do łazienki – mruknął i machnął na mnie ręką, bym poszła za nim.

Kiedy zamknęły się łazienkowe drzwi, uśmiechnął się do mnie prawie promiennie:

– Całkiem dobrze wyglądasz – powiedział.

– Taki żarcik? – zapytałam. – Dobrze wyglądam? W tym stanie? Ja jestem przerażona.

– Jasne – przytaknął. – A swoją drogą nie wszyscy dobrze wyglądają.

– Nie jestem trupio blada i krew mi nie cieknie z ran, tak? – zapytałam, bo nie widziałam się w lustrze.

– Nie wygłupiaj się – powiedział. – Miałaś tętniaka serca, obyło się bez ran.

– Czy wyglądam jak zombie?

– Naoglądałaś się filmów za życia – pogroził mi palcem. – A teraz do rzeczy!

– No właśnie – zgodziłam się bez wahania.

– Wiem, nie pytaj skąd, ale wiem, że jeszcze możesz wrócić do swojego ciała. Koledzy lekarze wprawdzie dostaliby szoku, ale to wciąż jest możliwe. A kolegom bym jakoś to wytłumaczył. Jest jeden kłopot: nie jest to absolutnie możliwe bez nowego życiowego potencjału, nowej dawki energii, bez fali, z której będziesz korzystać aż do

"So where does this energy come from?" my mother asked.

"From people," said my uncle calmly as he began to search for a syringe in his medical bag.

"Well then," I thought, "now I'm a vampire!"

"My little one is this, what's it called… a vampire?" My mother was perplexed (and not without reason).

"Of course not!" Uncle Arek bristled and gave me a severe look. "Your daughter is stuck waiting in between the so-called worlds or dimensions. And is now… an immaterial being."

"And you want to give me an injection right now?" my mother snapped. "You'd better tell me how I can help her. How to give her my life." ("What a clichéd expression," I thought).

Uncle Arek didn't respond right away. He twirled the medicine phial between his fingers. He shook his head and glanced at me out of the corner of his eye.

"I must go to the bathroom," he murmured, and gestured for me to follow.

Once the bathroom door closed, he smiled almost radiantly at me.

"You look quite well," he said.

"Is that a joke?" I asked. "Do I look well? In this state? I am terrified."

"Obviously," he nodded. "By the way, not all of them look that well."

"I'm not corpse white and blood isn't flowing from my wounds, right?" I asked, because I couldn't see myself in the mirror.

"Don't be silly," he said. "You suffered a cardiac aneurysm, there were no wounds."

"Do I look like a zombie?"

"You've seen too many movies in your lifetime," he shook his finger. "And now, let's get down to business!"

"Exactly," I agreed immediately.

"I know, don't ask how, but I know that you can still return to your body. My medical colleagues would be shocked for sure, but it's still possible. I would somehow find a way to explain that to them. There is one problem: it isn't possible to return

swojego ostatecznego końca w tym wymiarze. Teraz tego zabrakło. W przeciwnym razie mogłabyś z tego tętniaka jakoś wyjść. Nie masz w tej chwili silniczka podtrzymującego dotychczasową egzystencję. Nie masz siły, by się podłączyć ponownie. Ale szansa na podłączenie jest.

– Zatem drugie życie? – zapytałam niepewnie.

– Jakieś drugie tak – odparł, umył ręce i wyszedł.

Zostałam w łazience sama, patrząc w lustro, w którym mnie nie było.

– Jakieś inne życie – powiedziałam do siebie (bezgłośnie) i zrozumiałam, że w innym życiu (za sprawą życia innego) nie mogłabym żyć dla samej siebie, ale też zrozumiałam, że chcę wrócić. Chcę koniecznie wrócić z powodu moich dzieci. Czułam jak rośnie we mnie nagła i silna nadwrażliwość na ludzkie nieszczęścia, niepowodzenia, smutki i rozpacze. Jak dotyczy to moich córek, mojej mamy i (z pewnością) każdego kogo spotkam. Przeistaczałam się w samo sedno totalnego współczucia. Zrozumiałam też, że nie będę mogła patrzeć na świat spokojnie, i że moje nowe życie będzie moją nową walką o lepsze życie innych ludzi. Walką na cały etat. Życie na rzecz świata, czy coś takiego. Nie mogłam tej myśli w sobie zmieścić, ale nie mogłam też jej zlekceważyć. Gdybym znów mogła być, wszystko by było inaczej, poważniej i piękniej.

Chciałam wrócić do dzieci, do mamy, do poprzedniego życia. Ale to akurat nie mogło się udać. Pod żadnym względem. Moje ja doświadczyło mojego nie-ja.

– O, Boże, Boże – jęknęłam (choć na boga jeszcze tu nie trafiłam) i ruszyłam do pokoju (standardowo, przenikając przez ściany).

Wujek zrobił mamie zastrzyk, po którym poczuła się lekka i częściowo sparaliżowana, co przyniosło jej ulgę. Położyła się na kanapie, oddychając

without a new life potential, a new injection of energy, without a wave which you would ride right up until your final days in this dimension. Now it's all gone. Otherwise, you would've survived that aneurysm somehow. At this moment, you don't have the life force that had supported your existence. You don't have the strength to reconnect. But the chance for reconnection exists."

"A second life, then?" I asked hesitantly.

"Yes, some sort of second life," he replied, then washed his hands and left.

I stayed in the bathroom alone, looking into the mirror, in which there was no me.

"Some other life," I said to myself (soundlessly), understanding that in another life (because of that other life) I wouldn't be able to live just for myself, but I also understood that I wanted to return. I desperately needed to go back for my children's sake. I felt a sudden surge of acute sensitivity to human misfortunes, failures, sorrows and miseries. And how would those relate to my daughters, my mother and (surely) everybody whom I was yet to meet. I was becoming the soul of compassion. I also understood that I wouldn't be able to view the world calmly, and that my new life would be a new battle for a better life for other people. A full-time battle. Life in the service of humanity, or something like that. I struggled to accommodate this thought within me, but I couldn't ignore it either. If only I could be again, it would all be different, more serious and more beautiful.

I wanted to return to my children, to my mother, to my previous life. But that could not be. Not in any respect. My "I" experienced my "not-I."

"Oh God, God," I moaned (although I hadn't yet met God here) and started for the room (typically, by ghosting through the walls).

Uncle Arek gave my mother the injection, after which she felt light and partially paralysed, which brought her relief. She lay down on the sofa breathing calmly

spokojnie i głęboko. Wujek zaś wrócił do kuchni, by zaparzyć herbatę.

– W pełni wszystko pojęłam – powiedziałam, patrząc na niego oskarżycielsko.

– Dobrze – odparł.

– Kto ma być dawcą? – zapytałam, starając się, aby zabrzmiało to w miarę neutralnie.

Wujek spojrzał na mnie tak, że zrozumiałam kto.

Poderwałam się do lotu i wpadłam jak furia do łazienki. Gdybym mogła to zrobić – trzasnęłabym drzwiami.

– Co to, przeciąg? – szepnęła moja mama z kanapy, bezwiednie podnosząc dłoń do czoła, tak jakby jakiś wiatr poruszył jej ręką.

– Już idę nad nim zapanować – odkrzyknął wujek Arek i poszedł za mną.

– Czy ja w tym stanie mogę się na przykład spokojnie wysikać? – zapytałam podniesionym (jak sadzę) głosem, gdy tylko wszedł do łazienki.

– Jesteś zdenerwowana – odparł – to raz. A po drugie, nie masz takich potrzeb. Nie musisz sikać. Ale jeśli chcesz, to sobie możesz przysiąść. I z powrotem chwycił klamkę łazienkowych drzwi.

– Owszem, chcę zostać sama – warknęłam.

– OK. Masz godzinę – oznajmił. – A ja wyjaśnię wszystko mamie.

Wyszedł, nie czekając na moją reakcję.

Przesiedziałam na brzegu wanny więcej niż godzinę, potem powlokłam się do pokoju dziewczynek, które leżąc na brzuchach przeglądały „Promyczek". A gdy odłożyły gazetkę, zaczęły kolorować obrazki. Nie kłóciły się dzisiaj i w ogóle były przerażająco ciche i zgodne. Serce mi się krajało, naprawdę.

Wróciłam do pokoju znacznie już spokojniejsza. Mama już siedziała na kanapie, najwyraźniej się niecierpliwiąc.

– Jest tu teraz? – zapytała wujka.

– Już tak – powiedział.

– Córciu – głos jej się załamał, podniosła głowę, tak jak robią to osoby

and deeply. Meanwhile my uncle returned to the kitchen to brew tea.

"I understand it all completely," I said, looking at him accusingly.

"Good," he replied.

"Who is to be the donor?" I asked, trying to sound quite neutral.

My uncle looked at me in such a way that I understood who it was to be.

In fury, I stormed off into the bathroom. If I could, I would've slammed the door shut.

"What is that, a draught?" my mother whispered from the sofa, involuntarily lifting her hand to her forehead, as if some wind had moved her arm.

"I'm on my way to deal with it," uncle Arek shouted back and followed me.

"May I in this state, for example, pee without being interrupted?" I asked with a raised (as it seemed to me) voice, as soon as he entered the bathroom.

"Firstly, you're upset," he replied. "Secondly, you have no such urges. You don't need to pee. But you may squat if you wish." And he grabbed the handle of the bathroom door again to leave.

"Yes, I want to be alone," I growled.

"OK. You have an hour," he said. "In the meantime, I'll explain everything to your mother."

He left without waiting for my reaction.

I sat on the edge of the bathtub for longer than an hour, then dragged myself into the room of the girls who, lying on their stomachs, were looking through "Promyczek." After they had put the magazine aside, they started colouring in pictures. They weren't quarrelling today, and generally were frightfully quiet and amiable. My heart bled, it really did.

I returned to the room much calmer now. My mother was already sitting on the sofa, clearly impatient.

"Is she here now?" my mother asked my uncle.

"Yes, just now," he said.

"My darling," her voice broke down, she lifted her head up just like blind people

niewidome. – Córciu – powtórzyła – wiesz, że od dawna nie chcę żyć. Weź proszę moje życie, niewiele tu energii, ale na parę lat wystarczy. Weź, proszę – i się rozpłakała. A ja razem z nią. Nogi się pode mną ugięły i gdybym podlegała grawitacji, to bym sobie zemdlała. Ale nie podlegałam.

– Jak to weź? – zapytałam, ale mama mnie nie widziała i nie słyszała. – Wujku, jak to weź? Mam zamordować mamę? Co ty sobie kurczę myślisz? Chcę żeby żyła! Wiecznie! – położyłam się przy jej nogach i łkając oskarżałam wujka o całe zło takiego świata.

Wujek tymczasem się zadumał.

– Kochanie – zwrócił się do swojej siostry (a mojej mamy) i jednocześnie do mnie – procedura jest skomplikowana i ja w tym zazwyczaj nie biorę udziału. Ale to jeszcze nic, widzę bowiem, że twoja córka nie jest w stanie jeszcze podjąć decyzji.

– Ona może nie, ale ja jestem! – przerwała mu mama – ja oddaję. Niech się nie zastanawia i niech nie marudzi.

– Mamy jeszcze trochę czasu. – Poklepał ją uspokajająco po ramieniu. – Prześpij się jeszcze z godzinkę. Dziś u was zostanę na noc, dobrze? Wyszykuję dziewczynki do spania.

Mama się zgodziła, wycierając głośno nos. Wujek wstał, a ja poczłapałam (a raczej przemieściłam się) wraz z nim.

Dziewczynki grzecznie poszły się umyć i nie wymazały pastą do zębów ani lustra, ani siebie nawzajem. Szybko przebrały się w pidżamy i czekały w jednym z łóżek, aż im wujek poczyta, tak jak obiecał, zasiadając (jak zwykle) w wielkim fotelu, w którym ja, swego czasu karmiłam każdą z nich, gdy były niemowlakami.

W tym czasie mama leżała, patrząc w sufit, udając że śpi, a ja krążyłam po mieszkaniu jak ranny tygrys. Tyle, że bezszelestnie.

Kiedy dzieci zasnęły, wujek przeniósł Alinkę do jej łóżeczka, zamknął za sobą drzwi do pokoju dziewczynek i powiedział do mnie (stałam tuż pod drzwiami):

– To jak?

do. “My darling,” she repeated, “you know that I have long wanted to die. Take my life please, there is not much energy in it, but there will be enough for a few years. Please take it,” and she burst into tears. And I cried along with her. My legs gave way under me, and if I’d been subject to gravity, I would’ve fainted. But I wasn’t.

“Why do you say, ‘take it’?” I asked, but my mother neither saw nor heard me. “Uncle, why ‘take it’? Am I to murder my own mother? What on earth are you thinking? I want her to live! Forever!” I lay down at her feet, and, sobbing, was blaming my uncle for all the evil in this world.

Meanwhile uncle Arek was deep in thought.

“Dearest,” he turned to his sister (my mother) and at the same time to myself, “the procedure is complicated and I don’t usually get involved. But that’s beside the point, for I can see that your daughter is unable to make a decision yet.”

“She may not be, but I am!” my mother interrupted him, “I’m giving it. Don’t let her waste time thinking or grumbling about it.”

“We still have some time.” He patted her on the shoulder comfortingly. “Sleep for another hour or so. I’ll stay here for the night, is that okay? I’ll get the girls ready for bed.”

My mother agreed, sniffing loudly. My uncle got up, and I trotted (or rather translocated) along with him.

The girls obediently went for a wash and they didn’t smear toothpaste on either the mirror or each other. They quickly changed into their pyjamas and waited in one of their beds for my uncle to read them a story, as he’d promised, sitting (as usual) in the huge armchair, in which I’d once breastfed each of them when they had been babies.

Meanwhile my mother lay looking up at the ceiling, pretending to be asleep, while I was circling the apartment like a wounded tiger. Except that I was soundless.

When the children fell asleep, uncle Arek carried Alinka over to her bed, closed

– Nigdy, nigdy nie chciałabym wybierać – szepnęłam.

– To nie zmienia sytuacji. Ty decydujesz. Został ci dany wybór. I nie płacz. Myśl – nakazał.

Pochyliłam głowę, tak, że bałam się, że wpadnie mi pod mostek. Pomyślałam o dziewczynkach:

– Chcę porozmawiać z mamą. Będziesz pośredniczyć?

– Oczywiście – zgodził się i poszliśmy obudzić mamę, która i tak nie spała.

– Córciu? – zapytała.

– Jestem – powiedziałam, a wujek powtórzył.

– Proszę nie wygłupiaj się – zaczęła mama – przeniesiemy mój potencjał, czy jak to się tam nazywa na ciebie i będzie dobrze. Przecież się po tej drugiej stronie kiedyś spotkamy, prawda? Bardzo kocham ciebie i dziewczynki. Bardzo. Nie możesz ich zostawić. A ja nie mam siły, by zadbać ani o dzieci, ani o siebie. Ja się poddaję. Naprawdę. Więc, proszę, zgódź się. Jestem bardzo zmęczona. Mam tak niewiele do oddania... ale jeśli mam, to weź i nie marudź. Odpocznę. Wreszcie odpocznę.

– Mamo. – Łzy nie płynęły mi po policzkach, ale rozpływały w powietrzu – mamo...

I tak sobie pogadałyśmy.

Dużo płaczu.

– Dosyć – zarządził wujek Arek. – Przejęcie życia musi nastąpić w ciągu 48 godzin od pierwszej śmierci. Mamy 3 godziny.

To będzie sen. Po prostu sen.

– Ty wracaj do kostnicy – zwrócił się do mnie. – Zaraz tam przyjadę. – A ty – pogłaskał moją mamę po policzku tak delikatnie i czule, że wzruszyłam się jeszcze bardziej. – Ty po prostu będziesz miała piękne sny.

the door behind him and said to me (I was standing right at the door):

"So, what's it going to be?"

"Never, ever, would I want to choose," I whispered.

"That doesn't change the situation. It's your choice. You were given a choice. And don't cry. Just think," he urged.

I lowered my head such that I feared it would sink into my sternum. I thought about the girls.

"I want to speak to my mother. Will you mediate between us?"

"Of course," he agreed, and we went to wake my mother up, who wasn't sleeping anyway.

"Darling?" she asked.

"I'm here," I said, and my uncle repeated.

"Please don't be silly," my mother began, "we'll transfer my potential, or whatever it's called, over to you and it will be fine. After all, we'll see each other on the other side one day, won't we? I love both you and the girls very much. Very much. You can't leave them. And I don't have the strength to take care of either the children or myself. I'm letting go. Truly. So, please, say 'yes.' I'm very tired. I've so little to give… but whatever it is, take it and make no fuss. I'll rest. I'll finally be at rest."

"Mum." Tears didn't run down my cheeks, but instead they melted away into the air. "Mum…"

And so we talked.

Lots of tears.

"That's enough," uncle Arek interjected. "The transfer of life must take place within 48 hours of the first death. We have only three hours left."

It will be a dream. Just a dream.

"You go back to the morgue," he said to me. "I'll be there soon." "And you," he caressed my mother's cheek so very gently and tenderly that I felt even more deeply moved. "You'll simply have beautiful dreams."

"Ready for Anything That Comes my Way." Twelve Poems by Vasile Baghiu

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Vasile Baghiu is a Romanian poet who has published seven volumes of poetry and several volumes of fiction and short stories. He coined the concept of *chimerism,* which defines and shapes his identity as a poet (Baghiu 2017). The concept, thoroughly explained in his four *Manifestos of Chimerism*[1], has been widely accepted by the Romanian literary milieu. This translation and commentary reflects on Baghiu's poetic style through the lens of *chimerism,* and on the process of translating into English twelve poems selected from two volumes: *Madame Bovary's Wanderings* (1996) and *Himerus Alter in Rhineland* (2003). This piece also aims to demonstrate the uniqueness of Baghiu's poetry, which resides in the innovative fusion of imagery, self-discovery, escapism and a sense of freedom.

Baghiu was born in Romania in 1965, where he currently resides. He began his working life as a nurse in a tuberculosis sanatorium. After seven years, while reading Gustave Flaubert's travel diary, he imagined what it would be like to be away from the isolation of the sanatorium and to travel the world through a fictitious alter ego, later named *Himerus Alter,* a ubiquitous character residing in a "parallel reality" (Baghiu, 4). In this way, a poet was born, whose imagination knows no boundaries. Inspired by Jules de Gautier's essay on *bovarysme* (2009) and by Fernando Pessoa's work (1993), Baghiu coined the term *chimerism* – a cross between *bovarysme* and literature, defined as a tendency to escape everyday realities and to create a parallel universe, a counter-reality in which one lives (Baghiu, 4). The term, which has since been widely accepted by the Romanian literary milieu, signalled a new direction in Romanian poetry and resulted in the publication of his first volume of poetry: *Madame Bovary's Wanderings*.[2] Baghiu went on to publish six other volumes of poetry, several volumes of fiction and short stories, and four *Manifestos of Chimerism.* He is also a prolific blogger.

Baghiu has received numerous accolades in his native Romania and his work has been widely reviewed in a number of reputable journals. Notable reviews highlight the uniqueness of his poetic style and identify the duality of reality-memory as a recurrent motif in his poems. Ana Blandiana, a leading contemporary Romanian author, writes in one review: "[F]or this young man [...] poetry is like an oxygen mask, a survival mode and a weapon against the loneliness and disease that surround him" (Baghiu 258). She continues: "[T]he verse flows calmly, serenely, entirely free of embellishments [...] his phrase is uncomplicated, he expresses his feelings in a quiet, reserved manner. And yet, his poetry cascades impetuously from every verse, and each verse could function equally well as prose" (Baghiu 258). Essayist Roxana Sorescu identifies some of the innovative elements of Baghiu's writing. She notes:

> [T]he most striking characteristic of this poet's imaginary world is his capacity to live simultaneously in two parallel spheres: one that belongs to reality, the other to memory or fantasy, in which a fertile ambiguity is maintained. The real world is one of pain, disease, hospitals and enclosed spaces from which one can only escape with the help of imagination. Hence the need to create an imaginary, compensatory world [...] populated equally by real people and fictitious characters.
>
> (Baghiu 259)

[1] The first two *Manifestos* were published in 1998; the third *Manifesto* was published in 2006 and the fourth in 2010.
[2] All translations are my own, unless otherwise stated.

Writer Gellu Dorian takes a more organic view of Baghiu's poetry and asks rhetorically whether he will end up being known as "the poet of the sanatorium," since "his poetry has the endurance of an antibiotic-resistant chronic bacillus" (Baghiu 260).

Baghiu is one of the most prominent poets of his generation, a member of PEN International, and the recipient of four writer's residencies in Switzerland, Germany, Austria and Scotland (Banipal). My decision to translate his poetry was influenced by a number of reasons: his unusual, thought-provoking poetic style; his profound interest in enduring, universal themes such as identity, self-discovery and freedom; the innovative mélange of the elements that define the concept of *chimerism* and their incorporation into the realm of poetry, thus making the translator's work both interesting and challenging. I am also drawn to the fact that he uses his writing as a vehicle to voice his political, social and cultural views and to the fact that his poems are virtually unknown to the Australian readership.

Chimerism and chimeric poetry

The concept of *chimerism* is closely linked to Baghiu's personal journey to becoming a poet, shaped by the isolation of the sanatorium and the oppressive totalitarian regime of the 1980s. He strove to escape the regime through writing. As he revealed in one interview,[3] he knew instinctively that this creative outlet would allow him to become "someone else" and to "wander through cities and places" (Baghiu 2017) he had never seen, but dreamt about. Oneiric at first, these reflections crystallised over time into the four major elements representative of his writing, thus closing the circle of what would become the concept of *chimerism*:

> *[I]maginary journey*, a way of escaping the socio-political constraints and the cultural provincialism of the time; *disease*, which represented a reality devoid of superficiality and flippancy; *transfiguration*, a way of creating new experiences; and *science,* seen as poetic adventure in a space that has rarely been explored through poetic means.
>
> (Baghiu 2017)

These elements are intrinsic to all of Baghiu's poems, and it is from this perspective that I approached my translation of his verse.

Baghiu confesses that "the driving force behind *chimerism* was Thomas Mann's Bildungsroman *The Magic Mountain,* along with poems depicting sickness and human suffering," which he read throughout his teenage years. It was his conviction at the time that "working with the sick would give him insights into life and confidence to write" (Baghiu 2017). But what came out of that experience was something quite different: first, the realisation that "poetry does not represent one's ability to put words on paper, but rather one's capacity to see and understand life" (Baghiu 2017); and second, the "metamorphosis of the sanatorium from a centre of gravity and equilibrium" of his day-to-day life and a "place of isolation and professional formation" into a theme that "slowly evolved into the *chimeric* world, a form of freedom that helped me escape totalitarianism" – the embodiment of personal, geographical and intellectual isolation and oppression (Baghiu 2017). This sense of freedom has become "a central theme" of his writing and "a constant companion" (Baghiu 2017) throughout his life.

Chimerism and 'chimeric poetry', as I discovered in the process of translating Baghiu's verse, are powerful frameworks for contemplating and dreaming freely about the world. Enter Himerus Alter, the poet's alter ego, a character "born out of desperation" and invented to "express frustration at the lack of freedom" – he who speaks from a different perspective and

[3] The quotes in the section *Chimerism and chimeric poetry* are selected from a personal interview I organized with the poet and which is referenced in the Bibliography. I conducted the interview in Romanian and translated itinto English.

gives the poet the freedom to daydream (Baghiu 2017). Through extrapolation, chimeric poetry gives the reader permission to make a choice, and just like Himerus Alter, the reader is able to meander around the world through a somewhat "detached poetic sensibility, free of tensions and full of understanding" (Baghiu 2017). *Chimerism* gives the poet (and, by extension, the reader) the chance to live multiple lives in multiple ways, as different personas and embodiments, and to obliterate metaphorical borders in order to transform spaces and appropriate new worlds. But *chimerism* is not just an answer to individual solitude and transformation; it is, in Baghiu's words, also a "solution to the renewal of Romanian poetry, to achieving freedom from provincialism and its limitations" by offering "a new frame of reference" and, unapologetically, "a metaphysical way out, a retreat from the passive-aggressive reality" as well as a move away from the "formalism and fatigue" that seems to characterise the contemporary Romanian literary milieu (Baghiu 2017). Baghiu is an *écrivain engagé*; he uses chimeric poetry as a vehicle to voice his political, social and cultural views, which argue against the "postmodernist trend that dominates the artistic and literary space" and instead offers "a psychological portrait" of the contemporary Romanian poetry that aspires to align with, and become part of, world literature, though it is somewhat "limited by language, cultural isolation and shady political games" (Baghiu 2017). Through chimeric poetry Baghiu offers an opportunity to develop "a state of un-consoled *bovarysme* into a transforming space where a new reality can be imagined" (Baghiu 2017).

Translating Baghiu's poetry

After reading many of Baghiu's poems, I opted to translate a select few from *Madame Bovary's Wanderings* (Baghiu 66-95) and *Himerus Alter in Rhineland* (Baghiu 173-209) as I felt they best reflected the poet's inner journey towards freedom and self-discovery. Further considerations included stylistic features, register and poetic structure, but also certain aspects of Romanian language and culture to which I wanted to introduce Australian readers. My overall engagement with Baghiu's poetry had three dimensions: first, that of a reader of the source text (ST), attempting to uncover all its mysteries and to appreciate the complexities of meaning, subtle implications and cultural inferences (Grossman 9); second, that of the translator seeking to transpose the ST into a text that functions well in English (Baker & Saldanha 196); and third, that of a *re*-reader, this time of a translated text that tells a very similar story to the original. The ST features stylistic complexities reflective of the fact that Baghiu's poetry is deeply introspective. The verse is crisp and economical, even cryptic at times, yet each poem tells a well-rounded story; overall, visual image takes precedence over rhythm and sound. Each poem becomes a *tableau*, and as a translator I found that the most demanding task was capturing both the visual elements and the meaning behind them, ultimately coming up with a poem that preserves the freshness and authenticity of the original. It often felt as if I was trying to re-create a painting, rather than a poem, in English. Perhaps the most arresting example is "That Day in Rome," an exceptionally visual poem which I considered as a whole, to the point of disregarding the individual verse. Even from the first reading it became clear that searching for 'equivalents' to express such rich visual elements was not only futile, but a recipe for disaster. And while it was not impossible to find such equivalents, I felt that it would do an injustice to the original text and rob the reader of a unique poetic experience. The visual image in the verses "părul tău flutura despletit / pe fundalul mulțimii compacte" evoked Van Gogh's *Starry Night* (1889); in particular the swirling, wave-like shapes rolling above the village, which I translated as "your hair was undone in the wind, undulating / against the backdrop of a dense crowd." The translation of "mortul impozant" as "stately corpse" (rather than the more literal 'imposing' or 'commanding') brings an element of grandiosity, more appropriate to the description of a great poet's funeral. The contrast between the undulating hair, the compact crowd and the stately corpse creates both a feeling of movement and stillness.

Another stylistic aspect of Baghiu's poetry is intertextuality (Venuti 158) in the form of linguistic, semantic and aesthetic features that carry specific cultural connotations; in particular, location markers that situate a scene in a specific historical and geographical place (Pym 85). The poem "Once Upon a Time I Was Looking For You on Lipscani Street" features such location markers. A very familiar place for the Romanian reader, Lipscani is the *axis mundi* of Bucharest's old town. Constructed in late 16th century as a commercial hub, nowadays it represents the symbolic centre of bygone days, and its charming buildings and narrow cobblestone arcades attract steady streams of tourists. In this particular instance I chose to use foreignization as a translation strategy (Venuti 20), to give Australian readers a flavour of Romanian culture. The poem, which begins with the words "once upon a time," brings the weight of the past into the present. Baghiu's masterful use of adjectives ("trembling years," "frosty racecourse") and turns of phrases ("lives paved with winter holidays," "spring simmered under the layer of ice," "too old to carry its inflorescence on our shoulders") creates a certain luminosity that emerges from the darkness of war. The confluence of sound, sense, image and emotion in this poem posed a challenge for translation, and I sought to find the right balance of all these elements in order to re-create the poem in English (Grossman 95).

As noted above, *chimerism* gives the poet a chance to live multiple lives, in multiple ways, as different personas; and I believe this sentiment is beautifully captured in the poem "I try to fly with myself as one" – a poem that reveals the dual presence of the author and his alter ego. The poem embodies some of the most striking aspects of Baghiu's poetic style as is reflective of his artistic sensibility, as it represents the unity of the author's semantic and expressive intentions – the poet is utterly immersed in his language and inseparable from it, a pure and direct expression of his own intention (Bakhtin 285). The poem is a narrative, the language is simple and its message powerful: in his journey through places he did not know existed, the poet becomes one with his soul under the weight of time – everything he experiences today is already a step ahead. The mélange of past, present and future becomes a single moment in time as the poet escapes his own condition in a journey that unsettles him. The difficulty associated with the translation of this poem was to capture that precise feel by which the sense of freedom is achieved. After much consideration, I decided to be as concise as possible, and to keep very close to the original, thus moving the reader toward the writer (Schleiermacher 49). I felt that some translation loss was necessary – for instance, I translated "deşi fusesem prevenit / cum sunt mereu prevenit" as "even though I had been warned / as I always am," omitting the word "prevenit / warned" in the second line. To strengthen the underlying message in the target text, I chose to translate "m-am reconectat la propriul meu suflet" as "I am one with my soul" (rather than the more literal 'I reconnected with my own soul') as I wanted to re-emphasise the symbolic "one" of the title and final line.

Vasile Baghiu's poetry is complex and meaningful. It follows closely the mélange of the four dimensions representative of his writing: imaginary journey, disease, transfiguration and science. In my translation of the twelve poems presented here I sought to provide a thinking space that captures and highlights the richness of imagery and the deeply introspective nature of Baghiu's poetry. As a translator, I have focused on the stylistic complexities of the individual verse and of each poem as a whole, on the intertextuality expressed as linguistic, semantic and aesthetic features that carry specific cultural connotations, aiming to give the reader a taste of Romanian historical and geographical places, and I have endeavoured to capture the delicate balance between the poetry's key themes: *chimerism,* escapism, freedom and self-discovery. It is my hope that the reader will thoroughly enjoy Baghiu's beautiful, inspiring work.

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Selected Poems
By Vasile Baghiu

Incerc sa zbor odata cu mine

Presiunea timpului diferă cu vîrsta,
pentru că tot ce trăiesc astăzi
e deja un pic mai înainte.
Mergând spre Vest,
alături de un cuplu tânăr de nemți
într-un zbor care mă tulbură,
pentru că dorim să lungim o zi începută,
însoțind soarele.
Norii îmi aduc aminte de lucruri plăcute,
iar ca să simt căldura soarelui aici,
la mii de metri înălțime,
am pus mîna pe hublou.
M-am reconectat la propriul meu suflet
şi navighez cu încredere
prin locuri pe care nici eu nu le ştiam.
Sînt pentru o clipă derutat,
deşi fusesem prevenit,
cum sînt mereu prevenit.
Se întîmplă cam la fel: vine cineva trist
care tulbură chicoteala
şi este mereu ceva important de spus.
Comandantul aeronavei
ne spune că suntem deasupra Germaniei,
în timp ce eu încerc sa zbor odată cu mine.

În acea zi la Roma

În acea zi la Roma treceau funeraliile unui mare poet,
sub un soare nemilos, flori şi parfumuri discrete.
N-am reuşit să trecem strada vreun ceas.
Priveam cortegiul greoi.
Sus, în balcoane, pe cerul albastru, înflorise lămâiul
şi părul tău flutura despletit
pe fundalul mulțimii compacte
care petrecea mortul impozant.

După cină ne-am instalat pe punte

După cină ne-am instalat pe punte la lumina lampioanelor,
cu țigări şi cafele.
Baletul de chelneri,
stelele chioare deasupra apei călduțe cu valuri,

Selected Poems
By Vasile Baghiu
Translated by Cristina Savin

I Try to Fly with Myself As One

The weight of time changes as I age,
because everything I experience today
is already a step ahead.
Travelling West,
next to a young German couple
this journey unsettles me,
as we want to make the day longer
following the light of the sun.
Clouds bring pleasant memories,
and to feel the sunlight,
here, at a thousand meters in the air,
I touched the porthole.
I am one with my soul
and I navigate with confidence
through places I didn't know existed.
I am momentarily confused,
even though I have been warned,
as I always am.
Things happen the same way: someone sad comes along
who interrupts the chuckle
and there is always something important to be said.
The aircraft pilot
informs us that we are travelling above Germany
while I try to fly with myself as one.

That Day in Rome

That day in Rome the obsequies of a great poet proceeded under a merciless sun, flowers and delicate scents.
We could not cross the street for an hour or so.
We watched the slow procession.
Up in the balconies, on the blue sky, the lemon tree blossomed
and your hair was undone in the wind, undulating
against the backdrop of a dense crowd accompanying the stately corpse.

After Dinner We Sat On the Deck

After dinner we sat on the deck under the lamplights,
with cigarettes and coffees.
Waiters were moving in slow motion,

sufletul nostru, în fine, electrizat de sentimente domestice.
Aveam să plec, să uit, am oferit de băut la toată lumea,
neghiobi care uitau cât de scurtă e viața.
La Los Angeles, la începutul acestui secol,
mi-am luat o cameră modestă,
Great Northern se numea hotelul,
avea o firmă ascunsă după o-ngrămădire de schele,
și m-am gândit acolo la viitor.
Afară ploua cu găleata
și in cealaltă cameră unul fluiera și cânta.

the stars were dim above the lukewarm, wavy waters
and tranquil emotions stirred our souls.
I had to leave it all behind, I offered drinks to everyone,
fools who forgot that life was short.
In Los Angeles, at the turn of the century,
I took a low-cost room
at the Great Northern hotel,
its sign was obscured by a mass of scaffolding,
and I paused there, reflecting on my future.
The rain was pouring outside
and in another hotel room someone was whistling and singing.

Peştii înotau în sus pe firul cascadei

Peştii înotau în sus pe firul cascadei biruitoare
trebuia să strigi ca să te aud,
deşi erau atât de puțin necesare cuvintele,
mai târziu mi-ai mărturisit că ele te-au amăgit totdeauna,
poate de aceea mă porți prin expoziții, prin săli de concerte,
însă nu ştiu, zău nu ştiu din ce ar trebui să construiesc
aride versuri,
poate din câteva frunze, pietre, nisip,
eşarfele tale, călimara,
vrăbiile moarte pe pervazul ferestrei (din greşeală
ai presărat acolo otravă pentru şoareci),
poate ilustratele elvețiene cu cerul albastru,
ceaşca plină de ceai în care a căzut acum un păianjen,
sau fotografiile cu noi în fața unui arbore scheletic,
ne-am risipit, un şuvoi mai aprig, destul de incomod,
ne-a adus odată cu primăvara,
cu sloiurile,
cu frunzele acelui arbore.

Fish Were Swimming Up the Waterfall

Fish were swimming up the undefeated waterfall
you had to call out to be heard,
although there was no need for words,
but later you confessed they have always deceived you,
maybe that's why you take me to art displays and concert halls,
and yet how can I carve
hollow verses
from leaves and rocks and sand perhaps,
your scarves, the inkwell,
dead sparrows on the windowsill (which you dusted,
unwittingly, with rat poison),
maybe the blue sky on Swiss postcards,
the cup of tea in which a spider has now fallen,
or photos taken in front of an emaciated tree,
we consumed ourselves, a fiery torrent disturbed us
and carried us along with the spring,
with floating ice,
and leaves from that tree.

Pentru a fi dispus la orice

Stau la o masă violet
într-o sală de aşteptare a aeroportului din Amsterdam,
acultînd monotona voce
care avertizează de finalul pistei rulante
și limbile amestecate ale unei Europe
care pare să se aşeze în sfîrşit.
Nu ştiu dacă voi găsi ceea ce caut.
Privind elegantele avioane rulînd pe piste

Ready for Anything That Comes My Way

Seated at a violet table
in a waiting room at the Amsterdam airport,
I listen to the monotonous voice
warning travellers of the end of the walkway
and to the blended languages of a Europe
that seems, at long last, to have found itself.
I am searching for something I may never find.
Watching elegant planes rolling on runways
I sense my perennial regrets departing,

am sentimentul că regretele mele adunate în timp
își iau zborul unul cîte unul de pe un aeroport în care eu sînt un străin.
Eu sînt un străin
atunci cînd încerc să mă apropii
de ceea ce aș vrea să fiu cel mai mult
și un om de-al casei
cînd plec departe.
O voce mă avertizează în olandeză și engleză
că e timpul să mă ridic de la masa violet
și să mă îmbarc pentru Köln.
De fapt e timpul să mă ridic din propria mea greutate sufletească
și să mă îmbarc
pentru a fi dispus la orice.

one by one, from this airport where I remain an outsider.
I am an outsider
when I try to become
the man I want to be
and a family man
when I travel afar.
A voice informs me in Dutch and English
that is now time to leave the violet table
and board for Köln.
In truth, it's time to leave my qualms and to board,
ready for anything that comes my way.

Fragmente de vitraliu, copilăria

Fragmente de vitraliu, copilăria învelită în pluș,
restul era o indicibilă rumoare, iar cei dinafară,
săltându-se în vârfurile degetelor să vadă,
complicau și mai mult lucrurile,
cerul neavând importanță, și zâmbetul meu, temerar,
s-a pierdut în învălmășeală,
acum reînnoit de alte speranțe, mereu schimbătoare,
larma școlarilor,
onestele primăveri din anii aceștia stranii,
felul eroic de a privi lumea,
îngăduința care ne ajută să trăim omenește,
aversele de fericire câteodată pe stradă.

Fragments of Stained Glass, Childhood

Fragments of stained glass, velvety childhood,
what's left is a chaotic whisper, and the outsiders
rose on their tiptoes to see inside
and made things more complicated.
The sky became irrelevant and my impetuous smile
lost in the confusion
is now renewed by other hopes, forever changing,
schoolkids vociferating,
the candid springs in those strange years,
when we were facing the world without fear
and strove to be compassionate,
as torrents of happiness sometimes cascaded in the street.

Undeva aproape de Canal Grande

Undeva aproape de Canal Grande repetam
Concertul pentru oboi și orchestră de Marcelo,
într-o capelă părăsită.
Nişte nebuni, au zis, nişte nebuni, dacă stau în dărăpănătura aceea.
Într-o zi îi vom găsi sub ziduri.
Însă noi repetam cu inimile-ndurerate.
Mai cu seamă o colegă a ieșit cu ochii în lacrimi
și nu am mai continuat în seara aceea.
Nu știu ce a fost atunci și unde ne-am risipit,
atât de indiferenți la ceea ce ni se întîmpla cu adevărat,
departe de umezeala care cojea zidurile umede.
Dar tu mă insoțeai peste tot,
zile în șir pe marginea canalelor fără să vorbim,
de parcă am fi prevăzut vremea aceasta
în care conversam ca să ascundem ceva

Somewhere Near Canal Grande

Somewhere near Canal Grande we were rehearsing
Marcelo's Concerto for oboe and orchestra,
in an abandoned chapel.
Those lunatics, they said, lunatics if they stay in that derelict place
Some day they will be buried alive.
And yet, we rehearsed with heavy hearts.
An artist left in tears
and we didn't continue that night.
I don't know what happened then and where we vanished,
so careless about the truth in our lives,
away from the dew tearing off the damp walls.
But you accompanied me everywhere,
day after day along the canals and no words were spoken,

ce se poate spune mai simplu,
tranşant ca o sentinţă.

as if we made provisions for this day
when we hid behind a conversation
to voice a thought
as sharp as a death sentence.

O poză în mîinile generaţiilor viitoare

Scaunele din grădină
pe care am stat aseară la discuţii literare şi politice
au fost răsturnate de furtună înspre dimineaţă.
La radio se aud aplauze,
în timp ce la TV prognoza pentru mîine e bună.
Viaţa mea iese victorioasă
în faţa unui public doritor să afle ceva despre mine,
dar apare învinsă în mine însumi.
Cîteva voci de sub ramurile cu cireşe coapte
mă întrebau unde îmi este familia,
iar eu mă şi vedeam
într-o fotografie cu familia mea,
departe de conferinţe, lecturi
şi alte lucruri de acest fel,
o fotografie la care se uită nişte ochi sclipitori
ai unor draguţe persoane
din generaţiile viitoare.

A Picture in the Hands of Future Generations

The garden chairs
where we sat last night debating literature and politics
were overturned by storm at dawn.
I hear clapping on the radio,
while on TV tomorrow's weather forecast is good.
My life surfaces victorious
to a public who wants to learn something about me,
but appears defeated within myself.
Under branches heavy with ripe cherries, some voices
asked where my family was,
and I saw myself
in a picture with my family,
away from conferences, lectures
and other similar events,
a picture that someone nice
from future generations contemplates
with luminous eyes.

Ca o vorbă de duh

Aceste mici despărţiri ne pregătesc din timp,
iar eu sînt aici si nu foarte departe,
sub norii unui cer german din albume,
pedalînd pe o şosea pustie dintr-o pădure a Westfaliei,
unde un huhurez cîntă ca în România.
Palpită în mine ceva de demult
şi mă simt de parcă am fost oprit
de ceva ce nu înţeleg ce poate să fie,
aşa cum unele păsări sînt oprite brusc
din zborul lor avîntat
de geamul imens al verandei casei Böll.

Ieri dimineaţă era un graur sub fereastră,
iar azi am găsit o rîndunică.
Aşa am scris aceste rînduri,
întristat deodată şi ascultînd mai atent în mine
vibraţiile grave ale unei coarde sensibile şi păcătoase
care încearca să bată mai departe,
ca o vorbă de duh
ce spune mai mult
decît pare să spună la prima vedere.

A Witty Remark

These brief separations prepare us for later,
and I am here and yet not far away,
under the clouds of a German sky from picture books,
pedalling on a deserted road in a Westphalian forest,
where the song of an owl reminds me of Romania.
Something vibrates in me from days of yore
and I feel as if I'm being held back
by something I could not understand,
the same way birds are suddenly brought to a stop
in their high-aimed flight
by the gigantic window on the Böll house veranda.

Yesterday morning there was a starling under my window,
And today I found a swallow.
And that prompted me to write these words,
suddenly saddened and listening to the sombre, sinful vibrations
of my own voice trying to palpitate even more,

a witty remark
that means more than
it meant in the first place.

Astăzi când e soare

Astăzi când e soare ar trebui să fii cu totul străină
printre aceste dărâmături unde am ajuns din întâmplare
discutând un subiect de literatură,
am tot căutat linia, granița fluctuantă
în primăverile când ne bucuram de înflorire
și de florile astea sufocante,
parcă n-aș fi eu insumi, nu-mi este la îndemână
când vin pauzele lungi, tăcerile,
când scormonim absenți cu vârful pantofilor
bucățile de moloz, cu privirea în jos.
N-ai crezut că se poate spune despre cineva că e plin de sine,
preocupat de corpul și inima lui,
sau de creierul lui învelit în meninge protectoare,
învelite în oase late și piele și plete
din care tu știi că nu va rămâne decât o tigvă
care seamănă cu avertismentul de pe stâlpii de înaltă tensiune
sau pe flacoanele cu otravă.

Today, on a Sunny Day

Today, on a sunny day you ought to be a stranger
among these ruins where we arrived by chance
while discussing literature,
we searched the line, the fluctuating border
in springs of joyful blossom
and fetid flowers.
I lose myself and I feel restless
amidst long silences,
when we absently rummage in the rubble
with the tip of our shoes, looking down.
You did not believe one could speak of such vanity,
obsessively preoccupied with body and soul
or with the brain enveloped in a protective membrane
wrapped in wide bones and skin and hair
that you know it will be reduced to a skull with crossbones
resembling the signs on power lines
or on containers of poison from days gone by.

Pe Lipscani altă dată te căutam

Pe Lipscani altă dată te căutam în mulțimea care nu știa de noi.
Toamna bucureșteană e cea mai nemiloasă
Și aduce întotdeauna ceva de pierdut,
o privire îngăduitoare,
o ladă cu frângii și hamuri, hârtii,
fragmente de ziare îngălbenite.
Eu sunt vinovat că am risipit anii aceia tremurători,
viețile noastre pavate cu sărbători de iarnă,
temerile tale care nu te duceau la magazine de lux,
sau în săli de cinema vechi din timpul războiului,
când rulau filme cu unul cu mustăcioară
și părul pieptănat intr-o parte peste ochiul drept,
sau pâna în margine la hipodrom unde căzuse bruma.
N-am bănuit că atunci clocotea primăvara sub crusta de gheață,
că avea să ne cotropească, la fel ca astăzi,
prea vârstnici s-o ducem pe umeri cu înflorire cu tot,

Once Upon a Time I was Looking for You on Lipscani Street

Once upon a time I was looking for you on Lipscani street in crowds oblivious of our existence.
Autumn in Bucharest is unforgiving
and always brings something meant to be lost,
a look of compassion,
a crate with ropes and straps, papers,
scraps of faded journals.
I am guilty of wasting those trembling years,
our lives paved with winter holidays,
your fears that kept you from luxury stores
or from old wartime movie theatres
showing movies with a dictator wearing a moustache
and hair falling over his right eye,
or from the edge of a frosty racecourse.
I did not believe that spring simmered under the layer of ice,
ready to invade us, just like today,
when we are too old to carry its inflorescence on our shoulders,
and too young to not care.

prea tineri pentru indiferență.

E ca un film francez

Toată povestea asta complicată cu poezia
ține de stilul de viață.
Dacă eşti singur şi vrei să fii singur,
dacă vorbești mereu între oameni care rîd la glumele tale,
dacă zbori repede cu bicicleta pe drumuri de țară
ținînd ochii aproape închiși din cauza muștelor,
dacă scrii două rînduri în liniște
în timp ce radio BBC
anunță explozia unei bombe în Ierusalim,
dacă simți că orice moment
poate fi momentul tău,
iar lumea te cheamă și așteaptă două vorbe,
dacă ți-e dor de niște persoane dragi
rămase departe într-o țară săracă...
Toate pot fi în favoarea
acestei povești complicate cu poezia.

E ca un film francez
în care nimeni nu are slujbă,
nimeni nu are nimic clar de făcut,
decît numai să discute mereu
despre artă şi alte lucruri asemănătoare.
E ca o poveste de Cortazar
în care cîteva femei sofisticate
au niște replici ca din filme.
Toate acestea şi încă altele pot fi ale tale,
ca şi cum ai fi autorul acestor cuvinte
pe care autorul le duce la capăt
fără să ştie unde e capătul.

It's Like a French Movie

This complicated thing called poetry
comes from within.
If you are alone and wish to be alone,
if you always talk to people who laugh at your jokes,
if you ride a bicycle fast in the countryside
with your eyes half-closed to avoid the flies,
if you quietly compose a couple of lines
while BBC radio
is announcing a bomb explosion in Jerusalem,
if you feel that any moment
can be your moment,
and people call you to hear two words from you,
if your heart yearns for some loved ones
left behind in a poor country....
All these make a case for
this complicated thing called poetry.

It’s like a French movie
where everyone is out of work,
and there is nothing to do,
except to talk incessantly about
art and other similar things.
It's like a novel by Cortázar
where some refined women
talk as if they were in a movie.
All these and even more can be yours,
as if you were the author of these words
that you write all the way to the end
when there is no end in sight.

Translating the Art of Alexandre Vialatte's *Battling the Melancholy*

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Battling le ténébreux, the 1928 novel by Alexandre Vialatte (1901-1971), has all the makings of a cult *Bildungsroman* – almost a French *Catcher in the Rye* – but it never quite found its target audience. Like J.D. Salinger's 1951 classic, it is an anti-coming-of-age story, full of teenage alienation. Published a quarter of a century earlier than Salinger's, in the inter-war period, *Battling* comes with a hefty dollop of Freudian psychoanalysis and traces of the fantastic. The tale follows a trio of schoolboys – protagonist Battling, carefree Manuel, and the inconspicuous narrator – as they fight the institution, dream up other worlds, and obsess over a strange German artist named Erna Schnorr who arrives in their unremarkable small town. Battling watches on bitterly as Manuel wins Erna over, wallowing in memories of a loveless childhood and retreating to a dark and bizarre inner world that he constructs from fiction.

Battling is Vialatte's (1901-1971) first novel, and one of only three published in his lifetime. Primarily a literary translator from German, Vialatte belongs to a rare breed of writers better known for their translations. He introduced Franz Kakfa to the French, translating the bulk of the Czech writer's oeuvre, as well as works by Friedrich Nietzsche and Bertolt Brecht. His most famous novel *Les Fruits du Congo* (1951) is the only one to have been translated into English (1954) and is long out of print. Vialatte's very sporadic fictional contribution is difficult to place and has settled into relative obscurity. In fact, he proclaimed himself "notoriously unrecognized" and the academic literature labels him alternately behind and ahead of his time, traditional and post-modern, Catholic and irreverent, lyrical and grotesque, anti-intellectual with a taste for formalism (Schaffner 309; Jourde 10–12). The list could go on. Vialatte's ambiguities, arising in part from his position between French and German languages and literatures, have attracted a modest academic following today. Moreover, his strangeness appeals to translation in the sense famously ascribed to it by Walter Benjamin; the translator's task is founded in the unfathomable and mysterious nature of literature (70).

The following extract comes from the opening pages of *Battling* (Vialatte 21-36). Like its author, the text unites a hotchpotch of influences in "une sorte de roman total, à la fois complainte populaire, clownerie métaphysique, récit mythologique, roman noir, *Bildungsroman* etc." (a sort of complete novel, at once popular lament, metaphysical farce, mythological tale, *roman noir*, *Bildungsroman* etc.)[1] (Jourde 218). The extract begins with the now grown-up narrator nostalgically looking back to when he and his classmates were sixteen, still brimming with the dreams and innocence of youth. In the pages that follow, the schoolboys' teachers are quickly established as the enemy in an 'us against them' narrative. Monsieur Baladier, aka Rétine [Retina], serves as the scapegoat. A spiritless shell of a man, he represents the town's bourgeoisie, the scholastic institution and, as we soon see, the controlling power of authoritarian states. When the principal orders Manuel to his office because of an obscene caricature he drew of Rétine, the reprimand quickly turns into a metafictional debate on modernist art.

Through an allusion to George Grosz,[2] Manuel's caricature becomes a symbol of subversive interwar art, and the principal, a dictator. Vehemently anti-fascist, Grosz was a German expressionist painter and member of the Berlin Dada group active in the nineteen-

[1] All translations are my own unless otherwise marked.
[2] Born Georg Ehrenfried Groß, George Grosz adopted the anglicized spelling of his name as a statement against German nationalism.

twenties. The reference to his work suggests an ugly and provocative aesthetic employed to expose the cruel and unspoken realities of humanity. Opposing even the classification of such works as art, the principal delivers a tirade against anything obscene or experimental, collecting the lot under the repulsive banner of Bolshevism. The result is a humorous look at the politics of the avant-garde where these teenagers, standing in as progressive artists, strive to shock the bourgeoisie, and the teachers, as the oppressors, hold firm with rigid and nationalistic conceptions of Art.

My translation approach follows Tim Parks' "literary approach to translation" and "translation approach to literature", outlined in his book *Translating Style* (14). Key to Parks' method is the belief that those areas that are problematic to translation reveal the "artistic vision" of the original (144). In a circular process, a deep understanding of the text informs translation so that the complications of the literary text at hand dictate the translator's strategies instead of any static or binary understanding of translation theory.

Looking closely at those places in *Battling* where translation is especially difficult, it quickly becomes clear that the crux of the text is modernist art, and the politics and formalism that come with it. Not only is its content about art but also its form – descriptions often play with perspective and mimic cubism and collage. In the opening paragraph, for example, the narrator sees the pupils' heads in front of him as black between the whites of the ears and the teacher's chest is small (rendering the adults insignificant) due to perspective. Atmospheres and moods are material: thick like art, smooth like sculptures. In translation, it would be easy to normalize such language and thus lose its iconicity. For that reason, rather than any overarching preference for foreignization or domestication (Venuti, 15-20), I prioritize the art in translation, and its interwar European backdrop.

Most strikingly, the stand-off between Manuel and the principal is absurdly stylized, with the figures abstracted and the imagery geometric. The principal's head, for example, is broken up architecturally into building blocks with supports and vaults. Given translation's tendency to standardize (Berman, 68-69), I make a conscious effort to reproduce the text's strange shapes. At times, however, I replace these images for readability in English – to characterize the supervisor's constant nodding, for example, I write 'bobbing' rather than 'pendulum motion', and I tweak the adverb '*automatiquement*' to 'mechanically' to emphasize the puppet-like nature of these dehumanized teachers (29).

Such images pile atop one another, like a cubist painting, in long sentences separated only by semi-colons. While the schoolboys supposedly despise the posturing of the canonical art scene, the narrator peppers his prose with pretentious-sounding adjectives. In his own "heavy-handed frivolity" (31), everything is cumbersome and weighty. To reproduce this irony in translation but again maintain readability, I omit some semi-colons – which work in Vialatte's French but can distract in today's English – and intersperse my deliberately long sentences with a few shorter ones to avoid flattening tone and make any unwieldiness stand out.

Sometimes specific references were important to the subversive nature of the excerpt's art. When the narrator compares Manuel's vision of Baladier to the trademark lady of the Editions Larousse, the delicious incongruity of the image renders the caricature comically grotesque for the French reader. I adapt the reference, perhaps controversially, to Gretchen in *Faust*, not to domesticate – the intertext remains foreign to an English reader, and *Battling* is already dotted with German references – but to offer a world audience a more accessible link to that youthful game of 'he loves me, he loves me not'.

Topping off the war on perspective between Manuel's expressive caricature and the principal's classic art is the nickname 'Rétine'. Pronouncing their teachers blind to a true version of the world, the trio ironically dub Baladier 'Retina' in French. The boys, alienated from the adult way of things amid their 'culture potachique' (schoolboy culture), see the messy

edges and possibilities of the world through fantasies, absurdity and unhinged desire.[3] Manuel's drive to put shocking sentiment and chaotic life into material form characterizes the state of art at the time, swept up in the modernist concern to explore the messy and fragmented: to 'make it new' as per Ezra Pound. Conversely, in these dark days of unrest, the adults cling to established referents, politically correct language, and classic art in a blind need to establish order.

In light of this meditation on the wonders and pitfalls of modernist art, particularly in regard to perspective, translation looms as another hat to throw in the ring. In translation, *Battling* – Vialatte's work of art – gains another angle. As for Rétine, I keep his name as it is in the hope that the French is sufficiently transparent to an English reader and thank the translation gods for Romance languages.

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[3] *Battling* adopts the schoolboy culture made infamous by Alfred Jarry in *Ubu roi* (1896): see Béhar (16, 98–99).

Battling le ténébreux
By Alexandre Vialatte

Il me suffit de fermer les yeux pour entendre encore ronronner les becs de gaz de la petite étude, voir les murs verts et les grandes cartes géographiques, le Bassin parisien avec ses auréoles, le Tonkin violet, l'Annam rose, et trente têtes penchées patiemment sur des cahiers. C'est là que nous vivions nos seize ans. Nos yeux graves démentaient notre mauvais sourire ; nous avions des tabliers noirs, des doigts tachés d'encre et des signatures indécises ornées de paraphes copiés. Les vieux pupitres, invraisemblablement ravinés de formules, de dates et de devises, proposaient à la mémoire des patronymes fameux. C'est là que la génération précédente avait sculpté ses noms au couteau avant d'aller mourir à la guerre. Maintenant les pupitres avilis cachaient des photographies de femmes, découpées dans des magazines, des collections de timbres et des croûtons de pain, les déchets d'un âge inutile. Une République au profil grec regardait dans le vide avec des yeux de plâtre, horizontalement, plus loin que nous.

J'étais placé tout au fond de l'étude, dans un coin réservé aux anciens, entre Manuel Feracci, de Manuel Feracci, de Mathématiques élémentaires, et Fernand Larache, dit Battling, de première D. De là, nous embrassions l'ensemble de la salle où les têtes émergeaient en noir entre les anses blanches des oreilles ; tout au bout, dans la vapeur de la neige qui fondait autour du poêle, le buste du répétiteur, rapetissé par la perspective, flottait au-dessus de la chaire comme une vision mystique dans un porte-plume de Lourdes.

Je n'ai jamais su pourquoi nous l'appelions Rétine ; son vrai nom était Baladier. On ne savait d'où il était venu, ni quels faits avaient pu marquer son passé ; on ne se le demandait pas ; il jouissait de l'existence indubitable mais abstraite des vérités mathématiques ; on admettait qu'il eût toujours été là. Je l'avais connu plus fringant : quand j'étais encore en sixième, il affectait une certaine élégance de vignette scolaire, il avait des moustaches en croc, la démarche ferme, et des complets sans époque, parfaits jusqu'à l'impersonnalité, l'uniforme anonyme des messieurs vertueux dans le livre de morale. Mais, depuis, il s'était négligé, usé par la sous-préfecture ; il avait laissé pousser sa barbe et portait, en toute saison, comme les pêcheurs du

Battling the Melancholy
By Alexandre Vialatte
Translated by Frances Egan

I only have to close my eyes to hear the purring of gas lamps in the study hall once more, to see the green walls and the large maps, the Paris Basin with its rings, the purple Tonkin, the pink Annam, and thirty heads bent over their books. That was the year we were sixteen. Our serious eyes belied wicked smiles; we had black smocks, ink-stained fingers, and ever-changing signatures topped with stolen flourishes. The old desks, impossibly ravaged with formulas, dates and mottos, reminded us of prominent families. It was there that the previous generation had carved their names with knives before leaving to die in the war. Now the sullied desks hid photos of women, cut out from magazines, stamp collections and bread crusts – the debris of a senseless age. The Grecian profile of our republic stared into space with eyes of plaster, her horizontal gaze looking past us.

I used to sit right at the back of the study, with the older boys, between Manuel Feracci, from elementary mathematics, and Fernand Larache, aka Battling, from *première D*. From there we could take in the whole room: in the foreground, the heads that looked black between the white crescents of the ears, and beyond, in the steam rising from the snow melting around the stove, the teacher's chest, made small by the distance, floating above the lectern like a mystical vision in a pen holder from Lourdes.

I never knew why we called him Rétine; his real name was Baladier. We didn't know where he had come from, nor what events had stained his past – we never asked. He was evidence of the irrefutable but abstract reality of mathematical truths, and we assumed he had always been there. I had known him at his most spry: when I was still in the sixth grade he had affected a sort of schoolmasterly chic, with a handlebar moustache, a strict manner and a number of ageless suits, all perfectly nondescript, the anonymous uniform of virtuous gentlemen in books on morality. But since then he had let himself go. Jaded by life in a small town, he had grown a beard and taken to wearing, no matter the season, the hunting jacket favoured by local fishermen, with back pockets and metal buttons

département, un veston de chasse, avec des poches dans le dos et des boutons de métal ornés de têtes de griffons en relief, venu de la Manufacture d'Armes de Saint-Étienne. Il allait acheter tous les deux jours son paquet de gris chez Mme Vachette, la buraliste, avec laquelle il avait commencé par échanger quelques commentaires de courtoisie sur la nécessité générale de la pluie, ses opportunités particulières, et la certaine proportion pour laquelle la richesse entre, après tout, dans la constitution du bonheur. Il s'était habitué petit à petit à la chaleur malsaine du poêle, à l'odeur du tabac frais, au jour sombre de la pièce ; il y était revenu pour terminer sa promenade. L'habitude était devenue enfin une nécessité. Il avait découvert là, entre le rayon des ninas âcres et celui des Picaduros mafflus, le véritable climat de son âme. Il aimait la couleur locale des vignettes bariolées où des toréadors avantageux exhibent des favoris bleus sous une toque en fourrure, les banderoles luxueuses ornées de noms espagnols, les pipes vides, mélancoliques, les fume-cigarettes d'ambre-jaune ; les bonbons-surprise, et les petits bijoux à trois francs dont l'alliage s'oxydait dans l'éventaire à moitié vide. Mme Vachette, flattée par les visites d'un client aussi cultivé, disait de lui : « C'est un cerveau. » On leur prêtait des relations répréhensibles. Elle lisait à journée faite des romans semi-littéraires qui l'aidaient à se réinventer selon ses goûts, ornait son corsage douteux de rubans vifs et projetait sur les questions amoureuses la lumière définitive de ses aphorismes rose pastel. Quelquefois M. Ravière, le quincaillier, venait aussi, et, d'un seul coup, lâchait tous ses proverbes en sortant son porte-monnaie. La conversation prenait alors quelque chose de joufflu, de confortable, et, dans la chaleur du poêle, la vie valait d'être vécue. L'existence acquérait une épaisseur particulière ; l'amitié, la conversation, la belle humeur, le zouave du Job lui donnaient une saveur nourrissante. M. Baladier réfutait un argument sentimental par une citation latine ou plaisantait Mme Vachette sur ce qu'il appelait sa subconscience romanesque et ses refoulement freudiens ; laissait-elle une porte ouverte, il lui reprochait des lubricités sournoises et des complexes inquiétants. Elle éclatait alors d'un rire de femme qu'on chatouille auquel se superposait un petit gloussement étudié qu'elle trouvait tout à fait bon genre et disait en prenant une voix distinguée : « Vous êtes adorablement espiègle », car c'est ainsi que parlait Gina de Valmombreuse dans le roman qu'elle lisait.

adorned with embossed griffin heads, direct from the arms factory in Saint-Etienne. Every second day he would go to Madame Vachette's, the tobacconist, to buy his *paquet de gris* and exchange polite remarks about the need for rain in general, his prospects in particular, and the precise extent, in the end, to which wealth accounts for the constitution of happiness. Little by little, he had become accustomed to the unsavoury warmth of the wood stove, to the smell of fresh tobacco, to the dark day of the shop, returning there after his stroll. Habit had eventually become necessity. There, between the rows of sharp cigarillos and plump Picaduros, he had found the true essence of his soul. He liked the local touch on the colourful labels where puffed up toreadors flaunted blue side-burns beneath fur hats, the plush banners emblazoned with Spanish names, the empty, melancholy pipes, the yellow amber cigarette holders, the lucky-dip sweets, and the three-franc jewellery beginning to oxidize in the half-empty display. Madame Vachette, flattered by the patronage of such a cultured customer, used to tell everyone that he was "a great mind". They were alleged to have disreputable relations. Day after day, she would read semi-literary novels that helped her reinvent herself according to her tastes, she would adorn her cheap bodice with bright ribbons and illuminate questions of love with the sure sparkle of her pastel pink aphorisms. From time to time, Monsieur Ravière, the ironmonger, would call in too and, in one fell swoop, release a stream of proverbs as he pulled out his purse. And so the conversation took on a cosy quality, like chubby cheeks, and, in the warmth of the stove, life was worth living. Existence acquired a certain thickness – friendship, conversation, high spirits and the Zouave on the Job cigarettes gave it a rich flavour. Monsieur Baladier would counter a sentimental argument with a Latin quotation, tease Madame Vachette about what he called her fictional subconscious and her Freudian repression and, should she give him an opening, reproach her covert lustfulness and disturbing complexes. She would then burst into the laughter of a woman being wooed topped with a small studied titter that she thought in remarkably good taste and, assuming a sophisticated tone, would say, "you are *adorably* wicked", since that was how Gina de Valmombreuse spoke in the novel she was reading.

Mme Vachette, influencée par des lectures regrettables, définissait mal Baladier.

Baladier n'avait rien d'un adorable espiègle. C'était un chef taciturne et mou, un être banal et puissant qui présidait à la fermentation de nos adolescences comme un épouvantail champêtre à la germination du blé. Quand il ouvrait son parapluie sur le pas de la porte en levant vers le ciel un nez furtif, il apparaissait véritablement comme un symbole décourageant de la médiocrité terrestre et ce seul geste autorisait tous les désespoirs. En face de cet homme sans fantaisie qui niait l'imagination par sa seule présence, nous dissimulions nos âmes encombrantes sous des sourires sans sincérité. Nous étions pour la plupart fort occupés à nous jouer par-devant nous-mêmes un rôle d'hommes faits qui n'eût provoqué chez Rétine qu'une incompréhension bien franche plus vexante qu'une ironie. D'ailleurs, n'étant pas complètement dupes de notre propre comédie, nous avions une conscience inquiète qui nous rendait sournois et méchants. Mais qui nous eût tendu la main dans notre misère orgueilleuse ? Nos maîtres ? Supposition ridicule : les adolescents ne peuvent pas compter sur les adultes. Les adultes arrondis par le temps, les adultes aux âmes vulgaires et à la logique impeccable, ont peur de tant de richesse et de scorie. Nos regards exigeants leur inspiraient de la gêne ; nos bouches menteuses, du dégoût. Orgueilleux et vils à la fois, c'est en les méprisant que nous les prenions pour modèles.

Madame Vachette, influenced by some unfortunate reading, did not define Baladier well.

Baladier was far from adorably wicked. He was a meek and taciturn leader, an unremarkable and powerful being who watched over the fermentation of our adolescence like a country scarecrow the germination of wheat. Whenever he opened his umbrella on the doorstep, raising his furtive nose to the skies, he truly seemed the disheartening epitome of earthly mediocrity and this single gesture gave grounds for despair. Before this man without dreams whose presence alone negated the imagination, we hid our clumsy souls beneath insincere smiles. We were busy pretending to ourselves that we were men, something which must have driven Rétine crazy in his failure to understand – he never saw the irony. And since we ourselves, by the way, were not completely taken in by our act, we developed uneasy consciences which made us cunning and mean. But who had held out a hand in our proud misery? Our schoolmasters? Ridiculous supposition: adolescents cannot count on adults. Adults softened by the years, adults with simple souls and spotless logic, afraid of such richness and dross. Our demanding looks instilled in them unease, our lying lips, disgust. At once proud and lowly, it was in despising them that we followed their example.

Clair-de-Lune, le concierge – mélancolique importation du chef-lieu industriel – qui vendait du chocolat Menier aux récréations et sonnait la cloche pour diviser le temps, passa par la porte entr'ouverte son ventre gainé d'un tablier bleu :

– On demande Feracci chez Monsieur le Principal.

Feracci prit l'expression dédaigneuse de circonstance à partir du « premier bachot », posa sa plume, rejeta en arrière de longs cheveux noirs qui découvrirent un front noble, et se leva avec une lenteur voulue. Il tâcha d'avoir en sortant de l'étude un air complètement excédé.

– Travaillons, déclara Rétine ; et les têtes revinrent sur les cahiers.

Claire-de-Lune, the caretaker – a melancholy import from the main industrial town – who sold Menier chocolates at break and rang the bell to divide the time, came up to the half-open door, his belly sheathed in a blue apron:

"Feracci is wanted in the principal's office."

Feracci assumed the disdainful expression time-honoured by senior boys, put down his pen, threw back his long black hair to expose a noble brow, and made a show of taking his time getting up. He did his best to appear thoroughly exasperated as he left the study hall.

"Back to work," announced Rétine, and the heads turned back to their books.

Sur le palier, devant la porte du principal, un araucaria présidait dans une odeur d'encaustique. Un bébé barbouillé de confiture se

On the landing, in front of the principal's door, an araucaria held sway in a smell of wax-polish. A baby smeared with sweets hid behind an umbrella stand.

cacha derrière le porte parapluie. Une voix sèche cria : « Entrez. »

La lumière faisait briller des vitrines où s'alignaient des papillons morts, des pierres mauves et de vieux livres. Au milieu, derrière un bureau jaune, le principal se tenait assis, le buste renversé en arrière sur le dossier d'un fauteuil rond ; son nez busqué soutenait un grand front chauve comme un contrefort soutient une voûte ; il avait des moustaches blondes, une jaquette noire, un col cassé qui laissait nue la pomme d'Adam, très mobile, et des manchettes en celluloïd qu'il faisait remonter de temps en temps. Le surveillant général notait des chiffres sur un gros livre, dans un coin de la pièce ; il releva un instant les yeux sans bouger la tête, puis il finit d'écrire un nombre, posa sa plume et se carra sur sa chaise pour participer par son attitude à l'entrevue. Il avait de longs souliers jaunes qui brillaient comme le plancher, avec un bout très dur, et des plis transversaux entre le bout et la tige. Sa moustache posait deux virgules brique sous ses joues pourpres, et ses sourcils avaient l'air de deux grosses chenilles rousses au repos.

Quelque chose de solennel s'introduisait dans la pièce à la faveur du silence, une atmosphère de tribunal.

« Je vais être jugé, pensa Manuel en voyant le geste du surveillant, jugé au nom des papillons morts, des cailloux mauves et des vieux livres, au nom du porte parapluie en fonte émaillée, du bébé barbouillé de confiture et de l'araucaria domestiqué. »

Le principal laissait agir le silence. Il avait reculé un peu plus son fauteuil, croisé les jambes et passé le pouce gauche dans l'entournure de son gilet ; les sourcils levés très haut, la tête penchée en arrière et inclinée sur le côté, il regardait sa main droite avec laquelle il tenait son lorgnon et tapotait sur le bord du bureau.

Manuel commençait à se raidir, énervé, prêt à l'insolence. Il n'aimait pas le principal parce qu'il avait de grands bras maigres avec lesquels il télégraphiait en parlant et parce qu'il détachait les *e* muets en faisant sonner la dernière syllabe de ses mots. Il voulut conjurer la solennité que son supérieur préparait par le silence :

– Vous m'avez fait appeler, Monsieur.

(Feracci ne disait jamais : « Monsieur le Principal », comme les autres élèves et la plupart des maîtres, pour ne pas contracter, disait-il, « les mœurs de la tribu ».) Le principal bougea à peine ; il arrêta le mouvement du lorgnon, haussa

"Enter," came a curt voice.

Sunlight glistened over glass displays holding rows of preserved butterflies, purple stones and old books. In the middle, the principal sat behind a yellow desk, his torso tilted back against a curved armchair and his hooked nose supporting a large smooth forehead as a flying buttress supports a vault. He had a blond moustache, black tails, a wing collar that left his active Adam's apple bare, and celluloid cuffs that he pushed up from time to time. The head supervisor, taking down figures in a fat book in a corner of the room, looked up for a moment without moving his head, then finished writing a number, put down his pen, and settled back in his chair so he could contribute to the meeting with his manner. He wore long yellow shoes that shone like the floor, with a severe toe and horizontal creases on the vamp. His moustache planted two brick-red commas beneath flushed cheeks, and his eyebrows were like two fat red caterpillars at rest.

Silence descended over the room and, with it, the gravity of a court case. I'm going to be tried, thought Manuel, seeing the supervisor's gesture, tried in the name of the preserved butterflies, the purple stones and the old books, in the name of the enamelled cast iron umbrella stand, the baby smeared with sweets and the domesticated araucaria.

The principal let the silence do its work. He had moved his armchair back a little further, crossed his legs and pushed his left thumb through the armhole of his waistcoat. Eyebrows raised, head tilted back and to the side, he looked at his right hand which was holding the pince-nez that he tapped against the side of the desk.

Manuel stiffened, irritated, ripe for insolence. He didn't like the principal because he had long thin arms that he used to telegraph his speech and he enunciated the silent "e" of his words as he struck the last syllable. He wanted to ward off the gravity that his superior was brewing with silence.

"You sent for me, Monsieur."

(Feracci never said, "*Monsieur le principal*", like the other students and the majority of teachers, to avoid, as he put it, subscribing to "the customs of the tribe".) The principal was still. He stopped tapping the pince-

un peu plus les sourcils et tourna les yeux vers le surveillant général. Le surveillant général hocha la tête automatiquement avec un sourire amer. Puis il arrêta son mouvement de pendule et on n'entendit plus rien dans la salle. Alors, le principal ramena la tête dans la direction de Manuel, baissa enfin les yeux sur lui et plissa fortement les narines ; on vit que sa moustache naissait très haut dans le nez.

– Vous sentez le tabac, Feracci. Vous avez fumé ?

Il parlait sans passion, comme un homme qui constate.

– Oui, Monsieur.

Manuel avait passé la récréation de quatre heures « chez Aristide », à faire un billard avec Damour.

– Et vous avez le front de venir me dire en face…

– Vous m'interrogez ; je ne mens pas, coupa Manuel.

Il s'était senti tout d'un coup une sorte de rage froide provoquée par la mise en scène du principal, un besoin d'être insolent, de se faire mal voir. Il aurait voulu une « engueulade » nette et catégorique ; il sentait au contraire que le principal préparait lentement des phrases parfaites, jouait un rôle sans difficulté comme sans mérite pour se plaire à lui-même et à l'idiot écarlate qui prenait modèle dans son coin.

– Vraiment ! fit le principal un peu interloqué en ramenant la tête en avant. Mon petit ami, il y a deux sortes de sincérités : la franchise et le cynisme. Savez-vous dans quelle catégorie je range la vôtre ?

Il avait ouvert largement les bras sur l'affirmation générale, levé l'index sur le cynisme et la franchise, et posé la question lentement, avec un hochement de tête, en prenant l'expression de la curiosité la plus vive. Manuel contint son énervement pour répondre d'un ton intentionnellement excédé :

– C'est une question sans intérêt, Monsieur.

Jamais élève ne s'était permis pareille insolence. Mais pourquoi le poussait-on à bout ? A la fin il en avait assez ; qu'on le renvoyât, qu'on lui infligeât toutes les hontes scolaires, mais il ne voulait pas faire le jeu de ce phraseur prétentieux, se donner l'air de ne pas sentir le ridicule de la disproportion de cette mise en scène avec le motif de l'accusation.

Le principal affecta d'ailleurs une recrudescence de calme. Le surveillant eut pour Manuel un regard de reproche qui voulait dire :

nez, raised his eyebrows a little higher, and turned to look at the supervisor. With a bitter smile, the supervisor nodded his head mechanically. When he stopped his bobbing, nothing could be heard. The principal turned his head to Manuel, looked him in the eye at last and vigorously wrinkled his nose, revealing the very high beginnings of his moustache.

"You smell of tobacco, Feracci. Have you been smoking?"

He spoke dispassionately, like a man who observes.

"Yes, Monsieur."

Manuel had spent the four o'clock break "*Chez Aristide*" shooting pool with Damour.

"And you have the nerve to tell me to my face…"

"You asked," Manuel cut in, "I won't lie."

He was suddenly hit by a cold rage brought on by the principal's theatrics, a need to be insolent, to be in the bad books. He would have preferred a clean and categorical "telling off" but he sensed that the principal was instead slowly preparing perfect phrases, that he was playing a part as easy as it was cheap just to please himself and the scarlet idiot following his example in the corner.

"Indeed!" said the principal, tilting his head forward, a little taken aback. "There are two types of sincerity, my dear boy: candour and cynicism. Do you know in which category I put yours?"

He had opened his arms wide over the general affirmation, raised his index finger at the cynicism and the candour, and posed the question slowly, with a nod of his head, assuming an expression of utmost curiosity. Manuel contained his irritation.

"It is a question of little interest, Monsieur," he replied, with calculated exasperation.

Never had a student dared to display such insolence. But why push him over the edge? By now he was fed up. They could expel him, mete out whichever academic disgrace – he still wouldn't play along with this pretentious pontificator, pretending not to see how ludicrously out of proportion such theatrics were with the grounds for accusation.

Meanwhile, the principal affected a new wave of calm. The supervisor looked

« A quoi bon aggraver votre cas ? » Le principal haussa les sourcils comme précédemment pour regarder le surveillant. Le surveillant hocha de nouveau la tête avec le même sourire amer, et le principal se retourna vers le coupable.

– C'est une question qui aura de l'intérêt samedi soir à quatre heures. Nous disions donc que vous ne mentez pas ; et vous allez nous expliquer, Monsieur Feracci, avec cette belle franchise qui vous caractérise, vous allez nous expliquer, dis-je, d'une façon nette, ce que vous faisiez cette nuit à deux heures et quart, si je ne me trompe, dans les rues de la vieille ville, au lieu de dormir tranquillement dans la maison de Monsieur votre père, comme tous les garçons sérieux.

Manuel tressaillit. Il n'était pas préparé à une question pareille. Qui donc avait pu l'apercevoir ? Il répondit au bout d'un instant :

– C'est une question qui ne regarde que mon père.

– Et sans doute, avec votre belle franchise, avez-vous prévenu Monsieur votre père de vos fantaisies nocturnes ?

Manuel sacrifia au besoin de se crâner :

– Mon père ne s'occupe pas de bagatelles. Il a une foule d'affaires importantes qui le réclament. Je ne lui parle de mes sorties nocturnes que quand j'ai besoin d'argent.

Mais le principal n'était pas si bête. Il avait vu M. Feracci, l'antiquaire de la rue Magenta, dans le courant de l'après-midi, et s'était renseigné discrètement.

– C'est tout naturel, répondit-il. D'ailleurs, M. Feracci ne serait pas le premier père à se tromper sur son fils. Et maintenant, qu'est-ce que ceci ?

Il avait sorti de son buvard une aquarelle assez tragique exécutée dans le genre de Gross ; on y voyait un Baladier définitivement gâteux affaissé dans un fauteuil rose ; avec les douze poches de sa veste et ses boutons à tête de chien, il semblait personnifier le concept Médiocre sur un mode lourdement badin ; cette impression de frivolité pesante était accrue par un sac de fleurs qu'il tenait entre ses jambes et par une marguerite assez lamentable qu'il effeuillait en soufflant dessus comme la dame de la librairie Larousse ; Mme Vachette, complètement nue, trônait à un comptoir surchargé d'ébénisteries prétentieuses ; des détails cruellement choisis, la déformation du corset, les zébrures des baleines, des couperoses soulignées, un ruban vif autour du cou, faisaient de son corps un nu absolument obscène, avachi, miteux et repoussant. En haut, à

disapprovingly at Manuel, seeming to say: "why make things worse for yourself?" The principal glanced at the supervisor, raising his eyebrows as before. The supervisor nodded his head again with the same bitter smile, and the principal turned back to the culprit.

"It is a question which will be of interest Saturday afternoon at four o'clock. Since we have all agreed that you do not lie, you will explain, Monsieur Feracci, with that fine candour of yours, you will explain, I say, without fuss, what you were doing last night at a quarter past two, if I am not mistaken, in the streets of the old town, instead of sleeping peacefully in your good father's house like a sensible boy."

Manuel trembled. He had not expected such a question. Who, then, had managed to spot him? He hesitated before answering.

"It is a question which concerns only my father."

"And of course, with your fine candour, you will have informed your good father about your late-night whims?"

Manuel succumbed to the urge to brag. "My father does not concern himself with trifles. He has a whole host of demands upon his time. I only speak to him of my plans when I need money."

But the principal was not that stupid. He had seen Monsieur Feracci, the antique dealer on rue Magenta, in the course of the afternoon and had made some discreet enquiries.

"Naturally," he replied. "Monsieur Feracci would not be the first father to be mistaken about his son, would he? And now, what have we here?"

He had taken a rather tragic watercolour in the vein of Grosz out of his blotter: in a crudely playful portrait, a doddering Baladier sat slumped in a pink armchair, his jacket's twelve pockets and dog-head buttons making him the very picture of Mediocrity. With a bag of flowers between his legs, he was blowing on a pathetic-looking daisy and, in this spirit of heavy-handed frivolity, plucking its petals like Gretchen in *Faust*. A completely naked Madame Vachette took centre stage at a counter overwrought by pretentious woodwork. With a few cruelly chosen details – the indentations from the corset, the streaks of the stays, the bright red vessels on her face, a colourful ribbon around her neck – her body had been transformed into an utterly obscene nude, misshapen, pitiful, repulsive. A cupid lay flat on its stomach atop a cloud in the

plat ventre sur un nuage, un petit Amour jouait du trombone avec componction. Le tout, rehaussé de mauve pâle, de vert acide, et de rose glande, s'intitulait « *Marivaudage* » et se trouvait signé des initiales de Feracci. Il avait réussi à mettre là-dedans tous les dégoûts de notre jeunesse exigeante.

– C'est une caricature que j'ai faite.

– C'est même, si je ne me trompe, la caricature de M. Baladier, dit le principal. Et je ne vous en fais pas mon compliment. Une caricature avec laquelle vous prétendez donner cours à une fable obscène ? une caricature stupide. Vous en êtes fier, n'est-ce pas, Feracci ? Et voilà, ajouta-t-il violemment, voilà ce que je ne saurais souffrir ! Que vous vous permettiez, vous, Feracci, moitié de bachelier, encore mal sec derrière les oreilles, de ridiculiser bassement l'un de vos maîtres, un répétiteur qui se montre bon pour vous jusqu'à la faiblesse, de bafouer lâchement un homme qui a conquis à la force du poignet des diplômes auxquels, en prenant ce chemin, vous n'arriverez jamais, petit imbécile, avec vos airs de dédain déplacés ; un honnête homme qui exerce dignement une profession vénérable entre toutes, celle de l'éducateur, et qui, s'il peut vous faire l'effet d'un être usé, ne soit sa fatigue qu'au travail, à la lassitude de former des gamins ingrats. Ridiculisé par un gosse ! un morveux !

Il répéta plusieurs fois le mot pour bien humilier Manuel.

– Parfaitement, Feracci, un morveux ! Votre orgueil proteste ? Un homme digne de ce nom n'aurait pas eu la bassesse de se livrer au geste que vous avez commis. Si encore vous pouviez vous réclamer de l'art ! Mais vous m'avez l'air d'avoir sur l'art des conceptions aussi saugrenues que votre conduite : vous méprisez le beau pour la pornographie ; j'ai constaté dans votre pupitre la présence d'une demi-douzaine de revues stupides consacrées à l'esthétique de trois ou quatre voyous révolutionnaires venus d'outre-Rhin pour annihiler en France le sens du noble et du beau. Vous ne vous étonnerez pas de leur disparition ; je les confisque. Ah ! au nom de l'Art, du vrai, on peut bien des choses ; mais je vous défends d'en parler, pétroleur : vous le souillez. L'art, c'est l'élévation de l'âme, de l'esprit et des sentiments ; ce n'est pas la grossière transcription des instincts les plus bas de l'âme, la provocation au rire le plus vil, à la débauche, à la révolution. Appellerez-vous artistiques ces sales ébauches de peintres stériles qui, incapables de parler aux

sky, solemnly playing the trombone. The piece, set off by pale mauve, acid green and glandular pink, was entitled "*Marivaudage*" and signed with Feracci's initials. He had managed to convey all the disgust of our demanding youth.

"It's a caricature."

"It is even, if I am not mistaken, your caricature of Monsieur Baladier," said the principal.

"And do not take that as a compliment. A caricature with which you aspire to give free rein to an obscene fiction? A silly caricature. You are proud of it, Feracci, are you not? And therein," he added violently, "therein lies what I cannot tolerate! What gives you the right, Feracci, not even a high school graduate, still wet behind the ears, to shamefully ridicule one of your schoolmasters, a teacher who has shown you kindness to the point of weakness, to spinelessly scorn a man who has earned his qualifications through sheer hard work, qualifications that you, taking this road, will never hold, you little twit, with your misplaced disdain, an honest man who practices with dignity a profession venerable above all others, that of an educator, a man who, if he looks to be on his last legs, has only his job to thank, and the resignation that comes from educating ungrateful boys. Ridiculed by a kid. A snotty-nosed kid!"

He repeated this several times to thoroughly humiliate Manuel.

"Exactly, Feracci, a snotty-nosed kid. Is your pride injured? A real man would not have stooped to such an act. If only you could call it art. But it seems that your notion of art is as absurd as your conduct – you spurn beauty for pornography. I noticed half a dozen silly magazines in your desk dedicated to the aesthetics of three or four revolutionary lowlifes who have come from across the Rhine to destroy the French sense of the noble and the beautiful. Do not be surprised to find them gone – I am confiscating them. Oh, in the name of art, of truth, one could do many things, but I forbid you to speak of it, anarchist, you will dirty it. Art lifts up the soul, the spirit, the emotions; it does not crudely transcribe the soul's lowest instincts, or elicit foul laughter, debauchery, revolt. Would you call these filthy sketches art? Sketches by worthless painters who, incapable of speaking to the noble regions of the human heart, appeal to the most ignoble and contemptuous qualities of an instinct they got from the Bolsheviks? These

nobles régions du cœur humain, s'adressent à ce que l'instinct dévié d'un public bolcheviste a de plus ignoble et de plus haineux ? Ces images obscènes et morbides ? La caricature n'est pas de l'art, c'est de l'anarchie. Avant de jouer les artistes, gamin, apprenez à connaître la vie, et méritez d'abord vos diplômes. Mais vous n'en prenez guère le chemin. Que ferez-vous dans l'existence sans votre baccalauréat ? J'en ai connu, de ces créatures lamentables, de ces larves inquiètes, qui passaient leur temps de collège à fumer aux cabinets et à bafouer leurs maîtres ; ils étaient trois dans ma section ; le premier, après avoir fait faillite, s'est fait sauter la cervelle ; le second plante ses choux misérablement faute de pouvoir accéder aux carrières administratives ; le troisième est devenu antimilitariste ; c'est une pente ; cette pente, vous la prenez. On remarque chez vous depuis quelque temps, Feracci, une tendance à vouloir jouer l'homme fait, à trancher de l'indépendant, de l'esprit supérieur, et à donner le pire exemple à vos camarades sur lesquels votre influence me surprend. On vous rencontre dans les couloirs, les mains dans les poches, vous promenant avec la nonchalance d'un chef de bureau désœuvré ; vous parlez à vos maîtres sur un ton de négligence impolie ; on vous découvre fumant, jouant aux cartes, dans des cafés, des estaminets louches où je rougirais, moi, homme de quarante ans, de pénétrer. Ne niez pas ; monsieur le juge suppléant vous y a vu. Tout cela va cesser, mon garçon, prenez-en note ; vos petits airs de supériorité insolente ne sont pas de mise ici. Samedi soir, Feracci, à quatre heures vingt, dans ce bureau, vous viendrez comparaître devant le Conseil de Discipline pour répondre de votre sortie nocturne et de votre tenue en ville, de votre lâche insolence envers M. Baladier et de votre attitude à mon égard. Monsieur votre père sera avisé ce soir même ; en attendant, – notez, s'il vous plaît, Monsieur Trottier – vous pouvez vous considérer comme consigné pour dimanche, sans préjudice de ce qui suivra. Allez.

Peut-être eût-il fallu peu de chose pour que, dans son indignation, le principal apparût à Manuel presque sympathique : un tour un peu moins prudhommesque, une stylisation moins arbitrairement pédagogique de son blâme. Mais ces âneries au sujet de la caricature qui n'est pas de l'art !... Le prenait-on pour un enfant ? Voulait-on le tromper pour le faire tenir sage ? Pourquoi ces mensonges inutiles des adultes ? Et ces histoires de gens qui, s'enlisant de plus en plus dans la honte, tombent du suicide dans la

obscene and morbid images? Caricature is not art, it is anarchy. Before you play the artist, boy, learn a little about life, and before that, get a diploma. But you are so far from that path. What will you do in life without your baccalaureate? I know your type, pathetic creatures, wretched worms who spend their time at high school smoking in the toilets and scorning their schoolmasters. There were three in my cohort: the first went bankrupt and blew off his head, the second is vegetating because he couldn't get a job in the civil service, and the third has become an antimilitarist. It's a slippery slope, dear boy. For some time, Feracci, we have noticed a tendency in you to play the grown man, the maverick, to think yourself a cut above the rest, and to offer the worst possible example to classmates over whom your influence surprises me. You speak to your teachers with a rude carelessness, you stroll the corridors, hands in pockets, with the nonchalance of an idle office manager, and you are found smoking, playing cards, in cafés, in bars of disrepute, where I, a man of forty, would blush to enter. Do not deny it, the deputy judge has seen you. That is all going to stop, my boy, take heed. Your air of insolent superiority is not welcome here. Saturday afternoon, Feracci, at twenty past four, in this office, you will appear before a disciplinary committee to answer for your late-night jaunt and your conduct in town, your cowardly insolence with regard to Monsieur Baladier and your attitude towards me. Your good father will be notified this very evening and, in the meantime – take this down, if you will, Monsieur Trottier – consider yourself on detention until Sunday, without prejudice to what will follow. You're dismissed."

Perhaps it would not have taken much for the principal, in his indignation, to seem almost pleasant to Manuel: if his turn of phrase had been a little less pompous, the stylized reprimand less arbitrarily educational. But what was this nonsense about caricatures not being art... Did he take him for a child? Did he want to trick him into being well-behaved? Why did adults bother with such senseless lies? And those stories about people sinking further and further into disgrace, falling from suicide into a vegetative state

culture des choux pour finir par l'antimilitarisme ! Enfin Rétine méritait-il tant d'éloquence ? son insignifiance, aux yeux de Manuel, était vraiment trop écœurante. Et ses diplômes…, ces diplômes indispensables sans lesquels la famille Feracci vivait si bien, mais qui revenaient à chaque instant dans les discours du principal pour remplacer des personnalités absentes. On est trop exigeant à dix-sept ans ; on a lu trop de livres ; on mesure dédaigneusement ses maîtres à l'échelle de ses écrivains préférés. Manuel rentra donc en étude avec une affectation de soulagement méprisante :

– Ce qu'il m'a rasé, déclara-t-il en bâillant.

Les maîtres, les maîtres imprudents qui apprennent à lire à leurs élèves, ne savent pas le tort qu'ils se font.

and ending up as antimilitarists! Did Rétine really deserve such eloquence, anyhow? His insignificance, in Manuel's eyes, was positively disgusting. And those diplomas… those all-important diplomas without which the Feracci family lived so well, but which kept cropping up in the principal's rhetoric to make up for non-existent personalities. At seventeen, our expectations are too high. We've read too many books and we look at our schoolmasters with contempt when they do not measure up to our favourite writers. Manuel returned to the study hall, an expression of withering relief on his face:

"Bored me half to death," he declared, yawning.

What foolish schoolmasters, teaching their students how to read. They don't know the harm they are inflicting upon themselves.

"The Cities in the Wood": Translating Georg Heym's Poems Set in Sylvan Scenes

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Best known for his bleak and nightmarish depictions of the modern city, the German Expressionist poet Georg Heym (1887-1912) was also a sensitive and passionate portrayer of nature, and he never stopped writing poetry about it until his untimely death by drowning at the age of twenty-four. As the pieces here suggest, some of his dream-like poems set in natural landscapes present a strange and humbling contrast to human metropolises. Although Charles Baudelaire and Arthur Rimbaud are rightly cited as having had the greatest influence on Heym's style and themes, the poetry of the German and English Romantics also helps explain his worldview and his moods, while the verse techniques of John Keats, whom Heym especially admired, may well provide a model for how these poems can be rendered in English.

As Patrick Bridgwater has noted, Georg Heym's "great love was, and remained, the world of nature," a love that stemmed from his childhood amid the Giant Mountains (Riesengebirge) of Silesia (5). When Heym was twelve, though, his father was transferred to the noisy city of Berlin, whose environs both "fascinated" and "appalled" him (Bridgwater 211). Known to Heym at least in part through Stefan George's translations (Bridgwater 144), Charles Baudelaire gave him the model for launching bitter attacks against urban life in such poems as "Der Gott der Stadt" (The City's God) and "Die Dämonen der Städte" (The Demons of the Cities). He also provided the example of using classical forms, especially that of the sonnet, as a means for doing so (153). With its surrealistic and visionary imagery, Arthur Rimbaud's "Le Bateau ivre" (The Drunken Boat) made an equally great impact on him (Seelig 217).

Inspired largely by Baudelaire and Rimbaud, the pieces that made Heym famous were those that dealt with the modern city. Antony Hasler's landmark bi-lingual collection *Poems* (2004) gives these ample representation in English while also showing the range of Heym's poetic subjects, including the French revolution, Shakespeare, the downtrodden (who also intrigued Baudelaire and Rimbaud), and of course nature. Still, those that I have selected here are not featured in Hasler's book, nor have I come across them in English versions elsewhere. Yet except for "Der Schöne Herbst Naht Wieder" ("Another Lovely Autumn Nears") of 1907, he wrote all of these in the last two full years of his life (1910-11). In fact, two ("Die Städte im Wald" and "Der Wald" of March and May 1911, respectively) were composed some months after "Der Gott der Stadt" and "Die Dämonen der Städte" (both of December 1910). And, of the more than five hundred pages of poems from those years that are featured in the first volume of Karl Ludwig Schneider's comprehensive *Dichtungen und Schriften*, I count well over one hundred pages as being devoted to scenes in nature alone.

Although Heym never lived long enough to articulate a comprehensive philosophy of life, his journals do give hints of a worldview, and one may indeed contend that his poems set in nature pose an intriguing contrast to human realms.

Heym held a high regard for the natural world. In fact, his devotion to nature was so strong that by his twenty-second year he was seeking to establish a "new, humanistic religion" in subservience to the classical god Helios (4). The poem translated here as "Another Lovely Autumn Nears" celebrates the classical god of wine in a way reminiscent of Friedrich Nietzsche, whose philosophy Heym admired (40, 47). English scholars may also remember the more conservative English Romantic William Wordsworth's "The World Is Too Much with Us," which praises the ancient Greeks for their awe of nature:

Great God! I'd rather be
A pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn,
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea,
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn. (802-3)

Indeed, Wordsworth's position here provides clues about Heym's initial attitude toward nature. It also helps explain his horror of the modern city, which can alienate us from the elemental powers that reside in all of us and leave us unmoored, isolated, and in pain. Yet one aspect of Heym's makeshift faith, alluded to in the last two stanzas of "Another Lovely Autumn Nears," is that it acknowledges the suffering we all share and so makes room for compassion; as Heym says in one of his letters regarding ancient Greek worshippers, "[b]ecause they sacrificed together, they came to know one another's troubles, and were therefore drawn closer together" (Heym, *Dichtungen* 31; Bridgwater 116).

One also finds echoes of earlier German poets in the selections presented here. Two Romantics in particular come to mind. One is Heym's fellow Silesian, Joseph von Eichendorff, with his forebodings of doom and images of human ruins overrun by nature in such poems as "Zwielicht" (Twilight) from 1815 and "Heimkehr" (The Return Home) from 1812. Another is the brooding Hungarian-born Nikolaus Lenau, whom Heym likened to himself and contrasted with more famous figures such as Goethe, George, and Rilke for the reason that Lenau, like him, had remained "decent" and "uncompromising" as a poet (*Dichtungen*, Band 3, 175). And, just as for Lenau, nature more and more became "an expression of his own propensity toward themes of death and transiency" (Schmidt 42), so nature remained for Heym a central focus "because of his obsession with death" (Bridgwater 202).

To be certain, the general view of Heym's later poetry is that it shows a marked preoccupation with death, which is linked to a "profound sense of alienation from the whole object-world as such, whether natural or man-made" (Bridgwater 202). Be that as it may, the poems here appear to *glorify* nature; one might even argue that they elevate it above human cities in status. For instance, one cannot helping noting how, in describing woodland scenes, Heym uses words and phrases related to human kingdoms – words that, to give some examples, translate in English as *kingly*, *palace*, *chamber*, and *domain*. Forests, for Heym, contain *cities* – that is, they are geographical entities with their own laws and customs that call into question human systems. The images of mythic griffins and other strange creatures also give hints of the exotic that recall Baudelaire's "Correspondances" (1857) and Rimbaud's "Le Bateau ivre" (1871). Yet it is important to note that, unlike the earlier German and French poets mentioned, Heym effaces himself as speaker, offering little real commentary on the sights he describes.

Indeed, in this respect, one might argue that he approaches the perspective of the English Romantic John Keats, who argued that the poet has "no Identity—he is continually in for—and filling some other Body" (1220). One might think the comparison outlandish were it not for the fact of Heym's exuberant enthusiasm for Keats, whom he grouped with Baudelaire, Rimbaud, and the lesser-known French Symbolist Albert Samain as being "men with something to show for themselves" (Bridgwater 240). "Ich glaube nicht, daß es einen größeren Lyriker gibt, als Keats" (I do not believe that there is a greater lyric poet than Keats), he asserts in a journal entry of October 1910 (*Dichtungen*, Band 3, 147; Bridgwater 139). To be sure, even if Heym came to Keats chiefly via the translations of his good friend Ernst Balcke (Bridgwater 139), the English Romantic's emphasis on a verse "massively detailed" and "packed with images" was a quality that Heym had also admired in Baudelaire and sought to emulate (Bridgwater 142).

Keats advised his fellow Romantic, Percy Bysshe Shelley, to "load every rift of [his] subject with ore" (1235). I have found this advice helpful as I translate Heym, whose rhymes and meters are regular, therefore presenting the English translator with the problem that sometimes fewer words are necessary in English to convey the sense of Heym's German. One solution is to do as Antony Hasler often does and downplay the rhymes and "strict metres"; agreeing with Martin Sorrell that "rhyme does not have such a strong place in English prosody," he opts to work largely with a "lightly-assonanced English" and allows a "rougher, less regular pattern in the English line to assert itself where necessary" (xxii). But this can lead to an understating of Heym's music—a music that, as Eugen Kurt Fischer has noted, resembles that of a pianist being compelled "continually to hold the pedal down, so that all the sounds are heard together, complicating and fusing themselves into a new sound experience"(Hasler xx). In my renderings, I have sought to accentuate this music, doing as Keats says poetry should do, that is, "surprise by a fine excess" (1211).

These poems show the same kind of self-effacement – the same kind of immersion in nature – that Keats effects in stanza five of "Ode to a Nightingale" and in the third and final stanza of "To Autumn," respectively:

> I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
> Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
> But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
> Wherewith the seasonable month endows
> The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
> White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
> Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
> And mid-May's eldest child,
> The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
> The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves. (Keats 1185)

> Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
> Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
> While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
> And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
> Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
> Among the river sallows, borne aloft
> Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
> And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
> Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
> The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
> And gathering swallows twitter in the skies. (Keats 1204)

Although these stanzas (unlike Heym's) do begin with authorial commentary, by the end of each, we have lost all sense of the speaker and are fully enveloped in the natural scene. And the heavy alliteration and assonance in these lines, which make them impossible to pronounce rapidly and so give a tactile sense of earthiness, find counterparts in Heym's own. Some prominent examples, among many, include lines 7 and 8 ("Aus h*o*hen Eichen nickt mit *sch*warzem *Sch*opf/Der Greife V*o*lk aus ihrem r*o*ten Horst") from "Der Wald" and line 8 ("Und *ro*t im Abend l*o*dert *r*ings der Forst") from "Die Städte im Walde." Indeed, they show Heym painting with words as Keats does in those poems, revealing himself to be, like Keats, a poet who revels in the earth, its textures, and its sensations. As Heym's contemporary John Wolfsohn wrote, Heym "[…] war gewiß kein Hölderlin, kein gewichtloser, spiritueller,

sternhafter Firmamentgeist. Er war der späten Hölderlins Gegenpol, ein trotzend, saftiger, bluthafter Erdgeist“ *(Heym was certainly no Hölderlin, no weightless, spiritual, starry ghost of the firmament. He was the late Hölderlin's polar opposite: a defiant, verdant, full-blooded spirit of the Earth*) (my translation, qtd. in Seelig 216).

Accordingly, in order to give my renderings the earth-grounded tactility I find in Keats and Heym both, I have made the maximum use of such devices as alliteration and assonance. For instance, in “The Dream of the Very First Twilight”, I have opted for “The *kingly* fall of crimson trains” instead of the more idiomatic “*regal* fall”; and, in “From Night's Green Wood”, I have created such constructions as “Al*o*ng the flute that slipped his *gr*asp, m*o*ss *gr*ows”. If this leads to some lines being hard to enunciate quickly, that is part of my intention; I wanted to produce the sense of groundedness and earthiness I find in Keats's and Heym's work alike.

As a translator, I do not consider my work complete until I have carried the work over into my own language and created a new poem in English. Indeed, there comes a point in the process for me when I am thinking less about faithfulness to the original in a strictly literal sense than to the creation of a new – and good – poem in my own native tongue. I do tend to hold with Willis Barnstone that “songless translations mislead the reader, and this is not good scholarship, not close and not truly literal” (96). And, given that I am a poet myself, my own stylistic idiosyncrasies will invariably (and unconsciously) make themselves felt. I can be faithful only, as Ernest Dowson said in another context, “in my fashion” (1211).

For me, the act of translating certainly involves a more than objective grappling – indeed, a heated engagement – with the original text. Still, after the dust settles, I do look back to see whether I have deviated too far from it. Here, I find that I largely have resisted the temptation to be more consistent with syntax. For instance, Heym tends to alternate complete sentences and fragments in a way that I find irritating; I have refrained from making his structures more parallel, concluding that, in some respects, these poems have the effect of journal entries: somewhat informal jottings that make the strange scenes they describe all the stranger – and yet all the more credible. Heym also makes more use of introductory subordinate clauses than is typical in English, and while I have refrained from this tendency in places, I have followed it in stanzas where it seems convenient and helpful in retaining the meter and rhymes or where it is more grammatically standard in English, as in line 12 of “The Cities of the Wood”.

In any event, I am ultimately of Allen Tate's mind that “a pragmatic view of translation is […] the only useful view” (“The Translation of Poetry”). As such, I look for whatever help I can find to get the job done. This involves my being receptive to the voices of English poets I find myself hearing in the transfer from one tongue to the next. In this case, the resemblances to Keats were unavoidable. If the result is that I have veered too far away from Heym's own voice, I at least hope that these translations may in some respects stand as tributes to Heym's admiration for Keats, as well as good English poems.

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Gedichte
By Georg Heym

Selected Poems
By Georg Heym
Translated by William Ruleman

Der Traum des Ersten Zwielichts

Der Traum des ersten Zwielichts auf dem Tale. Des Grases Zittern, drauf die Kälte taut.
Die Wolken ziehen an dem Himmelssaale
In Farben, wie sie nie der Tag geschaut.

Die Reisigen der Nacht. Die Panzer sprühn
Das erste Licht. Auf breiten Marmortreppen
Die Hellebarden und der Helmzier Grün.
Der königliche Fall der Purpurschleppen.

Sie ziehen langsam zu dem Mond empor,
Zu Schlosse und Gemach, zu ruhen lang.
Wie einst der Duft der Rosen lag im Tor
Von Sybaris, die in den Schlaf versank

The Dream of the Very First Twilight

The dream of the very first twilight in the vale.
The chill melts on the grass's quivering green.
The clouds traverse the heavens' halls to sail
In tints and shades the day has never seen.

The thickets of night. Their suits of armor shine
With first sunlight. On marble stairs' vast plains,
The gems of halberds and helmets flash smaragdine.
The kingly fall of crimson trains.

In stately measure toward the moon they soar,
To palace, chamber, slumber long and deep
As once the scent of roses marked the door
Of Sybaris, who sank away in sleep.

Der Wald

Ein stiller Wald. Ein blasses Königreich
Mit grünen Schluchten voll und Dorngerank.
Ein Wasser singt.Am Himmel fein und schlank,
Wie eine Kerze, brennt die Sonne bleich.

Der Abend aber geht mit dunklem Kopf
Und dunkler Mantelschleppe in dem Forst.
Aus hohen Eichen nickt mit schwarzem Schopf
Der Greife Volk aus ihrem roten Horst,

Und Goldgetier mit wunderlichem Prunk
Uralter Schnäbel krächzt im Baume grell
Und fliegt heraus, im wilden Winde schnell
Mit Schwingen groß in graue Dämmerung.

The Wood

A silent wood. A pale domain replete
With green ravines and vines of tangled briar.
A rivulet sings. The sun's last fading fire
Burns like a candle on the sky's slight sheet.

But now the evening moves with darkening head
And darkening mantle train to its forest rest.
The griffin folk now nod, tall oaks their bed,
Black shocks of hair upon their crimson nest

As creatures golden, splendid, strange in sight
Emit shrill caws in trees from ancient beaks
And soar out in the air on wild winds' shrieks,

Tief in dem Wald ein See, der purpurrot
Wie eines Toten dunkles Auge glast.
In seinem wilden Schlunde tost und rast
Ein Wetter unten auf wo Flamme loht.

Wings spread and great in gray twilight.
Deep in the wood, a lake with crimson glaze
Gleams dark and glassy as a dead man's eye.
Down in its wild maw, storms rage, roaring high,
To rest below with flames that rave and blaze.

Die Städte im Walde

In großen Wäldern, unter Riesenbäumen
Darunter ewig blaues Dunkel ruht,
Dort schlafen Städte in verborgnen Träumen,
Den Inseln gleich, in grüner Meere Flut.

Das Moos wächst hoch auf ihren Mauerkränzen.
Ihr alter Turm ist schwarzer Rosen Horst.
Sie zittern sanft, wenn wild die Zinnen glänzen,
Und rot im Abend lodert rings der Forst.

Dann stehen hoch in fließendem Gewand,
Wie Lilien, ihre Fürsten auf den Toren
Im Wetterschein wie stiller Kerzen Brand.

Und ihre Harfe dröhnt, im Sturm verloren,
Des schwarzer Hauch schon braust von Himmels Rand
Und rauscht im dunklen Haar der Sykomoren.

The Cities in the Wood

Massive forests, under giant trees,
Way down where endless deep-blue darkness sleeps,
Whole cities rest in hidden reveries
Like islands in green oceans' brooding deeps.

Their moss mounts high on walls of woven vine.
Dark nests of roses form their ancient towers,
Quivering mildly when their pinnacles shine
And the woodland blazes red in evening's hours.

And then high up in flowing robes they stand
So like tall lilies, the princes at their doors
In lightning's silent candle-glow-like brand.

And, lost in the gathering storm, their zither roars,
Its black breath blowing from the horizon's band
To sigh within the dark-haired sycamores.

Aus Grüner Waldnacht

Aus grüner Waldnacht ruft Gegurr der Tauben
Bald nah bald fern. Der Sonne Lichter irren
Ins Blätterdunkel. Kleine Vögel schwirren
Durch das Geranke und die Hopfentrauben.

From Night's Green Wood

From night's green wood, the doves are calling now,
First near, then far. The sun's last flickers stray
Amid dark leaves. The small birds whirl their way
Through every hop vine, every tangled bough.

Die großen Spinnen wohnen in dem Farne.
Voll blauen Scheines glänzt ihr Netz wie Tau.
Sie gleiten schnell auf ihrem schwanken Bau,
Und weben enger ihre weißen Garne.

The massive spiders dwell among the ferns,
Their dew-like nets agleam with wet blue veins,
To glide with swift strides on their slender skeins
And give their white threads ever tighter turns.

Ein hohler Baum, vom Donner einst gespaltet
Vergeßner Zeit. Doch grünt noch sein Geäst.
Im Laube wohnt ein Schwan, der auf das Nest
Den schwarzen Mantel seiner Schwingen faltet.

A tree all hollowed, thunder-cracked, with rings
Of lost days. Yet its boughs are still leaf-blessed.
In the foliage lives a swan, whose nest
Accepts in folds the black cloak of his wings.

Der alte Waldgott schläft im hohlen Baum.
Die Flöte graut von Moos, die ihm entsank.
In seiner Hand verflog der dünne Trank
Der kleinen Rehe in dem langen Traum.

The ancient wood god sleeps in the hollow tree.
Along the flute that slipped his grasp, moss grows;
And in his hand, now lax, no longer flows
The drink the deer sipped in long reverie.

Der Schöne Herbst Naht Wieder

Der schöne Herbst naht wieder, wie ein zweiter
Doch dämmrig stiller Frühling. Ungewisses
Ist viel in Tal und Luft. Wir wissen nicht,
Will sich's gestalten oder schnell verziehn.
Die blassen Tage gleiten träumend hin,
Wie Bänder schmaler und verblaßter Perlen.

Another Lovely Autumn Nears

Another lovely autumn nears, so like
A second spring, though faint and still. So much
In sky and vale remains unsure. Will it
Assume firm form or fade? We do not know.
The pale days glide away in dreams as fast
As slender bands of pearls whose luster’s lost.

Mit Erntesang und lauter Schnitter Freude
Entwich der Sommer, aus den dunklen Locken
Noch hie und da auf goldne Wiesen streuend
Der roten Blumen Fülle. In der Ferne
Noch tanzet er auf sonngen Hügeln hin.

The summer slipped away with harvest song
And reaper’s joy, although its sable curls
Still scatter here and there, on golden fields,
The richness of red blooms; and, far away,
It frolics, dances still on sun-laced hills.

Doch aus den kühlen Wäldern naht der ernste
Und weiche Bacchos schon, den Thyrsusstab
In sein Revier zu pflanzen, daß er sammle
Die Treuen, die im weiten Land verborgen
Voll Sehnsucht warten, daß der Gott einzieh.

Yet from the chill woods now the soft and solemn
Bacchus comes to plant his Thyrsus-staff
In his domain so he may take the true:
The ones sequestered far out in the land
Who wait with longing for the god to come.

Was in dem lauten Sommer schlief, wird wach,
Und taucht herauf, und will sich still ergehen,
In diesen stillen Tagen. Es verliert
Der Schmerz die Härte, wie Brokat verbleicht.
Die Freuden sind nicht laut, doch immer tief.

What slept in noisy summer now awakes
And rouses up and will indulge itself
In silence on these quiet days. Pain loses
All its hardness, like a bleached brocade.
The joyful are not loud, but ever deep.

Und viel Gesichter, die sich sonsten fremd
Voll Spott vorbeigehn, sie erkennen sich
Und sehen nun, daß auch in sie eingrub
Sich tiefer Schmerz, und bald verbrüdern sich
Die sonst Verhaßten. Sie erkennen wohl,

Daß allen Leid gemeinsam, daß es leichter,
Wenn sie's gemeinsam tragen. Und am Abend
Wenn sich die Stern im tiefen Strome spiegeln,
Entbrennen auf den Hügeln rings die Feuer
Des tiefen Dankes. Und der Gott zieht ein.

And many faces that in other times
Pass by in mockery now look within
And see that in them, too, the deepest pains
Lie buried, so that soon they form a bond
With every brother they once loathed. They see

That we are kindred in our suffering,
Which lightens if we bear it hand in hand.
And when the evening star is mirrored in
The river’s depths, the fire around the hills
Flares up with gratitude. And the god appears.

"Filling in That Which is Missing": A Discussion and Selected Translation of *Ci Liushi jiu wen*

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The proliferation and expansion of a body of literature that came to be termed *biji* 筆記 ("notes") or *biji xiaoshuo* 筆記小說 ("notes and small talk") during the Tang period in Chinese history is a well-known and important literary-historical development (Zhang 43–46, Fu "Preface," Miao 1-6, and Wu 339-342). Works and collections classified as *biji* or *biji xiaoshuo* could include anecdotes about famous and less famous personages and historical events, records of unusual occurrences, geographical and/or ethnographic knowledge, discussions of literature and materials dealing with a range of other topics. This paper seeks to contribute to our understanding of these works by offering an introduction to and selected translation of Li Deyu's 李德裕 (787-850) *Ci Liushi jiu wen* 次柳氏舊聞 (A Record of Past Events Recounted by Mr. Liu [Liu Fang]). *Ci Liushi jiu wen* is a relatively early example of a subgenre of *biji* devoted to the reign of Xuanzong 玄宗 (Li Longji 李隆基; r. 712-756), a period of particular fascination because of its tumultuous and dynasty-changing events. These included the splendor of the Emperor's early reign, the sudden and permanent destruction of this era in 755 by the rebellion of Xuanzong's one-time favorite, the frontier general An Lushan安祿山 (c. 703-757), and the backdrop of tragic romance afforded by the relationship between Xuanzong and his consort, Yang Guifei 楊貴妃 (719–756), a passion that, in the popular imagination and official historical narrative, was blamed as triggering the rebellion.[1]

Ci Liushi jiu wen in its present form is a one-chapter compilation of anecdotes, as purportedly told to historian Liu Fang 柳芳 (fl. 740s–760s) by Xuanzong's close eunuch confidant Gao Lishi 高力士 (684–762). It was later related to Li Deyu by his father, Li Jifu李吉甫 (758–814), who had served with Fang's son Liu Mian 柳冕 (ca. 730–804). The ascription of authorship or compilation to well-known official and writer Li Deyu is well attested. According to various sources, including the introductory entry in *Ci Liushi jiu wen* itself, Li Deyu submitted the completed work to the throne in September of 834, during the eighth month of the eighth year of the Taihe 太和or Dahe 大和reign period (827–835) (Wang Qinruo et al., 556.25a, Wang Pu 36.662, Liu et al. 17b.55, and Ouyang et al. 58.1468).[2]

Li Deyu was one of the most prominent political figures of the early ninth century. His long and illustrious – though ultimately tragic – career in the imperial bureaucracy spanned about thirty years, from the 820s through his death in 850. Li Deyu's career is closely linked to the infamous "Niu-Li Factional Conflicts" 牛李黨爭, which began in the 820s. The factional conflict is named after the leading partisans of opposing factions, Niu Sengru 牛僧孺 (780–849) and Li Deyu. Li Deyu ultimately died in exile on the southern island of Hainan 海南after his faction lost the emperor's favor and was purged (Fang Ch. 1).

As it stands, *Ci Liushi jiu wen*, completed while Li Deyu was serving in the central court, is comprised of the preface plus seventeen brief anecdotes that take place during Xuanzong's rule, with a few additional anecdotes pieced together from various other sources.

[1] An Lushan's rebellion led to staggering loss of life and permanently weakened the central imperial authority. See Liu et al. 200a.5367–5374 and Ouyang et al. 225a.6411–6424. The extreme favor shown to Yang and her family has traditionally been pinpointed as a major contributing factor in inciting An Lushan's rebellion. For Yang Guifei, see Liu et al. 51.2178–2181 and Ouyang et al. 76.3493–3496.

[2] *Tang hui yao* places the presentation of the text in the ninth month. In *Cefu yuangui* and *Jiu Tangshu*, the text is called *Liu shi jiu wen* 柳氏舊聞 ("Past Events Recounted by Mr. Liu [Liu Fang]"). See Zhou 41.

In keeping with Li Deyu's offering of the text to the throne in his capacity as high-ranking minister and advisor, the content of *Ci Liushi jiu wen* is often concerned with the performance of good government (Hou 213–215). Prominent themes involve character evaluation, imperial father-son interactions, nostalgia for the Kaiyuan pre-rebellion period and the tragedy of the rebellion itself. The historical judgments indicated by the episodes that comprise *Ci Liushi jiu wen* are generally in keeping with the evaluations of events and personages found in standard historical sources, further suggesting the text's historical orientation and self-ascribed goal, stated in the preface to the text as translated below, of "filling in that which is missing" in the historical record. Xuanzong's famous interest in the supernatural arts is also suggested by the inclusion of several episodes with otherworldly themes.

Ci Liushi jiu wen appears in early catalogues, encyclopedias, histories, and other sources under several names, including *Liu Fang jiu wen* 柳芳舊聞 ("Liu Fang's 'Record of Past Events'"), *Ci Liushi jiu shi* 次柳氏舊史 ("A Record of Past History Recounted by Mr. Liu" [Liu Fang]), and *Liushi shi* 柳氏史 ("Mr. Liu's History") (Wang Qinruo et al. 556.25a, Wang Pu 36.662, and Li et al. 1). The original content and order has long been lost, and the collection has been reconstituted from Song compendia, including the tenth-century *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記 ("Extensive Records from the Taiping Reign") and Zeng Zao's曾慥 (1091–1155) *Leishuo* 類說 ("Categorized Tales"). I have indicated episodes that appear in *Taiping guangji* and *Leishuo* in the corresponding notes below.[3] Several tenth- and eleventh-century works describe *Ci Liushi jiu wen* as a three-chapter work (Liu et al. 17b.555, Wang Qinruo et al. 556.25a, Zhou 41–42, and Ning 128). By later in the Song, however, only one chapter remained. As the preface mentions seventeen episodes (though several additional episodes have been culled from other texts), in various Song and later sources, beginning with *Leishuo*, the text appears under the alternative title of *Minghuang shiqi shi* 明皇十七事 ("Seventeen Episodes from Xuanzong's Reign") (Zhou 41 and Ding, *Kaiyuan Tianbao* 286–288).

Most modern editions follow scholar Ye Dehui's 葉德輝 (1864–1927) pioneering text-critical efforts and base their editions on the text as preserved in Gu Yuanqing's 顧元慶 (1487–1565) *Gushi wen fang xiao shuo* 顧氏文房小說 (Anecdotes/Small Talk from Gu's Study), which is considered the most accurate and complete version, in consultation with other sources (Ding, *Kaiyuan Tianbao* 13, Gu Vol. 4, 1a–11b, and Zhou 42–43). I have chosen to follow this practice based on the general readability and completeness of the said edition. In my translation, I have mainly utilized critical modern editions published by Shanghai guji chubanshe (under the titles *Kaiyuan Tianbao yishi shi zhong* 開元天寶遺事十種 [1985] and *Tang Wudai biji xiaoshuo da guan* 唐五代筆記小說大觀 [2000]) and Shangwu yinshu guan (under the title *Minghuang zalu* 明皇雜錄, with appended texts [1959]). Points of more significant divergence between the editions are noted in the references.

In selecting which episodes to translate, I have attempted to reflect the range of themes found in the work as a whole. Several episodes deal with Xuanzong's interactions with his ministers. For example, the second translated episode describes the confidence placed by the young emperor in Zhang Yue張說 (663–730), an influential statesman and literary figure from the 690s through the end of his life. This episode also references his early conflict with his aunt the Taiping Princess 太平公主 , a powerful politician who reached the height of her influence in the first decade or so of the eighth century. Soon after Xuanzong's ascension to the throne, he became locked in a bitter power struggle with Taiping, ending with his execution of her in 713. The fourth translated episode likewise references the historical backdrop of Xuanzong's

[3] As noted by Zhou Xunchu, *Leishuo* also incorporates five episodes that should rightly belong in *Rongmu xian tan* 戎幕閑談. See Zhou 42 and Zeng 21.669–670.

early reign by describing his impartial display of admiration for Xiao Zhizhong 蕭至忠 (d. 713?), a prominent official under Xuanzong's predecessors and an important partisan of the Taiping Princess. The third episode contrasts the early Kaiyuan period, when Xuanzong worked closely with the honorable and indispensable senior officials and policy-makers Yao Chong 姚崇 (650–721) and Song Jing 宋璟 (663–737), with the emperor's later reign, when imperial relative Li Linfu 李林甫 (d. 753) was appointed chancellor. Li Linfu served in this capacity for an unusually long tenure of eighteen years and has been blamed for fostering a climate of factionalism and in-fighting among Xuanzong's top officials. The second to last translated episode suggests another major theme in materials on Xuanzong, that is, his fascination with feats of superhuman prowess. In my translation, I have done my best to evoke the language of the original, which combines the terse style typical of classical historical prose with lively vocabulary and diction.

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Selections from *Ci Liushi jiu wen*
By Li Deyu

大和八年秋，八月乙酉，上於紫宸殿聽政，宰臣涯已下奉職奏事. 上顧謂宰臣曰: 故內臣力士終始事迹，試為我言之. 臣涯即奏云: 上元中，史臣柳芳得罪，竄黔中，時力士亦徙巫州，因相與周旋. 力士以芳嘗司史，為芳言先時禁中事，皆芳所不能知，而芳亦有質疑者. 芳默識之. 及還，編次其事，號曰《問高力士》. 上曰: 令訪史氏，取其書. 臣涯等既奉詔，乃召芳孫度支員外郎璟詢事. 璟曰: 某祖芳，前從力士問靨縷，未竟，復著唐歷，採摭義類尤相近者以傳之. 其餘或秘不敢宣，或奇怪，非編錄所宜及者，不以傳. 今按求其書，亡失不獲. 臣德裕亡父先臣，與芳子吏部郎中冕，貞元初俱為尚書郎，後謫官，亦俱東出，道相與語，遂及高力士之說，且曰: 彼皆目睹，非出傳聞，信而有徵，可為實錄. 先臣每為臣言之. 臣伏念所憶授凡有十七事. 歲祀久，遺稿不傳. 臣德裕，非黃瓊之達練，習見故事; 愧史遷之該博，惟次舊聞. 懼失其傳，不足以對大君之問，謹錄如左，以備史官之闕云.

Selections from *Ci Liushi jiu wen*
By Li Deyu
Translated by Rebecca Doran

Preface

In the autumn, on September 13th, 834, the eighth year of the Dahe reign period (827–835), the Emperor (Wenzong文宗; Li Ang 李昂, r. 826–840) was holding court at Purple Polestar [Zichen] Palace,[1] and from Grand Councilor Wang Ya[2] on down ministers were attending to their duties and reporting on government affairs. The Emperor asked the Grand Councilor, "Tell me about events that occurred during the time of the former inner servant [Gao] Lishi." Minister Ya replied: "During the Shangyuan reign [760–761] period, historian Liu Fang had offended the throne and been demoted to Guizhou. At the time Lishi was also demoted to Wuzhou, so the two got to know each other. Because Fang had worked as a historian for the imperial court, Lishi told Fang about the affairs of the inner palace [during the time Fang had been exiled],[3] which Fang could not possibly have known about, and Fang in turn asked questions. Fang secretly remembered what Gao Lishi told him. When he returned [to the capital], Fang wrote down what Gao Lishi had told him and entitled his book 'On Asking Gao Lishi.'" The Emperor heard this and said, "I order you to visit the historian's [Liu Fang's] clan and obtain this book." Minister Ya and the others thereupon summoned Fang's grandson, Vice Director in the Ministry of Revenue [Liu] Jing, to inquire about the book. Jing said, "Your subject's grandfather, Fang, did not finish recording the details of his conversation with Gao Lishi. However, in his *Tangli* [Chronicle of Tang History], he selected the episodes that he saw fit for publication. As for the others, some were confidential and

[1] During the Tang, the Emperor received the court officials and foreign emissaries at Zichen Palace. Zichen is also used by extension to refer to the Emperor or imperial seat.
[2] Wang Ya 王涯 (764–835), a decorated official and poet, was promoted to Grand Councilor in the seventh year of Dahe (833), one year before this episode supposedly took place. See Liu et al. 169.4401–4405 and Ouyang et al. 179.5317–5320.
[3] The exact dates of Liu Fang's exile from court are unclear. See Liu et al. 132.4536.

he did not dare to transmit them; others were fantastical and strange, and not appropriate for inclusion in the record, so he did not transmit them."

Today, Liu Fang's manuscripts had all been lost. Your Majesty's former subject and deceased father of yours truly, your subject [Li] Deyu [Li Jifu], and Fang's son, Director in the Bureau of Personnel [Liu] Mian, both served in the Secretariat during the early Zhenyuan reign [785–805]. Later they both were demoted from their positions and banished to the east. On the way, their conversation touched upon the subject of Gao Lishi. Liu Mian said, "Everything he [Gao Lishi] said was witnessed with his own eyes and not mere hearsay. The accounts are truthful and can be backed up by evidence, and should be made into a Veritable Record." Your former subject [my father Li Jifu] often spoke of this to me. I can only humbly write down what I remember, which amounts to seventeen episodes. Many years had gone by and his words were never recorded. I, your subject Deyu, lack the perspicacity and practiced skill of Huang Qiong, who was well versed in the affairs of former times; I am ashamed before Historian [Sima] Qian's profound and broad-ranging knowledge, in that I can only record these anecdotes about the past.[4] I feared that this record would be lost and therefore would be unable to meet the inquiries of the ruler. In making this record, I have carefully followed in the tradition of the Historian of the Left [in recording the ruler's actions],[5] so as to fill in that which is missing in the historical record.

玄宗之在東宮，為太平公主所忌，朝夕伺察，纖微聞於上；而宮闕左右，亦潛持兩端，以附太平之勢. 時元獻皇后得幸，方娠，玄宗懼太平，欲令服藥除之，而無可語者. 張說以侍讀得進太子宮中，玄宗從容謀及說，說亦密贊其

When Xuanzong was the Crown Prince, [his powerful aunt] the Taiping Princess (d. 713) was threatened by his presence. She kept watch on him day and night and would report the minutest details to the Emperor

[4] Huang Qiong 黃瓊 (86–114 CE) was a prominent official during the Eastern Han 東漢 (25–220 CE). Fan et al. 61.2032–2043. Sima Qian 司馬遷 (c. 145 or 135–86 BCE) was a famous Western Han 西漢 (206 BCE–9 CE) historian and creator of the foundational work of history *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the Historian). See Ban 62.2707–2738.

[5] According to the classical text *Li ji* 禮記 (Record of Rites), the Historian of the Left recorded the ruler's actions, while the Historian of the Right recorded the ruler's words.

事. 他日, 說又入侍, 因懷去胎藥三煮劑以獻. 玄宗得其藥, 喜, 盡去左右, 獨搆火殿中, 煮未及熟, 怠而假寐. 肹蠁之際, 有神人長丈餘, 身披金甲, 操戈繞藥三匝, 煮盡覆而無遺焉. 玄宗起視, 異之, 復增火, 又投一劑, 煮于鼎中, 因就榻瞬目以候之, 而見神覆煮如初. 凡三煮皆覆, 乃止. 明日, 說又至, 告其詳. 說降階拜賀曰: 天所命也, 不可去. 厥後, 元獻皇后思食酸, 玄宗亦以告說. 說每因進經, 輒袖木瓜以獻. 故開元中, 說恩澤莫之與比; 肅宗之於說子均、垍, 若親戚昆弟云. 芳本張說所引, 說嘗自陳述, 與力士詞協也.

[Xuanzong's father Ruizong; r. 710–712]. The attendants at the Crown Prince's palace also secretly played both sides in order to ally themselves with Taiping's strength.[6] At the time, Empress Yuanxian [Xuanzong's consort] had received favor and was pregnant. Xuanzong was terrified that Taiping [might act against him] and wanted to make Empress Yuanxian have an abortion, but he didn't have anyone in whom to confide about this matter. At the time, Zhang Yue was admitted to the Crown Prince's palace as a tutor. Xuanzong discussed his plan with Yue, and Yue also approved of the idea.

One day when Yue came in to attend again, he used the opportunity to present three servings of abortion medicine to Xuanzong. Xuanzong was pleased upon receiving the medicine. He dismissed all of his attendants and, alone, started a fire in the inner palace to boil the medicine. Before the medicine could boil, he became tired and fell asleep. Rising into the air with the steam and vapor of the medicine,[7] there appeared a divine being over a *zhang* tall,[8] its body covered with metal armor. Grasping a spear, it circled the medicine three times and overturned the pot so that there was nothing left. Xuanzong got up to examine the situation and thought it was uncanny. He started the fire again, threw in another serving, and boiled it in the cauldron. Then he went back to his couch, kept his eyes wide open, and waited, whereupon he saw the spirit overturn the boiling cauldron as before. He started to boil the medicine a third time and [the spirit] overturned it again, so he stopped. The next day, Yue came again, and Xuanzong told him what had happened. Yue descended the stairs, bowed in praise, and said: "This is ordained by Heaven; you can't stop it." Later, Empress Yuanxian was craving sour foods. Xuanzong also told this to Yue, and whenever Yue came to expound on the

[6] The Shangwu yinshuguan edition has *gongwei*宮闈 (inner palace) instead of *gongque* 宮闕 (palace). See Zheng 1.
[7] The Shangwu yinshuguan edition has *xi xiang*昒蠁 instead of *xixiang* 肹蠁. See Zheng 2.
[8] One *zhang* is 3.33 meters.

classics, he would always have a quince in his sleeve to present to her. This is why, during the Kaiyuan reign period (712–756), the favor shown to Yue from the throne was comparable to none, and Suzong (r. 756–762; the son born to Yuanxian and Xuanzong) treated Yue's sons Jun and Ji as younger brothers. [Liu] Fang was originally recommended by Zhang Yue. Yue previously narrated these events himself, and what he said tallies with what [Gao] Lishi said.[9]

玄宗初即位, 體貌大臣, 賓禮故老, 尤注意於姚崇、宋璟, 引見便殿, 皆為之興, 去則臨軒以送. 其他宰臣, 優寵莫及. 至李林甫以宗室近屬, 上所援用, 恩意甚厚, 而禮遇漸輕. 姚崇為相, 嘗於上前請序進郎吏, 上顧視殿宇不注, 崇再三言之, 冀上少售, 而卒不對. 崇益恐, 趨出. 而高力士奏曰: 陛下初承鴻業, 宰臣請事, 即當面言可否. 而崇言之, 陛下不視, 臣恐宰臣必大懼. 上曰: 朕既任崇以庶政, 事之大者當白奏, 朕與之共決; 如郎署吏秩甚卑, 崇獨不能決, 而重煩吾耶? 崇至中書, 方悸不自安. 會力士宣事, 因為言上意, 崇且解且喜. 朝廷聞者, 皆以上有人君之大度, 得任人之道焉.

When Xuanzong took the throne, he treated his great ministers with respect and showed ritual deference to the elders of former regimes. He especially respected Yao Chong and Song Jing. Whenever he summoned them for audiences at his leisure palaces, he would always get up to receive them. When they left, he would stand on the balcony to see them off. None of the other grand councilors received the level of favor accorded to them. When Li Linfu was favored by the throne because he was a member of the imperial clan, the favor shown to him was very great indeed, but the ritual deference [between Emperor and ministers] was increasingly neglected. [Earlier] when Yao Chong became a Grand Councilor, he once went before the throne to request the promotion of regular officials and clerks according to their rank. The Emperor looked around the palace hall and didn't pay him any attention. Chong requested three times, hoping that the Emperor would start to respond, but in the end he still did not. Chong became increasingly nervous and left the palace in a hurry.

Gao Lishi said to the Emperor, "When Your Majesty first took the throne,

[9] This episode is included in Li et al. 136.973 (minus the final lines describing how Liu Fang was recommended by Zhang Yue and also heard the story from Yue), where it is attributed to *Liushi shi*. The episode is also preserved, with minor variations, in the Korean anthology *T'ae p'yŏng Kwang ki sang chŏl* 太平廣記詳節, a partially surviving version of *Taiping guangji* that was published in 1487 and seems to have been based on a Song text (in contrast to Chinese printings, which seem to have been based on Yuan texts). See Sŏng Vol. 5, 10.263–264. The account of Suzong's divinely sanctioned birth appears in condensed form in the biography of his mother, the Yuanxian Empress, in both *Jiu Tangshu* and *Xin Tangshu*. See Liu et al. 52.2184 and Ouyang et al. 76.3492.

whenever a councilor made a request, you would always answer in front of them whether it was allowed or not. But now, when Chong spoke to you, Your Majesty didn't even look at him. Your humble subject is afraid that the councilor must be extremely worried." The Emperor said, "I appointed Chong to take care of various tasks of the government. When it comes to major issues, of course he should report to me, and I shall make the decision. But when it comes to something as minor as the order of officials, how is Chong not able to make a decision by himself and has to repeatedly bother me?" When Chong reached the Secretariat, he felt apprehensive and ill at ease. When he met with Lishi, who explained the Emperor's intention to him, he then felt relaxed and happy. When the court heard about this, they all thought that the Emperor showed great open-handedness of being the ruler and knew how to trust his ministers.

源乾曜因奏事稱旨, 上悦之, 於是驟拔用, 歷户部侍郎、京兆尹以至宰相. 異日, 上獨與力士語曰: 爾知吾拔用乾曜之速乎? 曰: 不知也. 上曰: 吾以其容貌言語類蕭至忠, 故用之. 力士曰: 至忠不嘗負陛下乎? 陛下何念之深也? 上曰: 至忠晚乃謬計耳. 其初立朝, 得不謂賢相乎? 上之愛才宥過, 聞者無不感悦.

Because Yuan Ganyao's reports were in accordance with the Emperor's wishes, the Emperor was very pleased with him, and Ganyao was rapidly promoted. He served successively as Vice Director in the Ministry of Revenue, Metropolitan Governor, and reached to the rank of Grand Councilor [in 716].[10] One day, the Emperor said to [Gao] Lishi, "Do you know why I promoted Ganyao with such speed?" Lishi said, "I don't know." The Emperor said, "His appearance and his way of speaking resembled Xiao Zhizhong's; this is why I promoted him." Lishi said, "Didn't Zhizhong betray Your Majesty? Why do you think of him so fondly?" The Emperor said, "In his later years Zhizhong made some terrible mistakes. [But] at the beginning of his career, didn't he deserve to be called a worthy minister?" The Emperor valued talent and forgave mistakes, and all

[10] For Yuan Ganyao 源乾曜 (d. 731), see Liu et al. 98.3070–3073 and Ouyang et al. 127.4450–4451.

those who heard of it [what he said about Xiao Zhizhong] were glad.[11]

玄宗好神仙, 往往詔郡國徵奇異士. 有張果者, 則天時聞其名, 不能致. 上亟召之, 乃與使偕至, 其所為變怪不測. 又有邢和璞者, 善算心術, 視人投算, 而能究知善惡夭壽. 上使算果, 懵然莫知其甲子. 又有師夜光者, 善視鬼. 後召果與坐, 密令夜光視之. 夜光進曰: 果今安在? 臣願得見之. 而果坐於上前久矣, 夜光终莫能見. 上謂力士曰: 吾聞奇士至人, 外物不足以敗其中, 試飲以堇汁, 無苦者, 乃真奇士也. 會天寒甚, 使以汁進果, 果遂飲盡三巵, 醇然如醉者, 顧曰: 非佳酒也. 乃寢. 頃之, 取鏡, 視其齒, 已盡燋且黧矣. 命左右取鐵如意以擊齒, 盡墮而藏之于帶. 乃於懷中出神藥, 色微紅, 傅於墮齒穴中, 復寢. 久之, 視鏡, 齒皆生矣, 而粲然潔白. 上方信其不誣也.

Xuanzong was fond of the supernatural and often commanded the Territorial Administrations[12] to summon those with supernatural powers. There was one Zhang Guo, of whom he had heard during the reign of Empress Wu Zetian (Wu Zhao; r. 690–705) but whom he hadn't been able to bring to court. Since then, the Emperor had repeatedly summoned him, and he finally arrived with the messenger. He could accomplish transformations and strange marvels that were beyond comprehension. There was also Xing Hepu, who was good at the art of divination. Just by reading someone and casting a calculation, he was able to know everything about their future: the good and the bad, and how long they would live. The Emperor made him do a calculation about [Zhang] Guo, and [Xing Hepu] responded with a blank look and couldn't even determine Guo's age. There was also Shi Yeguang, who was good at seeing ghosts. Afterwards the Emperor summoned Guo to sit with him and secretly commanded Yeguang to read him. Yeguang reported, "Where is Guo now? I wish to take a look at him." All this time, Guo was sitting before the Emperor, but Yeguang was unable to see him.[13]

The Emperor said to [Gao] Lishi, "I've heard that when it comes to remarkable eccentrics and sages, external things are unable to affect them. Test him by having him drink the juice of the *jin* plant.[14] If he doesn't find it bitter, he's truly a remarkable eccentric." At the time, it was extremely cold. A messenger presented the juice to Guo. Guo drank three cups at once.

[11] This episode appears in Li et al. 202.1521 but is attributed to *Guo shi bu* 國史補 (Supplement to the National History), another collection of anecdotes compiled by Li Zhao 李肇 (fl. 806–820).

[12] *Jun guo* 郡國 (Territorial Administrations) refers collectively to Commanderies (*jun*郡), Princedoms (*wang guo*王國), and Marquisates (*hou guo*侯國) – that is, to all regional units of territorial administration.

[13] A shortened version of part of this passage appears in *Lei shuo* (where *Ci Liushi jiu wen* is referred to by its alternate title *Minghuang shiqi shi*), under the heading "Zhang Guolao" 張果老. See Zeng 21.670.

[14] *Jin* (third tone) 堇 (Viola verecunda A. gray) is used in Chinese medicine and supposedly is efficacious in treating knife wounds. *Jin* (fourth tone) can be a synonym for *wutou* 烏頭 (Aconitum carmichaeli Debx), a poisonous plant that also has medicinal uses.

He was tipsy as if drunk and said, “This isn’t good wine.” Then he fell asleep. After a little while, he took up a mirror and looked at his teeth, and they were all scorched and dark. He commanded his attendants to take an iron *ruyi* scepter to poke his teeth.[15] They all fell out and he collected them in his belt. Then he took out some divine medicine from his chest. It was light red. He put it in the apertures of the teeth that had fallen out and went to sleep again. After a while he looked in the mirror and the teeth were all back in his mouth, brilliant and gleaming white. The Emperor then knew that [Zhang Guo] was not a fraud.

興慶宮, 上潛龍之地, 聖曆初五王宅也. 上性友愛, 及即位, 立樓於宮之西南垣, 署曰花萼相輝. 朝退, 亟與諸王游, 或置酒為樂. 時天下無事，號太平者垂五十年。及羯胡犯闕， 乘傳遽以告, 上欲遷幸, 復登樓置酒, 四顧悽愴, 乃命進玉環. 玉環者, 睿宗所御琵琶也. 異時, 上張樂宮殿中, 每嘗置之別榻, 以黃帕覆之, 不以雜他樂器, 而未嘗持用. 至, 俾樂工賀懷智取調之, 又命禪定寺僧段師取彈之. 時美人善歌從者三人, 使其中一人歌《水調》. 畢奏, 上將去, 復留眷眷, 因使視樓下有工歌而善《水調》者乎? 一少年心悟上意, 自言頗工歌, 亦善《水調》. 使之登樓且歌, 歌曰: 山川滿目淚沾衣, 富貴榮華能幾時. 不見只今汾水上, 唯有年年秋雁飛. 上聞之, 潸然出涕, 顧侍者曰: 誰為此詞? 或對曰: 宰相李嶠. 上曰: 李嶠真才子也. 不待曲終而去.

Flourishing Fortune [Xingqing] Palace was the place where the Emperor went to relax. At the beginning of the Shengli reign period [of Wu Zhao’s Zhou dynasty; 697–700], it had been the residence of the Five Princes.[16] The Emperor was by nature friendly and generous, and when he took the throne, he erected a tower by the southwestern wall of the palace. The sign on the tower said, “Flower and stems shine upon each other.”[17] When the Emperor left court, he would often go there to spend leisure time with his brothers. Sometimes they would hold a banquet and make merry. At the time, there were no problems in the empire, and peace had descended for fifty years. When the barbarian stormed the bordering walls,[18] the message was urgently relayed to the Emperor. The Emperor was about to leave, but he climbed the tower once again, set out a banquet, looked around sorrowfully, and commanded them to bring forward “jade ring.”[19] “Jade ring” was the imperial *pipa* during Ruizong’s time.[20] At other times,

[15] A *ruyi* scepter is a ceremonial scepter in Chinese Buddhism. *Ruyi* can also indicate a talisman that brings good fortune.

[16] Xuanzong’s five brothers: Li Chengqi 李成器 or Li Xian 李憲 (679–742); Li Hui 李撝 (683–724); Li Fan李范 (686–726); Li Ye李業 (686–735); and Li Longti 李隆悌 (692–702).

[17] *Hua’e* 花萼 (flower and stem) is a metaphor for older and younger brothers.

[18] A reference to An Lushan, who was of non-Han origins.

[19] Incidentally, “jade ring,” or *yuhuan* 玉環, was also the personal name of Xuanzong’s favorite, Yang Guifei, or Yang Yuhuan 楊玉環.

[20] A *pipa* 琵琶 is a four-stringed musical instrument that is played by plucking the strings. The *pipa* is somewhat similar to the lute.

when the Emperor had held musical entertainments in the palace, he would always place "jade ring" on a separate couch and cover it with a yellow veil. He wouldn't mix it together with the other instruments and had never picked it up to use it. When it arrived, the musician He Huaizhi picked it up to tune it, and the Emperor commanded the monk Duanshi from Profound Meditation [Chanding] Temple to pluck it.[21] There were three Beauties in attendance who were good at singing, and the Emperor selected one to sing the song "Shui diao" (Water Tune).[22]

The song was over and the Emperor was about to leave, but he lingered on tenderly. He sent someone to look below the tower and call out to ask if there were any singers who were good at singing "Shui diao." A young man understood what the Emperor meant and said that he himself was quite a singer and was also able to sing "Shui diao." The Emperor had him climb the tower and sing. The song went, "Mountains and rivers fill my eyes, tears soak my clothes, / How long can wealth and glory last? / Don't you see now atop the Fen River, / year after year only the autumn geese flying by." When the Emperor heard the song, he started to cry. He asked his attendants, "Who composed that song lyric?" Someone answered, "The [former] Grand Councilor Li Jiao."[23] The Emperor said, "Li Jiao was a true talent." He didn't wait for the end of the song and left.[24]

[21] *Chanding* is a joint reference to *chana* 禪那, the Chinese transcription of the Sanskrit dhyāna, which refers to profound meditation leading to enlightenment, and *ding* 定, the Chinese translation of the Sanskrit samadhi, which refers to intense concentration achieved through meditation.

[22] "Shui diao" refers to a particular tune format, not a specific, fixed song. Songs with different lyrics could be written to the tune of "Shui diao."

[23] Li Jiao 李嶠 (d. 714?) was a prominent minister and literary figure from the time of Wu Zhao through the early years of Xuanzong's reign. In addition to serving in high-ranking political posts, he was a very well-known poet and writer. See Liu et al. 94.2992–2995 and Ouyang et al. 123.4367–4371.

[24] Two abbreviated accounts from this episode are included in *Leishuo*, under the headings "Li Jiao Zhen Caizi" 李嶠真才子 (Li Jiao was a True Talent) and "Yuhuan Pipa"玉環琵琶 (Jade Ring Pipa). See Zeng 21.668.

Translating Fritz Beer's "City at Night in Retreat"

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Nächtliche Stadt auf dem Rückzug was selected from Fritz Beer's short story collection *Das Haus an der Brücke* (1949/2011), a collection first published by Nest Verlag in 1949 and republished by Arco Verlag in 2011. The collection contains semi-autobiographical war narratives written from the perspective of a German speaking soldier of Czech origin, fighting the Germans under French command.

Fritz Beer was born into a German-speaking Jewish family in Moravia in the Austro-Hungarian Empire (now the Czech Republic). Forced into exile in Great Britain, he went to France in 1940 to fight the Germans in the exile Czechoslovak Army. He returned to London in 1945 and worked for the BBC as the German language broadcaster from 1946-1975. He was the president of PEN international (of exiled German authors) from 1988 until its disbanding.

The opening section of *City at Night in Retreat* contains the larger narrative of the story. The author describes the hopelessness of the soldiers amidst the chaos of war. The soldiers are trapped in a circular futility, walking in loops through an unknown city, looking for food, shelter and, ultimately, a way home. The nameless city is packed with refugees, soldiers and civilians. Martin, the protagonist, wanders through the city in a fatigued, dream-like state. He is an outsider and a lost soldier. The narrative circles around the figure of the troop commander, whom Martin keeps encountering in the guise of different characters, both men and women. Martin's exhaustion makes him question his sanity, yet by the end of the story Martin appears to have tangible proof that something impossible has occurred.

When approaching this translation, I explored the writing of literary translators such as Edith Grossman (2011), Anthea Bell (2006) and Gregory Rabassa (2005), all of whom write about the less tangible concepts of literary translation: the importance of capturing the author's voice, for example, which requires the translator to work more instinctively and to follow a 'feeling'. Edith Grossman (10), describes the translator as both a listener to the original text, aware of the voice of the author, and as a speaker of the translated text, repeating what we have read in the target language. Anthea Bell (59), quoting Adriana Hunter and Michael Frain, writes that literary translation is akin to acting. Gregory Rabassa (35) speaks of the translator's role in similar terms. He uses a musical analogy, describing the translator as having less freedom of interpretation than a performing musician when interpreting a composition, adding "to continue the musical analogy, there is no place for riffs in translation." Rabassa continues in *Words Cannot Express…* "[…t]here ought to be some kind of under-current, some background hum that lets the English speaking reader feel that this is not an English book" (42). Lawrence Venuti (1999) argues for a translation approach that remains close to the source text and thus foreignizes it, whereby the basic elements of the narrative form are retained (470). Narrative sequence, character's names, actions and historical and geographical markers remain unaltered in my translation. It is important to note that the translator has to employ a raft of techniques and retain flexibility in their approach so that the target text (TT) is idiomatic yet retains its original identity in the target language (TL).

The translation of the title of the short story required it to be semantically unpacked. "Nächtliche Stadt" could be translated as "nocturnal city" or "city at night". This is a question of register, and the second part of the clause also influenced my translation strategy. "Auf dem Rückzug" literally means 'in the retreat' – a military retreat from the city – but when the clause is transferred from its historical military context into the contemporary context of the target culture meaning, the meaning of 'retreat' could be incorrectly interpreted as 'in the holiday

resort'. If the article 'the' is dropped and the translation then reads 'in retreat', the military reference becomes clearer to the contemporary target audience.

I addressed the awkwardness of interlingual translation on a case-by-case basis as the layers of translation challenges were revealed. This can be evidenced by the many examples in the ST where the word order is changed, sometimes over several sentences. Some repetitions that occurred in the ST at word level were omitted in later drafts to achieve a more idiomatic reading in the TT. See for example "schalldicht" > "soundproofed". "Schalldicht" is used in consecutive sentences in the ST. I translated it as "completely silent" in the first sentence and "soundproofed" in the consecutive sentence. There is also repetition in the ST narrative. When Martin looks through the window at the sewing woman, he stops twice in the ST. I chose to omit the second stop, as he was already standing in front of the window.

The guiding principles of the literary translation practitioners were at the centre of my translation strategy, especially Rabassa's concept of the background hum. The goal was to listen closely and to retain the author's broader stylistic literary devices, allowing them to be transferred to the TT. Beer's writing style in *City at Night in Retreat* marries form and content with its rhythmical prose. The TT translation needed to retain the narrative's flow, rhythm and feel, while achieving an idiomatic target language word order.

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Nächtliche Stadt auf dem Rückzug
By Fritz Beer

Spät abends hielt der Zug wieder. Im Dunkel des Waggons rieten Stimmen, welche Stadt es sei. Wieder rief jemand auf dem Bahnsteig die Nummern von Divisionen aus, die hier ihren Sammelplatz hatten. Ein paar Soldaten stiegen aus und kamen nach einem Augenblick wieder zurück, weil die ausgerufenen Divisionsnummern nicht stimmten. Andere stiegen aus und kamen zurück, weil sie keine Auskunft bekommen konnten. Neue Soldaten kamen und wollten in den dichtgedrängten Waggon einsteigen.

„Wohin fährt dieser Zug?“

- „Wir wissen nicht“, antwortete man ihnen aus dem Waggon.

„Wie heißt diese Stadt hier?“

– „Weiß’ der Teufel, wie die Stadt heißt. Es ist ein Loch wie jedes andere.“

Jemand im Waggon sagte:

„Kommt, wir sind lange genug gefahren. Vielleicht gibt es hier etwas zu essen.“

Ein paar stiegen aus und Martin mit ihnen.

Auf dem Bahnsteig drängten sich tausende Soldaten. Ein Offizier rief im eintönigen Singsang die Nummern von Regimentern aus und die Namen von Orten, in denen sie sich sammelten. Die Soldaten hörten zu und gingen wieder weiter, weil ihre Regimentsnummer nicht genannt wurde. An einer Tür hing ein Pappschild mit der Aufschrift: „Auskunft für versprengte Soldaten.“ Jemand hatte mit Kreide ein Wort dazugeschrieben, so daß es jetzt hieß: „Keine Auskunft für versprengte Soldaten.“ In der Stube schliefen Soldaten, dichtgedrängt auf dem Fußboden. Ein Zugführer saß an einem Tisch und schrieb bei Kerzenlicht in ein Heft die Namen von allen Soldaten, die dachten, es hätte einen Sinn, sich hier zu melden. Wenn ein Heft vollgeschrieben war, legte er es auf einen Stapel und begann ein neues.

City at Night in Retreat
By Fritz Beer
Translated by Claudia Schneider

Late in the evening the train stopped again. In the darkness of the carriages, some of the passengers tried to guess which city they were in now. Someone on the platform was calling out the division numbers that were supposed to meet here. A few soldiers got off the train, but came back after a moment because the numbers that were called out were incorrect. Others got off and then boarded again, unable to get any information. New soldiers arrived and wanted to jump on the overcrowded train.

“Where is this train going?”

– “We don’t know,” came the answer from the carriage.

“Which city is this?”

– “Only the Lord knows what this city is called. It’s a mess, like all the others.” Somebody inside the carriage said: “Come on, we have travelled long enough. Maybe we can get something to eat here.” A few disembarked, Martin among them.

Thousands of soldiers were crowded on the platform. In a monotonous sing-song, an officer called out the regiment numbers and the places they were to meet. The soldiers listened and if their number was not called, they kept walking. There was a cardboard sign on a door with the message: “INFORMATION FOR DISPLACED SOLDIERS.” Somebody had added a word to the sign so that it now read: “NO INFORMATION FOR DISPLACED SOLDIERS.” Inside the room soldiers slept packed together on the floor. A troop commander sat at a table by candlelight and wrote, in a notebook, the names of all the soldiers who thought it might help to report here. When the notebook was filled, he laid it on a stack and began a new one.

In regelmäßigen Abständen sagte er zu den Auskunft suchenden Soldaten, ohne von seinem Heft aufzusehen, in müdem und mechanischen Ton:

„Das weiß ich leider nicht."

Manchmal sagte er es auch, wenn er gar nicht gefragt wurde. Und dann sah er sich bestürzt um, als ob er etwas Ungebührliches getan hätte. Als Martin ihn nach dem Sammelplatz der tschechoslowakischen Division gefragt hatte, sah der Zugführer auf. Sein Gesicht war voll blauer Schatten, von langen Stunden fehlenden Schlafes, sein Haar war grau an den Schläfen, und in den müden Augen war ein Funken Wärme. Aus einem früheren Leben vielleicht. Und dann sagte er, mit einer Anstrengung, in der alle Solidarität der Männer im Waffenrock lag:

„Das weiß ich leider nicht, Kamerad."

Und schrieb in seinem Heft, müde und verloren.

Vor dem Bahnhof schliefen Soldaten auf der Erde, gegen die Mauer gelehnt und auf einem Zaun, den sie umgerissen hatten und als Unterlage benutzten. Aus der Stadt kamen Gruppen von Soldaten und fragten die aus dem Bahnhof Strömenden nach Zügen in allen Richtungen. Und die Soldaten aus allen Richtungen, die mit dem letzten Zug angekommen waren, fragten die aus der Stadt Kommenden, wo es Unterkunft und Verpflegung gab. Und weder die einen noch die anderen wussten eine Antwort.

Auf dem Weg in die Stadt wurde Martin immer wieder nach Unterkunft und Verpflegung gefragt. Obwohl er jedesmal antwortete, er wisse nichts, gingen manche Frager mit ihm mit, als ob es gemeinsam leichter wäre, etwas zu finden. Wenn andere Soldaten dann Martins Gruppe sahen, dachten die, die wüssten wohl mehr, und schlossen sich ihr an - ein großer Haufen hungriger, müder Menschen. Man ging durch irgendein paar

Straßen, blieb irgendwo stehen und fragte irgend jemanden.

Und plötzlich wussten alle, dass auch dieser Haufen nicht mehr wusste als jeder

In regular intervals he said in a tired mechanical tone:

"I'm sorry, I don't know"

to soldiers who were looking for information.

Sometimes he even said it when nobody was asking him. Then he looked around startled, as if he had said something improper. When Martin asked him about the assembly point for the Czechoslovakian division, the troop commander looked up. His face was full of shadows, marked by long hours without sleep, his hair greying at the temples, and in his tired eyes there was a hint of warmth. Maybe from another life. And then he answered with an effort that encompassed all the solidarity of men in uniform:

"I'm sorry, I don't know, comrade."

He continued writing in his notebook, tired and lost.

Soldiers slept on the ground in front of the train station, leaning against the wall and on a fence they had ripped down and were using as a base. Groups of soldiers were leaving the city and they asked the soldiers streaming out of the station about trains going in all different directions. And the soldiers, coming from all different directions, who had arrived on the last train, asked those leaving the city where to get food or shelter. But neither could give the other an answer.

On his way into town Martin was asked again and again about food and shelter. Even though he answered every time that he didn't know, some of the men started to walk with him, as if it would be easier to find something together. When other soldiers saw Martin's group, they joined it in case the group knew something. A big mob of hungry, tired people. They walked through a couple of streets, stopped somewhere and asked somebody.

And suddenly they all knew that this crowd knew nothing more than any other.

andere. Man ging auseinander, in alle Richtungen. Und an der nächsten Straßenecke schloss man sich in einer anderen Gruppe an, vielleicht wusste die mehr oder hatte sie mehr Glück. Irgend jemand übernahm die Führung, vielleicht weil sein Schritt fester und sicherer war, oder weil er noch nicht so lange gesucht hatte wie die anderen. Man ging entschlossen eine Straße entlang, bog um die Ecke in eine andere Straße, und wieder um die Ecke, und der Schritt wurde weniger sicher und weniger fest. Vor irgendeinem großen Gebäude blieb man stehen, eine Taschenlampe tastete die Hausfront ab, und jemand las laut vor: „Städtische Sparkasse“, oder „Bischöfliches Seminar“, oder Südfranzösische Weinbaugesellschaft“. Die Gruppe zerstreute sich, ohne Worte und ohne Fluchen. Und an der nächsten Straßenecke begann man von neuem zu suchen.

Manche gingen zum Bahnhof zurück, andere klopften an verschlossene Haustüren. Einer stieg über eine Mauer in einen Hof und versprach, das Tor von innen zu öffnen – kam aber über die Mauer wieder zurück; Das Haus und die Hofgebäude seien voll schlafender Soldaten und ziviler Flüchtlinge. Man ging weiter und klopfte an andere Türen, die sich auch nicht öffneten.

Martin war müde und setzte sich auf eine Türschwelle. Ein dünner Mond war inzwischen aufgegangen, und die wandernden Soldaten warfen lange Schatten mit verwischten Konturen. Wenn Martin die Augen schloss, hörte er noch immer die schlurfenden Schritte. Und wenn in ihren müden Takt zögernde Unordnung kam, wusste er, dass sie anderen müden, zögernden Beinen begegnet waren. Und dann hörte er auch die monotone Antwort:

„Das weiß ich leider nicht.“

Ein Wind trieb Wolkenfetzen über den kleinen Mond. Die wandernden Soldaten mit ihren unsicheren Schatten sahen in seinem zerstreuten Licht wie groteske Phantasiegestalten in einer Kellerlandschaft aus. Fast schien es Martin, er könne den abgestandenen, modrigen Geruch und die faulende Nässe unterirdischer Kasematten

They then separated and scattered in all directions. And on the next street corner someone might join another group, in case they knew more or had more luck. Anyone at all could take the lead, maybe because they were still more hopeful or had not been searching for as long as the others. They walked down a street with conviction, turned a corner into another street and around a corner again, and their stride became less confident and certain. One stopped in front of a big building, and while the torch scanned the façade somebody read aloud: “CITY SAVINGS BANK,” or “CHRISTIAN SEMINAR,” or “VINICULTURE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN FRANCE.” The group scattered quietly and calmly. And on the next street corner they began their search again.

Some returned to the train station, others knocked on locked front doors. One climbed over a fence into a yard and promised to open the gate from the inside. He came back over the fence. The house and garden houses were full of sleeping soldiers and displaced civilians. They walked on and knocked on other doors that never opened.

Martin was tired and sat down on a doorstep. Meanwhile, a thin moon had risen, and the wandering soldiers threw long shadows, their contours blurred. When he closed his eyes, Martin could still hear their steps echoing. When the exhausted rhythm became a hesitant shuffling, Martin knew that someone was bumping into another tired, exhausted man. Then he heard the monotonous answer again: “I’m sorry, I don’t know.”

A wind blew scrappy clouds over the tiny moon. The wandering soldiers looked like grotesque fantasy figures in a subterranean landscape with their uncertain shadows in the scattered light. Martin could almost smell the stale, muggy smell and the mouldy damp of straw sleeping-mats

spüren, in deren ausweglosen Irrgängen Gefangene ihre lebenslange Haft abgeisterten.

Martin stand auf und wanderte weiter. Vor einem niedrigen Gebäude, das wie ein Lagerhaus aussah und den Geruch von Spirituosen ausströmte stand ein Soldat Wache. „Nein“, sagte er, hier gäbe es kein Essen, kein Quartier und auch keine Auskunft. In einem Ton, als hätte er es schon tausendmal gesagt. Ein Offizier kam aus dem niedrigen Torbogen und Martin fragte nochmals.

„Sie suchen ihre Division?“ Die Stimme des Offiziers klang vertraut, doch traurig: „Ich suche mein Vaterland.“

Martin schwieg verständnislos.

„Ich dachte sie würden das verstehen“, fuhr der Offizier fort,

„Weil sie auch ihre Heimat verloren haben. Aber vielleicht haben sie noch keine Zeit gefunden darüber nachzudenken. Und ich habe zu viel Zeit gehabt. Kommen sie mit mir, ich will ihnen etwas zeigen.“

Beim Licht einer Taschenlampe gingen sie durch einen langen Korridor, stiegen einen weiten Treppenflur hinunter und kamen in ein weites Gewölbe, in dem der Geruch von Wein oder Spirituosen ganz intensiv war. Der Offizier drehte das Licht an, kleine, kümmerliche Glühbirnen, deren Schein kaum bis zum Fußboden reichte. Das Gewölbe war lang gestreckt, im Vordergrund standen Wandgestelle mit ein paar Flaschen: Leere, verstaubte Demijohns und kleine Fässer lagen in einer Ecke. Aber der größte Teil des Gewölbes war vollgefüllt mit einer merkwürdigen Fülle von Kisten in allen Größen und Formen. Lange, dünne Kisten, aus denen Stroh ragte, als ob Fensterglas in ihnen verpackt wäre, standen aufrecht, gegen andere Kisten verspreizt, so daß sie nicht umstürzen konnten. Manche Kisten hatten groteske Formen, wie Pyramiden oder Särge, manche mit einem Hocker oder einem Auswuchs an irgendeiner Stelle. Dazwischen standen unförmige, in Zelttuch eingehüllte Formen. Manche sahen wie riesige ungeschlachte Vögel aus der Menagerie

underground, where prisoners languish life-long in the inescapable maze-like corridors.

Martin got up and kept walking. In front of a squat building that looked like a warehouse, the smell of spirits emanated and a soldier kept watch.

“No”, he said,

“There is no food, no shelter, no information here.”

His tone was as if he had said it a thousand times. An officer stepped out of a low, arched doorway and Martin asked again. “You are looking for your division?” The officer’s voice sounded familiar, but sad: “I’m searching for my country.”

Martin was quiet and confused.

“I thought you would understand,” continued the officer,

“because you too have lost your homeland. But maybe you haven’t had time to think about it yet. I have had a lot of time. Come with me. I want to show you something.”

Using the light of a torch, they walked through a long corridor and down a wide staircase until they came to a vault where the smell of wine and spirits was overwhelming. The officer turned the light on – small scrawny globes whose light could not even reach the ground. The vault stretched out a long way. In the foreground were shelves with a few bottles: empty, dusty demijohns and small barrels lay in the corner. The largest part of the vault was filled with a rag-tag assortment of boxes in all shapes and sizes. Long, thin boxes with straw poking out, as if they had been packed with window-glass stood upright, hooked into other boxes, to keep them from falling.

Some of the boxes were shaped grotesquely, like pyramids or coffins; others had bits and pieces sticking out of them. In between them there were misshapen shapes covered by tent canvas. Some looked like giant, live birds, plucked from the menagerie of a madman’s imagination. Shadows

einer geisteskranken Phantasie aus. Im Halbdunkel des langen Gewölbes kreuzten sich die Schatten mit den ungefügen Formen, Kisten und Ballen, und Martin, hungrig, müde, übernächtig, sagte vor sich hin:

„Das ist alles unmöglich. Ich träume." Aber da hörte er wieder die Stimme des Offiziers, und sie war auch wieder so vertraut wie vorher. Wo hatte er diese Stimme nur gehört, diesen vertrauten Klang, wie aus einem anderen Leben, diese unfassbare, unverständliche Traurigkeit?

„Hier sehen sie Frankreich", sagte die Stimme,

„Das heißt, sie könnten es sehen, wenn diese Gemälde und Statuen nicht verpackt wären. Wir haben sie aus Paris hierhin geholt, um sie vor dem Krieg zu retten. Für nachher, wenn der Krieg zuende ist. Das hier ist das Frankreich, das jetzt auf den Straßen stirbt. Ist das nicht merkwürdig? Gestern war all dieser Reichtum hier noch Leben. Und heute ist es schon das Frankreich von gestern. Hier ist aller Geist, der unser Leben ausmachte. Zum Beispiel dort, in dieser Kiste, sind die zehn besten Gemälde unserer Impressionisten. Das sind fünfundzwanzig Quadratmeter bemalter Leinwand. Und auf diesen fünfundzwanzig Quadratmetern ist so viel Intensität, Licht, Farbe und Leben unseres Volkes, dass kein Sinn mehr übrig blieb für Soldatenspielerei. Man kann nicht beides haben, Cézanne oder Degas und eine Blitzkrieg-Armee.

Wir hatten einmal einen Schriftsteller, der nur schreiben konnte, wenn er in einem schalldichten Zimmer saß, in dem kein Laut zu ihm dringen konnte. Ein Zimmer in seinem Haus war zu diesem Zweck schalldicht ausgepolstert, und dort, fernab von der Außenwelt, schrieb er Romane, in denen noch das leiseste Echo jeder Regung unseres Lebens widerhallte. So fein war die Sensitivität seines Geistes, daß er, wie ein Seismograph, in der tiefsten Abgeschlossenheit noch jede Erschütterung verzeichnete, die sich fernab zutrug. Wenn er in seinem abgeschlossenen Zimmer schrieb, schlug der Puls Frankreich in seiner Feder. Solche Menschen zeugen keine Krieger...

crossed the odd shapes, boxes and bails in the half-light of the large vault, and Martin, hungry and exhausted, said to himself:

"This is all impossible. I'm dreaming." But then he heard the officer's voice again, and it was as familiar as before. Where had he heard this voice before, the familiar timbre, like it was from another life, with its unbelievable, incomprehensible sadness?

"You can see France here," said the voice. "I mean you could see it, if the statues and paintings were not wrapped up. We have brought them here from Paris, to save them from the war. For later, when the war is over. This is the France you now see dying on the streets. Isn't it strange? Yesterday all this wealth was ours. But today it is already the France of yesterday. Here is the spirit that made our lives meaningful. Over there for example, there, in that box are the ten best paintings by our impressionists. 25 square metres of painted canvas. And on these 25 square metres of canvas is so much intensity, light, colour, and our peoples' life, that there was no sense left for soldier's games. You can't have both, Cézanne or Degas and a Blitzkrieg army.

We once had a writer who could only write if the room was completely silent, with no noise possibly reaching him. A room in his house was soundproofed and there, far away from the outside world, he wrote his novels, which resonated with the faintest echo of every stirring of our life. So delicate was the sensitivity of his spirit that he could, like a seismograph, feel every far away tremor in his seclusion. When he wrote in his secluded room, France's pulse could be felt in his feather. People like that don't father warriors…

In dieser kleinen Kiste sind Leinwandstücke eines Malers, der am Sonnen-Wahnsinn unterging. Er verbrannte in seinem Begehren, Licht, die Sonne auf seine Leinwand zu bannen. Wenn er heute noch lebte, würde er nicht wieder untergehen müssen, weil es an Licht und Sonne mangelt...?

In diesem Ballen, unter dem unförmigen Höcker, ist eine Statue unseres größten Bildhauers. Eigentlich sind es nur zwei Beine. Aber die Statue heißt ‚Der Mann, der schreitet'. Das waren einmal wir Menschen. Als wir noch wussten, wohin die Welt führt. Diese Beine sind nur Weg und Ziel. Kein Kopf ist da und kein Leib. Aber jeder Muskel dieser Beine weiß das Ziel. Schwer drängen die Beine herab zur Erde, und doch streiten sie stetig aus, vorwärts. Und selbst wenn ihr Ziel im Nichts läge, wäre ihr Schreiten doch noch beglückendes, sinnvolles Leben. Heute wandern Millionen auf den Straßen Frankreichs, aber weiß jemand, wohin er schreitet? Weiß jemand, ob sein Schreiten Sinn hat?"

Ich träume, ganz sicher, ich träume", sagte Martin nochmals zu sich. Und dann gingen sie die breite Treppenflur wieder hinauf, durch den Korridor, in die Stube des Offiziers. Er drehte das Licht an und reichte Martin eine Tasse Kaffee.

„Das ist alles, was ich ihnen Anbieten kann." Aber Martin griff nicht nach dem Kaffee, er starrte in das Gesicht des Offiziers, das er nun zum erstenmal im vollen Licht sah. Und jetzt wusste er auch, wo er diese Stimme schon einmal gehört hatte. Schwere Nachtschatten lagen auf dem Gesicht, das Haar an den Schläfen war grau. Es war das Gesicht des Zugführers, der in der Stube auf dem Bahnhof im Kerzenlicht Meldungen schrieb.

„Es war ein Traum", sagte Martin, als er wieder auf der Straße war.

In der Straße kam Martin an einem erleuchteten Fenster vorüber, dessen Vorhänge nicht ganz zugezogen waren. Durch den kleinen Schlitz sah er im Vorbeigehen eine Frau am Tisch sitzen und ein Kind, in eine Schublade auf dem

In this small box are the canvas pieces of a painter who went mad and perished from sunstroke. He got burned up in his passion to capture the light and the sun on his canvas. If he were alive today would he not perish again, because now the sun and light have gone…?

In this bundle, under the misshapen mound, is a statue of our greatest sculptor. It is actually just two legs. But the statue is called 'The Man Who Strides'. Like our people, once upon a time. When we still knew where the world was going. The legs are just path and destination. There is no head or trunk. But every muscle in these legs knows the destination. The legs are heavy as they touch the earth, and yet they stride steadily forward. Even if the destination was nowhere, their striding makes for a happy and meaningful life. Today millions wander through the streets of France. But do they know where they are going? Does anybody know if their wandering has a purpose?"

"I'm dreaming, surely, I'm dreaming," Martin said to himself once more. Then they went up the wide staircase, through the corridor, into the officer's room. He turned on the light and passed Martin a cup of coffee.

"This is all I can offer you." But Martin did not reach for the coffee. He stared in the officer's face, which he could see properly in the light now. And now he knew where he had heard the voice before. Heavy night-shadows lay over his face; the hair was grey at the temples. It was the face of the troop commander, who wrote notes by candlelight in the room at the train station. "It was a dream," said Martin when he was back on the street.

Martin passed an illuminated window, where the curtains had not been fully drawn. As he passed, he could see, through the small gap, a woman at the table, and a child fast asleep in a drawer on the ground. When he got to the end of the street,

Fußboden gebettet, schlafen. Als er schon am Ende der Straße war, kehrte Martin wieder um. Das kleine, trübe Licht der Petroleum Lampe hinter dem Vorhang zog ihn zurück. Er stand vor dem Fenster und und starrte in die Stube. Die Frau besserte Wäschestücke aus, ein Mann lag neben der Kommode, mit seinem Mantel zugedeckt, der Docht der Lampe war heruntergeschraubt, trauliche Schatten lagen über der Stube und dem schlafenden Kind.

„Flüchtlinge“, dachte Martin und blieb stehen. Von Zeit zu Zeit hielt die Frau ein Wäschestück gegen das Licht und prüfte es, legte es sorgfältig zusammen und strich die Falten glatt. Einmal stand sie auf, zog die Decke des Kindes in der Schublade zurecht, hüllte den schlafenden Mann fester in den Mantel und setzte sich wieder an die Arbeit. Und Martin starrte noch immer auf das kleine, trübe Licht, auf die langsamen, bedächtigen Handbewegungen der nähenden Frau, und in einem Winkel seines Herzens weinte ein kleines Kind nach seiner Mutter, bettelte ein Obdachloser um einen Platz in einer warmen Stube, und begehrte ein einsamer Mann nach der Nähe einer Frau. Ihm fröstelte plötzlich.

Andere Soldaten kamen vorüber und fragten, was los sei. Sie sahen durch den Schlitz in die Stube, auf die nähende Frau, den schlafenden Mann und das Kind in der Schublade und sagten:

„Das sind auch Flüchtlinge“ und blieben vor dem Fenster stehen, drängelten ein wenig, um besser sehen zu können, und starrten weiter in die Stube, als ob ein großes Licht von der kleinen Lampe ausginge, und eine große Wärme von der nähenden Frau. Wie sie so eine Weile vor dem Fenster drängelten und ihre schweren Schuhe auf dem Pflaster klirrten, horchte die Frau auf, drehte die Lampe für einen Augenblick hoch, verlöschte sie dann ganz und öffnete das Fenster.

„Was ist los?“ fragte sie.

„Nichts.“ Die Soldaten antworteten verlegen.

„Ihr sucht wohl Obdach? Wir sind hier bei Fremden, auch nur Flüchtlinge; aber

Martin turned back. The small, dull light of the petroleum lamp behind the curtain drew him back. He stood in front of the window and stared into the room. The woman was mending washing and a man lay next to the chest of drawers, covered by a coat. The lamp’s wick was turned down. Homely shadows lay over the room and the sleeping child.

“Refugees,” thought Martin. The woman lifted her mending against the light from time to time to check, then folded it carefully and smoothed out the wrinkles. At one point she stood up, pulled the child’s covers tighter and wrapped the man in the coat, then went back to her work. Martin still stared at the small, dull light and at the slow, deliberate hand movements of the woman sewing. In a part of his heart a small child cried for his mother, homeless man cajoled for a place in a warm room, a lonely man desired the closeness of a woman. He was suddenly cold.

Other soldiers came over and asked what was happening. They looked through the gap into the room, at the woman sewing, the sleeping man and the child in the drawer and said:

“They are refugees too. They stayed at the window and jostled a little, in order to see better. They kept staring into the window, as if a big light emanated from the small lamp, and a lot of warmth came from the woman sewing. After they had been standing there for a while with their heavy shoes clanking on the pavement, the woman heard them, turned the lamp up for a moment, briefly turned it off, and came to the window.

“What is happening?” she asked. “Nothing,” the soldiers answered self-consciously.

“Are you searching for shelter? We are staying with strangers. They are

für einen ist noch Platz, hier auf dem Fußboden.“

– „Danke schön“, sagten die Soldaten, „Wir werden schon etwas finden. Gute Nacht.“

„Gute Nacht“, sagte die Frau.

„Aber wenn ihr nichts findet, ist hier immer noch Platz für einen. Kommt nur ruhig wieder zurück.“ Sie schloss das Fenster, und die Soldaten gingen weiter.

„Hast du ihr Gesicht gesehen?“ fragte Martin den Mann der neben ihm ging. „Was soll ich an dem Gesicht gesehen haben? Müde sah sie aus, wer weiß wie lange sie schon auf der Flucht ist. Und gehört auch nicht mehr zu den Jüngsten. Hast du denn nicht die grauen Haare gesehen?“

„Sie sah aus wie der Zugführer auf dem Bahnhof in der Auskunftsstube“, sagte Martin. „Du bist verrückt“, meinten die Soldaten. „Und der Offizier, der die Kunstschätze bewacht, hatte das gleiche Gesicht.“

– „Du bist verrückt.“

Es begann zu regnen. Einer nach dem anderen fiel ab und drückte sich in eine Toreinfahrt, einen trockenen Winkel. Aber fast in allen Ecken und Winkeln lagen oder standen schon ein paar Menschen und die anderen eilten weiter, von Straße zu Straße. Martin kam auf einem kleinen Platz, auf dem ein langgestrecktes Gebäude stand, mit Nischen entlang der Vorderfront, in denen sich schon Soldaten drängten. Er lief die Hausfront entlang und als er zur Nische kam, in der nur eine Gestalt stand, sprang er hinein und versuchte, die Gestalt leicht zur Seite zu drängen, um auch noch Platz zu finden. Aber die Gestalt rührte sich nicht. Sie war aus Stein, ein Heiliger oder ein Krieger, es war in der Dunkelheit nicht zu erkennen.

Martin lief weiter und fand eine Hauseinfahrt, die weit offen stand. Er stieg über Schläfer, die die Einfahrt füllten, stieß gegen Menschen, die auf den Treppen schliefen, tappte in der Dunkelheit in eine Dachkammer, in der es nach Tauben roch, dachte

displaced too. We have room for one more - here on the floor.”

– “Thank you,” said the soldiers, “We will find something, for sure. Good night.”

“Good night,” said the woman. “But if you don’t find something, there is still room for one here. You can always come back.” She closed the window, and the soldiers walked on.

“Did you see her face?” Martin asked the man walking next to him.

“What should I have seen in her face? She looked tired. Who knows how long she has been on the run. And she wasn’t that young anymore. Did you not see her grey hair?”

“She looked like the troop commander in the arrival hall at the train station,” Martin said. “You are insane,” the soldiers said. “And the officer guarding the art treasures had the same face too.”

– “You are insane.”

It began to rain. One by one they dropped away and pushed themselves into a dry corner or a doorway. But there were people already lying or standing in most nooks and crannies, and the others kept rushing onwards, from street to street. Martin came to a small square, where a long building stood with a recess at the front, and soldiers already crowding underneath. He walked along the front of the building, and when he saw a gap where only one person sheltered, he jumped in. He tried to move the figure slightly to the side, but it would not move. It was made of stone, a saint or a warrior, he could not tell in the darkness.

Martin kept walking and found a driveway gate that was wide open. He climbed over sleeping bodies that filled the space, bumped into people sleeping on the stairs, and in the dark found an attic that smelled of pigeons.

„Endlich“ und wollte sich ausstrecken. Aber da flammte ein Streichholz auf. Jemand sagte:

„Wir sind schon zu viel hier“, und Martin konnte, bevor das Streichholz verlosch, noch den langen Bodenraum sehen, in dem, dichtgedrängt, Soldaten und Zivilisten auf dem Boden lagen.

Er stieg die Treppe hinunter, stieß an Menschen, trat auf Beine, stolperte über Körper, ging einen Korridor entlang und durch eine Stube, in der gerade eine Wanduhr in zierlichen, abgestimmten Tönen die Zeit abschlug. Menschen lagen auf dem Boden, auf den Stühlen, an den Tisch gelehnt. Der Glockenschlag der Uhr verhallte zitternd in der Stube, das Räderwerk rasselte noch einen Augenblick, und dann hörte Martin nur noch das gleichmäßige Ticken und den leisen Nachklang der Glockenschläge in seinen Ohren, so wie es vor vielen langen Jahren gewesen war, wenn er zuhause wach im Bett gelegen und hellhörig in die Nacht gehorcht hatte. Es fröstelte ihn, und plötzlich lag alle Müdigkeit der langen Nacht und des langen Suchens auf ihm. Er kauerte sich in eine Fensternische und stützte seine Beine auf einen Blumenständer daneben. Und in dieser unbequemen Haltung schlief Martin ein.

Er wurde geweckt, bevor der Morgen noch voll war. Ein älterer Herr, in langen Unterhosen und einer seidenen Nachtmütze auf dem Kopf, sagte: „Entschuldigen Sie“, und er hob Martins Beine von dem Blumentopf hoch, auf dem sie ruhten.

„Das ist nämlich eine seltene Narzisse.“

Er nahm den Blumentopf weg, legte Martins Beine wieder behutsam auf den Blumenständer, schob ihn etwas zurecht, damit Martins Beine bequemer lagen, und sagte:

„Danke schön.“ Dann stieg er mit seinem Blumentopf über die Schläfer zu seinem Bett, stellte ihn auf einen Stuhl, zupfte ein paar abgeknickte Blätter ab, goss aus einer Karaffe Wasser über die Blume,

“Finally,” he thought and went to stretch himself out, but a match was lit.

“There are too many of us already.” Martin could see, just before the match died, that the room was filled with soldiers and civilians packed tightly on the floor.

He went down the staircase, bumping into people, stepped on legs and tripped over bodies. He walked along the corridor, through a room, where a clock was daintily marking time in well-tuned notes. People lay on the floor, on the chairs and leaned against the table. The bell chime of the clock vibrated and faded away. The chains rustled for a moment, and then Martin could only hear the steady ticking and the ghostly echo of the bell chime in his ears, like many years ago, when he lay in his bed and listened closely into the night. He shivered, and suddenly all of the fatigue of the long night and the search overcame him. He crouched in a window recess and leaned his legs on a flowerpot next to him. And in this uncomfortable position Martin fell asleep.

He was woken before morning broke. An elderly gentleman in long johns and a silk nightcap on his head said,

“Excuse me,” and lifted Martin’s legs off the flowerpot where they had been resting. “This is a very rare narcissus.” He took the flowerpot away, lay Martin’s legs down gently on the flower stand, adjusted it so Martin’s legs were more comfortable and said,

“Thank you.” Then he climbed over the sleepers towards his bed, and, still holding the flowerpot, put it on a chair, removed some squashed leaves, watered it with his carafe, adjusted his nightcap and went back to bed.

zog seine Nachtmütze zurecht und legte sich wieder ins Bett.

„Ich träume“, sagte Martin. Aber sein Magen gestattete ihm nicht, daran zu glauben. Er stolperte aus dem Zimmer, das nun im ersten Morgenlicht wie eine Insel kleinbürgerlicher Behaglichkeit und pedantischer Ordnung aussah, in das eine Flut heimatlosen Unrat hineingeschwemmt hatte.

Martin überlegte vor dem Haus, nach welcher Seite er gehen sollte. Nach links war es so sinnlos wie nach rechts. Weiterzugehen war so sinnlos wie stehen zu bleiben, es war sinnlos sich hinzulegen und sinnlos, zum Bahnhof zu gehen und wieder in einen Zug zu steigen, der nur wieder in eine andere Stadt fuhr, in der Soldaten suchend durch die Straßen irrten und niemand wusste, wohin die Welt eilte.

Eine Gruppe von Soldaten mit Esskübeln und Kannen kam vorüber und Martin ging ihnen nach. Am Rande der Stadt bogen sie in den Hof einer Gebäudegruppe ein. „Institut für junge Mädchen“, stand über dem Tor. Der Regen hatte den Grund aufgeweicht, Kraftwagen hatten tiefe Kotfurchen durch den Hof gepflügt, leere Konservenbüchsen, Kisten, Stroh, Pappschachteln, Kartoffelschalen und verwelkte Krautköpfe, der ganze Abfall einer provisorischen Soldaten-Proviantstelle füllte den Hof.

Die Beete mit Spalierobst am Rande des Hofes waren mit weißen Kieselsteinen eingefasst, und zwei Nonnen wateten mit hochgeschürzten Röcken durch den Dreck des Hofes, harkten die Beete zurecht, zupften Grashalme und Unkraut aus und taten sie in einen Korb, den sie von Zeit zu Zeit in einer Ecke des Hofes entleerten, wo über einer hölzernen Einfriedung ein kleines Schild hing mit der Aufschrift „Abfälle“.

Martin stellte sich in die Schlange, die zur Proviantstelle vorrückte. Vor ihm sagte einer:

„Wachtposten Nummer 27 – 3 Unteroffiziere, 6 Mann.“

“I’m dreaming,” thought Martin. But his stomach did not allow him to believe it. He stumbled out of the room, which looked, in the first morning light, like an island of bourgeois comfort and pedantic tidiness overwhelmed by a flood of homeless refuse.

In front of the house, Martin thought about the direction in which he should walk. Turning right made as much sense as turning left. To keep walking made as much sense as to stop, it was pointless to lie down and pointless to go to the station and to get on a train again that was just going to stop in another town where soldiers wandered the streets lost, and where nobody knew where the world was going.

A band of soldiers with food troughs and jugs walked past, and Martin followed them. They turned into the yard of a group of buildings at the edge of town. “INSTITUTE FOR YOUNG LADIES,” said the sign above the door. The ground was soaked with rain, trucks had left deep grooves in the yard, empty food cans, containers, straw, cardboard boxes, potato peels and wilted cabbages, all the rubbish of a provisional victual house for soldiers filled the yard.

White pebbles framed the plots of trellised fruit on the edge of the yard. Two nuns waded through the dirt in the yard with their skirts hitched, ripping weeds and stray grass from the ground, filling up baskets that they emptied from time to time in a corner of the yard, where above the wooden frame a small sign read: “WASTE MATERIALS.”

Martin joined the queue, which moved slowly to the victual house. In front of him somebody said:

“Guard number 27 –3 sergeants, 6 men.” – “9 portions,” yelled the writer.

– „9 Portionen“, rief der Schreiber aus. Martin kam die Stimme bekannt vor. Sein Vordermann sagte:

„Außenstelle Nummer 34 – 2 Unteroffiziere, 12 Mann.“

„14 Portionen“, rief die Stimme in den Nebenraum. Martin war an der Reihe. Er zögerte.

„Nun?“ sagte der Schreiber. Martins Magen drängte. Er sagte:

„1 Unteroffizier und 3 Mann – Außenstelle 51.“ Sein Herz klopfte.

Der Schreiber trug die Angaben in sein Heft ein.

„1 Unteroffizier, 3 Mann, Außenstelle... Welche Nummer sagtest du?“ – „Einundfünfzig“, sagte Martin, er hatte keine andere Wahl.

„Unser Regiment hat keine Außenstelle 51“, bemerkte der Schreiber müde. Jetzt klang seine Stimme ganz vertraut. Der Schreiber sah auf.

„Das ist nicht möglich“, dachte Martin als er seine grauen Schläfen sah.

„Ich habe seit gestern Mittag nicht gegessen“, flüsterte er dann schnell. Die Augen holten wieder den kleinen Funken Wärme aus einem anderen Leben heraus und der Mund in dem müden, faltenreichen Gesicht sagte leise: „Du hast gestern nach der tschechischen Division gefragt?“ Martin nickte.

„4 Portionen!“ rief der Schreiber laut ins Nebenzimmer. Dann ließ er Martin den Empfang unterschreiben und sagte: „Außenstelle 51. Ihr habt gestern keine Sonderfassung erhalten?“ Und er schnitt von einem Riesenlaib ein Stück Käse, wickelte es in ein Papier.

„Der Lastwagen im Hof“, sagte er leise, „fährt in unsere südlichste Außenstelle: Nr.34. Ich nehme an, dein Posten Nr.51 ist noch weit, weit südlicher... Adieu, viel Glück in einem anderen Leben.“

Martin fasste Brot, schwarzen Kaffee für vier Leute und eine Büchse Fleisch. Er fuhr mit dem Lastwagen auf irgendeiner Seitenstraße ein paar Kilometer, dann fuhr der Wagen in den Wald und Martin stieg aus.

Martin thought the voice was familiar. The person in front of him said:

“Field office number 34 – 2 sergeants, 12 men.” – “14 portions.” It was Martin’s turn. He hesitated.

“Yes?” said the writer. Martin’s stomach urged. He said:

“1 sergeant and 3 men, field office 51.” His heart thumped.

The writer took the details down in his notebook.

“1 sergeant, 3 men, field office…what was the number you said?”

- “Fifty-one.” said Martin. He had no other choice.

“Our regiment does not have a field office 51,” the writer said in an exhausted voice. He sounded very familiar. The writer looked up.

“That is impossible,” Martin thought when he saw the greying temples.

“I haven’t eaten since midday yesterday,” Martin whispered quickly. The eyes conveyed a glimmer of warmth from another life, and the mouth in the tired, wrinkled face said quietly:

“You asked after the Czech division yesterday?” Martin nodded.

“4 portions!” the writer yelled loudly towards the other room.

Then he let Martin sign the receipt and said: “Field office 51. You did not receive extra rations yesterday?” And he cut a piece from a huge hunk of cheese, and wrapped it in paper.

“The truck in the yard is going to our southernmost field office: Number 34. I imagine that your post number 51 is still far more south from there…Adieu, good luck to you in your next life.”

Martin took the bread, enough black coffee for four people and a can of meat. He got a lift in the truck for a few kilometers, then the truck went into the forest and Martin got out.

Er war todmüde, seine Füße waren schwer, sein Kopf benommen. Die Sonne war aufgegangen, die Felder und die Straße dampften leichten Wasserdunst aus. Vögel sangen; ja, Vögel sangen und weit und breit war niemand zu sehen, kein Soldat, kein Tank, kein Flüchtling und kein Flugzeug. Martin streckte sich im Gras aus. er nahm einen tiefen Zug aus der Feldflasche, der schwarze Kaffee erfrischte ihn.

„Ich habe alles nur geträumt“, sagte er, „Die Stadt gibt es nicht und den Zugführer auch nicht. Und morgen ist Frieden und ich finde wieder heim.“

Er schnitt vom Brot ab und wickelte den Käse aus. Sein Blick fiel auf das beschriebene Papier. Es war eine Seite aus dem Heft, in das der Zugführer gestern Abend auf dem Bahnhof die Namen und Regimentsnummern der versprengten Soldaten eingetragen hatte.

He was exhausted; his feet were heavy and his head muddled. The sun was up and the dew was rising from the field and streets. Birds sang; yes, birds sang and there was no one else around, not a soldier, not a tank, not a refugee and not a plane. Martin stretched out in the grass. He took a big gulp from the canteen. The black coffee refreshed him.

“This is all a dream,” he said,

“This town does not exist, and nor does the troop commander. And tomorrow peace will come and I will find my way home.” He cut some bread and unwrapped the cheese. His gaze fell on the piece of paper. It was a page from the notebook the troop commander had written the names and regiment numbers of the displaced soldiers in, last night at the station.

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