

# The AALITRA Review

A JOURNAL OF LITERARY TRANSLATION

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## The AALITRA Review

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## Translating Style in Dazai Osamu's *Ningen Shikkaku*

MICHAEL TYNAN

### Abstract

Dazai Osamu (1909-1948), born Tsushima Shūji, remains famous throughout Japan, with his magnum opus, 人間失格 (*Ningen Shikkaku*), being the second most purchased book in Japan of all time. Despite this fame, it is rare to see his texts in circulation in English, and those that do exist are largely relegated to manuscripts and translations put forward in journals (Lyons 1). However, with his texts being released to the public domain, many have seen re-translation; notably *Ningen Shikkaku* was translated as *No Longer Human* and recently retranslated as *A Shameful Life*. This essay attempts to analyse Dazai's style and most famous literary techniques in Japanese, and considers the techniques used by different translators to emulate these techniques in English. In doing so, it hopes to create an understanding of the effect of these techniques on the audience, and how to recreate them effectively in translation.

### Introduction

#### *Who is Dazai Osamu?*

Dazai Osamu (1909-1948), born Tsushima Shūji, is regarded as one of Japan's greatest authors, due to, or perhaps despite, his numerous transgressions against not only the law, but also his moral conduct in general; discussions of his life invariably return to his addictions to alcohol and opioids, his many affairs, and his equally numerous suicide attempts. It is no surprise, then, that when Dazai committed suicide shortly after completing the final chapter of 人間失格 (henceforth *Ningen Shikkaku*) that the mystery of Dazai and his near flagrant disregard for Japanese societal norms became part of his charm. This charm continues to this day, with *Ningen Shikkaku* spawning several manga, anime, and live action film versions as recently as 2019, and being revered as a classic in Japan; Lyons (1) likens his level of popularity and tone to that of F. Scott Fitzgerald and J. D. Salinger in the West.

While he is famous within Japan, the selection of texts translated into English that is commercially available to the public is limited: Lyons (iii) noted that at the time of his writing, only 斜陽 (Henceforth *Shayō*) and *Ningen Shikkaku* were commercially available, and they had been translated in the 1950s. In the years since, Dazai's works in their entirety have entered the public domain, inspiring more translations, though much remains hidden away in academic texts, or has simply not been translated at all.

#### *Ningen Shikkaku*

This research aims to interrogate how translators have attempted to emulate Dazai Osamu's style in translating his works from Japanese to English. To do so, I will consider his most famous work, *Ningen Shikkaku* and its two translations by Donald Keene and Mark Gibeau. *Ningen Shikkaku* is semi-autobiographical, fitting into the 私小説 (*shishōsetsu*), or "I-Novel" genre, like most of Dazai's other works. The main difference is that while Dazai's short stories were often single instances or events that he detailed without hiding that it was, in fact, his life, *Ningen Shikkaku* dramatizes, alters, or entirely invents events, and is done so under the guise of a man reading the diaries of the character meant to represent Dazai, Ōba Yōzō.

*Ningen Shikkaku* opens with an unnamed narrator effectively stumbling upon three

journals and pictures of a man he has never met, Ōba Yōzō, and publishes them as a writer, after which Yōzō becomes the narrator. In his journals, Yōzō details the varied events of his life, and the reader follows him as he attempts to relate to those around him through consistent pranks, which he refers to as “clowning”. Believing himself to be alone, fundamentally not a human being and therefore incapable of understanding others and being understood himself, he sinks deeper into depression and addictions to drugs and alcohol, before finally ending his journals in a decrepit house. While the reader is left to ponder his fate, we switch back to the unnamed narrator, who returns to discuss the journals with the madam of a bar from whom he first received them. Here, the real question of the text is revealed: is Yōzō the “angel” the madam believes him to be, or the distasteful man with whom our narrator initially presented us? Particularly when Dazai’s life so closely mirrors that of Yōzō, the internal conflict within Dazai of whether he deserved pity and redemption or to be cast out of society is what stays in the audience’s mind, and what spurred it to become a modern classic.

This closeness between Dazai and Yōzō is key, and, mixed with the knowledge that Dazai himself is a fictionalized version of Shūji, has been the source of much critical consideration; notably, Keene, Gibeau, and Lyons all agree that the three are entirely distinct characters, despite being superficially the same man. Lyons (3-4) summarizes this tension succinctly by indicating that the main character, Ōba Yōzō, is a fictionalized version of Dazai Osamu, who himself is an authorial persona of Tsushima Shūji. For this reason, when I refer to the author, I refer to him as Dazai Osamu; similarly, when I refer to the character, I refer to Ōba Yōzō. The lines between the two are blurry at times, so it is important that it is Dazai’s style (as author) and Yōzō’s *voice* (as principal narrator): while Dazai is the one writing, it is Yōzō whose emotional response gives meaning to the words.

### **Research outline**

This research focusses on *Ningen Shikkaku* not only because it is Dazai’s most commercially successful work in Japanese, but also because it provides us with the greatest detail and number of examples of his stylistic choices. I will also consider the importance of the sixty years that divide Donald Keene and Mark Gibeau’s respective translations, which saw not only great changes within Japan, but also in how Japan and Japanese people were seen, as well as norms in Japanese to English translation.

In essence, this research intends to: (1) consider Dazai’s most famous techniques in Japanese; (2) consider how these have been emulated in the English target text (TT); (3) search for similarities and differences across the two translations; and (4) consider the effect of these different techniques on a TT audience. To do so, I will: (1) Consider the analysis of style and literary techniques put forward by academics and translators, and (2) analyse short sections of the texts in the source text (ST) and two TTs that best display these techniques and what effects these would have on their respective audiences. Currently, there is a lack of research on Dazai from a Translation Studies perspective; indeed, most of the references pertaining specifically to Dazai in this research are both several decades old and only included as part of anthologies of translations done by the same translator who is commenting on Dazai. Given that Dazai’s work in its entirety has recently entered the public domain, and there are likely to be a variety of re-translations in the future, it would be beneficial to provide translators with an interpretation of Dazai’s style and how to emulate it. There is also likely to be significant overlap with Dazai’s style and that of other Japanese authors. Therefore, it would be useful to consider the analysis put forward in this research in terms of how one might translate similar stylistic techniques of other Japanese authors, particularly as authors such as Haruki Murakami push Japanese translated texts into the mainstream in English bookstores.

## Literature review

### *The nature of style*

To begin a critical review of Dazai's style in translation, we must begin with an understanding of what "style" means, and how it is understood in translation studies. Wales (398) describes style (in part) as "the set of features peculiar to, or characteristic of an author; his or her 'language habits'" and, importantly in terms of translation, that "stylistic features are basically features of language; so style in one sense is synonymous with 'language'"; that is, that the language in which a text is written is an important feature of its style.

Boase-Beier (32) follows the same definition given by Wales, and notes that style in translation is difficult because there are effectively *two* styles: that of the ST, and that of the TT. While the TT's style is informed by the style of the ST, it is also informed by the translator's understanding of authorial intent, as the thematic message of the author is intrinsically linked with their writing style; as each reader has a different understanding of authorial intent, this can impact the translation. Boase-Beier (32) further notes that style is merely "perceived": meaning is "constructed according to the cognitive context of the person reading", and so while there may be "communal elements", there will also be individual ones. In short, a translation is read through the lens of the reader, who in turn is reading it through the lens of the translator, who is reading it through a lens of perceived authorial intent and thematic concerns (which may not be what the author had intended).

### *The translation of style*

If we accept Boase-Beier's suggestion that style is interpreted by the reader as much as it is written by the author, and that as a result a translator will bring their own understanding of style through in their translation, then we must understand how Dazai's techniques affect the reader. Reader-response theory supports this understanding, and essentially supposes that a text is transactional: regardless of what the original author had intended, its existence is determined based on those who read it, perceive it, and react to it (Johnson 161).

This is useful in terms of this research for two reasons: Firstly, as Boase-Beier has indicated, translation of literary texts relies on the translator's interpretation of a text, and therefore is inextricably linked with the effect that the text has on the reader, rather than authorial intent; Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, the translators of Dazai's works, in particular of *Ningen Shikkaku*, have admitted that Dazai is a mystery in terms of his intent. Gibeau (137) notes that while Dazai's suicide pushed *Ningen Shikkaku*'s sales, it "also made it impossible for the mind of Tsushima Shūji to ever be known", and it is this mystery that surrounds him that makes his intent almost impossible to confirm. Knowing that we cannot understand Dazai as an author, all we can do in terms of analysing his works is to analyse the range of potential effects on the audience, intended or not.

### *Translation as interpretation*

Gutt (69-70) notes that contemporary (post-1960s) translational theory has generally focused on translating the *meaning* of the text, rather than its stylistic features; this presents an issue insofar as, as Boase-Beier noted, these interpretations of meaning may be incorrect, and stylistic techniques are important in expressing this meaning. Because meaning and style are closely linked, it is important that translators consider *both* the content and form of fiction in their translation.

While it is impossible for one to be able to remove one's prejudices and read entirely as the author intended in any circumstance, this is particularly pronounced when the time and place in which the author has written is distant from one's own (Gutt 78). Given that we are to consider Dazai in an increasingly modern context as we compare Keene and Gibeau's



translation, this is of particular importance. Gutt (78) notes that where contextual assumptions about a text are incorrect, the ambiguities will be resolved incorrectly, and lead to a cascade in which the original intention is missed entirely, and that this becomes more likely the further away from the time and cultural context one is. In answer to this issue, Gutt (79) suggests that this problem could be resolved two ways: either the translator supplies the contextual information (e.g., in the form of a footnote), or adds an expository comment as part of the text that explains the contextual implication.

Keene saw fit to include a foreword about the importance of Japanese writers of the time as divorced from their own literary tradition, whereas Gibeau includes an afterword to explain the relevance of Dazai's life to the writing of *Ningen Shikkaku*, and necessarily its connection to the *shishōsetsu*. In comparing these commentaries, we can see that there is an increasing need to explain the writings of Dazai to the average reader, as Gutt anticipated.

### ***Japan and Orientalism***

As this research intends to consider the difference between the two translations, we should also consider how translation norms have changed over time. In Keene's (3) foreword, he notes that "for once nobody thought to use the damning adjective 'exquisite' about an unquestionably Japanese product", suggesting that views on Japan and the Japanese directly following WWII were often exoticized as part of an Orientalist mindset. In his scathing discussion of Orientalism, Said (9) suggests that "the Orient" is a European invention that allowed it to contrast itself to its oldest and richest colonies, its cultural competitors to which it needed to continue to be superior; following WWII, America continued this tradition with China and Japan, becoming the pre-eminent power within the Pacific.

Keene was thoroughly frustrated with Orientalism and commented in his foreword that the Japanese are no different to Americans than Europeans, and that this is particularly reflected in their literature. Fowler (*On Naturalizing* 116) continues this critique, noting that languages such as Japanese are often forced into awkward approximations and equivalents in English, while English itself continues with no bending of the rules allowed, and lamenting that what are considered the best translations are those that do not sound or feel like translations, despite obvious differences in culture, setting and, of course, language. Two years later, Fowler (*Rendering Words* 3) furthered this discussion, noting that the great strides of Japanese translation in the 1950s were what had hindered later translations: the whiplash of change from the pre-war Japan (an immediate encroaching power that encouraged nothing but fear) to post-war Japan (an exoticized ancient land full of mystery and intrigue) was too much for the average American audience to withstand. Thus, interest in Japanese literature dwindled as it failed to capture both the reality of modern Japan and American preconceptions of it.

While interest in Japan increased in the 1980s, following the so-called "economic miracle", this interest was largely in society and economy, rather than literature; indeed, Fowler (*Rendering Words* 4) cites that only fifty-four and twenty-two Japanese texts had been translated into US and UK English respectively in 1981, while the number of texts translated from all other languages that year was 1086 and 1035 respectively. So, while Japanese literature saw a "golden age" in the 1950s (Fowler, *Rendering Words* 8), this was followed by years of floundering in which Japan's cultural sway was limited in comparison to that of its economic power. As a result, many translators were encouraged to treat Japan as "the Other", exaggerate its foreignness, and encourage an exoticized view of the country (Fowler, *Rendering Words* 6), yet simultaneously, and contradictorily, be accessible to the average reader.

### ***Modern Japan***

Younger readers may express some confusion at this: Japan's cultural power has been considered a key part of its economic and political agenda for quite some time following the nation's rebranding efforts of "Cool Japan" that were solidified in the 2000s (Ronalds 27). Hijiya-Kirschner (144) notes that while Japanese writers, up to and including the twentieth century, were avid readers of international literature, they rarely aspired for their own literature to be translated. This, Hijiya-Kirschner (145) says, changed in the 1990s, when periodicals promoted translation out of Japanese, alongside support programs and prizes, though many Japanese authors continued to refuse to grant translation rights. More modern writers, however, have taken to performing what Hijiya-Kirschner (147) refers to as "pretranslation" (that is, the act of writing in a manner that presupposes translation), and refers to Haruki Murakami as a pre-eminent user of such a form. Hijiya-Kirschner (148) notes that while pretranslation is not unique to Japanese, it is certainly very present in the ways that writers attempt to make a text distant from its home nation, both linguistically and in descriptions of locales and characters. In summary there appears to be an effort in STs to make texts *less* Japanese in order to appeal to the international audience.

### ***Keene and Gibeau***

The theory discussed thus far can be seen in the different views that the two translators have brought to their respective translations of *Ningen Shikkaku*. Donald Keene (1922-2019) is an extremely famous translator, both within and outside of Japan, and was known particularly for his work during Fowler's (*Rendering Words* 8) aforementioned "golden age" of translation in the 1950s. Working as an intelligence officer in WWII, Keene was interested in the diaries of Japanese soldiers that he translated, leading him to gradually increase his role as a translator after the war and become one of the leading Japanologists of his, if not all, time.

Mark Gibeau is a current senior lecturer of Japanese language and Culture at Australian National University, specializing in literary translation and Japanese post-war literature. Gibeau and Keene share some similarities insofar as both were professors at the time their translations were published, and interest in similar Japanese authors; obviously, however, their translations must certainly be different enough to warrant Gibeau's retranslation. Commenting on this, Gibeau (138) says that *A Shameful Life* "is not intended to be a criticism of [Keene's] work" but notes that his "answers" to the questions of translation "differ significantly from Keene's answers" (140).

### ***Methodology***

This research intends to consider how the effect of specific language techniques used by Dazai, making up his "style", have been replicated for English audiences by considering how his magnum opus has been translated. *Ningen Shikkaku* was chosen because, as his last completed work, it shows Dazai's coming-of-age as an author (Lyons 17), as well as a variety of examples of his stylistic techniques. Drawing on two translations, specific short sections, in which the ST is compared with the TT and TT2, will be chosen for dissection.

In comparing the three texts, I shall consider the techniques that the translators of both TT1 and TT2 have used to emulate Dazai's ST, and their respective effects on the audience. The aim is not to look for whether the translators have kept the exact same techniques as Dazai, as this would be near impossible in some instances in English. Instead, this analysis explores how, where, and why translations differ from one another, and the potential effects of translation choices on readers, in order to inform later translations of new texts.

## **Analysis**

### ***Narrators and author***

As has been discussed in the introduction, Ōba Yōzō and Dazai Osamu are fictionalized versions of Tsushima Shūji, and *Ningen Shikkaku* sets itself apart from large swathes of Dazai's work in being a far more fictionalized account of his life. Within *Ningen Shikkaku* itself, though, lies a hidden *fourth* character: the unnamed narrator, who provides us with further opportunity for unreliable narration. While Shūji masquerades as Dazai, Dazai fictionalizes himself in Yōzō (who, by his own admission, never speaks a single word of truth), and then finally the obtrusive unnamed narrator who has never known Yōzō reads his diaries and immediately notes his contempt for him. The mystery of narration and truth becomes ever more confusing, as while our unnamed narrator has no reason to lie, and Yōzō is supposedly writing a journal that is not intended for other readers yet reads as a performative memoir, we cannot shake the belief that there are lies, hidden truths or a message from Dazai in the words of the characters. These four characters (Shūji, Dazai, Yōzō, and the narrator), all similar and yet distinct, create something of a house of mirrors, wherein truth is distorted, and any hope of finding the reality of events becomes difficult, if not impossible.

The difficulty, then, becomes extracting Dazai's sincerity from this web of writers: is it Dazai, the unnamed reader of the diaries, or Yōzō speaking? Is the lack of clarity intended to be more "clowning" on the behalf of Dazai? Should readers even be concerned about this given that Dazai's suicide leaves these questions forever unanswered? These are questions often posed by Dazai's translators, and, of course, spring forth a variety of interpretations.

### ***Dazai Osamu's Style***

Referring solely to Dazai's ST for the moment, we can look to Dazai's "language habits" (Wales 346) for an idea of what we should consider in translation. Lyons (ix) summarizes his style succinctly in writing that "while Dazai's language is accessible and evocative, it is also idiosyncratic and sometimes oblique", and points to his "long and meandering" sentences, repeating "words or phrases from one sentence to another", paragraphs that "run on for a page or more", "direct quoted statements without quotation marks", and "the shift of pronoun referent within a single paragraph" as his most notable techniques. This typically means that while Dazai's style lends itself to short, simple clauses in Japanese that flow readily into one another and excluding information such as the subject, it causes issues in translation with sentences too long for English to sustain comprehensibly, and often requires changing subtle shifts into new sentences and even paragraphs.

In this research, I will look specifically at his extended sentences (as they often include far more clauses and sub-clauses than can realistically be used in English), quoted statements without quotation marks, and others. These have been chosen because they directly relate to the interpretation of the narrative voice within *Ningen Shikkaku*, as will be discussed individually with examples. While I discuss Dazai's style, there is no doubt that similar techniques will be used by other writers, as is always the case in any language, and so this research also hopes to add perspective upon which translators of other authors can consider translation based on style.

### ***Mind Style***

Bockting describes mind style as being "concerned with the construction and expression in language of the conceptualization of reality in a particular mind" (159); that is, that the use of language indicates the way the world is perceived at any given moment by a character through their narration. This is crucial within texts such as Dazai's where the narrator is not omniscient but merely a character: In *Ningen Shikkaku*, readers are always aware that Dazai is author, yet

similar to his character and narrator, Yōzō, and so we can feel an overlap between the style and voice of the two. In considering the below techniques, we should be aware of how they are all representative of the mind of Yōzō, and indeed perhaps Dazai himself.

### **Example 1: Free Indirect Discourse**

Maier (346) refers to dialogue without quotations as part of “free indirect discourse”. Free Indirect Discourse (henceforth FID) is a mix of indirect or reported speech in which the speech of a character and that of the narrator blends, so it is difficult to tell which of the two is speaking and is often marked by a lack of reporting clause. This can be marked by a merging of narrative and story-time, what Wales (120, 199-200) refers to as “Histoire” and “Discours” respectively. For example, while a story may be narrated in past tense (Histoire), the character is experiencing it in their present (Discours), and thus in a merging of the two voices one can see the change in voice through tense.

However, FID does not wholly match with Dazai’s style: as mentioned before, our narrator and character in *Ningen Shikkaku* are one and the same, and so we are not shifting from omniscient narrator to character, but from narrator to deeper within the mind of the character (who is that self-same narrator). It is often used to represent a form of retreat by Yōzō, who, unable to address his feelings nor communicate with others, falls back in on himself.

For example, let us consider the below passage:

人間、失格。

もはや、自分は、完全に、人間で無くなりました。

ここへ来たのは初夏の頃で、鉄の格子の窓から病院の庭の小さい池に紅い睡蓮の花が咲いているのが見えたが、それから三つき経ち、庭にコスモスが咲きはじめ、思いがけなく故郷の長兄が、ヒラメを連れて自分を引き取りにやって来て、父が先月末に胃潰瘍でなくなったこと、自分たちはもうお前の過去は問わぬ、生活の心配もかけないつもり、何もなくていい、その代り、いろいろ未練もあるだろうがすぐに東京から離れて、田舎で療養生活をはじめてくれ、お前が東京でしでかした事の後仕未は、だいたい渋谷がやってくれた筈だから、それ気にしないでいい、とれいの生真面目な緊張したような口調で言うのでした。

(Dazai 147)

Disqualified as a human being.

I had now ceased utterly to be a human being.

I came at the beginning of summer. Through the iron bars over the windows I could see water-lilies blossoming in the little pond of the hospital. Three months later, when the cosmos were beginning to bloom in the garden, my eldest brother and Flatfish came, to my great surprise, to take me out. My brother informed me in his habitually serious, strained voice that my father had died of gastric ulcers at the end of the previous month. “We won’t ask any questions about your past and we’ll see to it that you have no worries as far as your living expenses are concerned. You won’t have to do anything. The only thing we ask is that you leave Tokyo immediately. I know you undoubtedly have all kinds of attachments here, but we want you to begin your convalescence afresh in the country”. He added that I need not worry about my various commitments in Tokyo. Flatfish would take care of them.

A human, failed.

I had, utterly and completely, ceased to be human.

When I arrived, it was early summer, and, peering through the bars of my window, I could see the red blossoms of lilies floating atop the small pond in the hospital garden. Three months later the cosmos were starting to bloom, and, my eldest brother, with Flounder in tow, appeared out of the blue to get me out. Father had died of a gastric ulcer at the end of last month. We don't care about your past. We don't want you to worry about money. You don't have to do anything. In exchange, you have to leave everything, get out of Tokyo right away, and go to the countryside to recover. We know you still have unfinished business in Tokyo but Shibuta has already taken care of most of the loose ends so you don't need to worry about it. My brother spoke in his characteristically tense, somber manner.

(Gibeau 115-116)

In one of the most memorable sections of the text, as Yōzō is at his absolute lowest and, moments before his final diary ends, we see how the character's mind wanders: He conflates his arrival and departure within a single sentence, the blooming of the lilies and cosmos painting the background of an otherwise sombre, one-sided conversation between himself and his brother. As with most other times in which Dazai opts for this dialogue without quotations, Yōzō is devoid of agency, and has retreated to the recesses of his mind, incapable and/or unwilling to voice his concerns or act on them. We understand here that Yōzō is empty, and that things happen around him, but he no longer acts; he is, as he was described in the final photograph, "devoid of expression" (Keene 16).

In Keene's translation, there is a considered use of quotation marks, alongside some syntactic reformatting: while Dazai ends his sentence with a comment on his brother's tone, Keene precedes his quotes with this. However, Keene does eschew traditional English conventions by including quotations within the paragraph, rather than beginning a new line. It is interesting to note that he also follows the large slab of quotations with a simple sentence to summarize Shibuta's<sup>1</sup> role in this, which was otherwise included in the brother's speech in the ST. Finally, and most importantly, Keene has translated the singular, long, winding sentence into a variety of shorter, sharper, sentences, moving hypotaxis to parataxis.

Keene's use of quotation marks where there are none in the Japanese is fairly consistent, as we will see in the other examples, and was likely used to avoid confusion because Dazai's technique is not used in the same way as FID. The use of parataxis, on the other hand, is an effective way of communicating Yōzō's apathy, particularly as, while the sentence itself is extensive, the clauses are exceptionally short and simple to parse in the ST.

In contrast, Gibeau's translation does not have quotation marks, and attempts to relay at least part of the ST's hypotaxis by using multiple commas and conjunctions until Yōzō's brother begins speaking. While the hypotaxis does give a momentary sense of confusion, the sentences group specific ideas, such as Yōzō's arrival followed by the arrival of his brother and Shibuta in the next sentence: the hypotaxis is not sustained enough to capture the ST's strangeness nor detachment. The lack of quotation marks, emphasized by the pronoun "we" that was present in the ST and indicate it is not Yōzō speaking, do well to capture the strange retreat by Yōzō into his mind, however. This effect appears to better capture the ST's escapism

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<sup>1</sup>The translation of the more commonly used nickname, ヒラメ (Hirame) differs in the two translations, so I will defer to his real name instead.

and helps readers to imagine Yōzō as the empty husk who is now beyond caring about the situation.

### **Example 2: Hypotaxis**

“Hypotaxis”, as per the definition put forward by Wales (204), is a heavy use of subordination by means of conjunctions to connect clauses. In her research of English-language hypotaxis, Cerban (52) refers to the 2006 short story *Manhattan Days* by Hermione Lee to describe its use and effects: Interestingly, while there is indeed a heavy use of conjunctions and the associated punctuation of commas and semicolons, the sentences are relatively short, in direct contrast to Dazai’s use in which his sentences can span entire paragraphs, and thereby entire pages.

Of importance is Cerban’s (53-4) discussion of how these clauses are either a form of *elaboration* (a clause that expands on another, generally giving additional information while focusing on the same event or idea), *enhancement* (a clause that qualifies another with circumstantial information such as place or time, etc.), or *extension* (a clause that provides new information, gives an exception or alternative). Dazai’s use of hypotaxis is largely one of *elaboration* and *enhancement*: There are often ideas that have multiple new actions performed while serving the same main action, and, when these actions have reached their limit of information, he swiftly moves to a new action and fills it, too, with additional information. The effect is largely one of confusion, wherein objects or actions are flooding one’s view while a hyperactive narrator tries to detail every minutiae to his audience; at the same time, the numerous actions can feel disjointed, like the fleeting memories of a dream not fully remembered.

While hypotaxis can be seen in the example above, similar examples are recorded throughout *Ningen Shikkaku*, such as below:

しかし、はじめは、この男を好人物、まれに見る好人物とばかり思い込み、さすが人間恐怖の自分も全く油断をして、東京のよい案内者が出来た、くらいに思っていました。自分は、実は、ひとりでは、電車に乗ると車掌がおそろしく、歌舞伎座へはいりたくても、あの正面玄関の緋の絨緞が敷かれてある階段の両側に並んで立っている案内嬢たちがおそろしく、レストランへはいると、自分の背後にひっそり立って、皿のあくの待っている給仕のボーイがおそろしく、殊にも勘定を払う時、ああ、ぎごちない自分の手つき、自分は買い物をしてお金を手渡す時には、吝嗇ゆえでなく、あまりの緊張、あまりの恥ずかしさ、あまりの不安、恐怖に、くらくら目まいして、世界が真暗になり、ほとんど半狂乱の気持ちになってしまって、値切るどころか、お釣を受け取るのを忘れるばかりでなく、買った品物を持ち帰るのを忘れた事さえ、しばしばあったほどなので、とても、ひとりで東京のまちを歩けず、それで仕方なく、一日一ぱい家の中で、ごろごろしていたという内情もあったのでした。

(Dazai 45-6)

At first, however, I was convinced that Horiki was a nice fellow, an unusually nice fellow, and despite my habitual dread of human beings I relaxed my guard to the extent of thinking that I had found a fine guide to Tokyo. To tell the truth, when I first came to the city, I was afraid to board a streetcar because of the conductor; I

was afraid to enter the Kabuki Theatre for fear of the usherettes standing along the sides of the red-carpeted staircase at the at the main entrance; I was afraid to go into a restaurant because I was intimidated by the waiters furtively hovering behind me waiting for my plate to be emptied. Most of all I dreaded paying a bill – my awkwardness when I handed over the money after buying something did not arise from any stinginess, but from excessive tension, excessive embarrassment, excessive uneasiness and apprehension. My eyes would swim in my head, and the whole world grow dark before me, so that I felt half out of my mind. There was no question of bargaining – not only did I often forget to pick up my change, but I quite frequently forgot to take home the things I had purchased. It was quite impossible for me to make my way around Tokyo by myself. I had no choice but to spend whole days at a time lolling about the house.

(Keene 60-1)

In the beginning, however, I thought him a fine fellow indeed. So fine a fellow one hardly saw his like, and, terrified of people though I was, even I was put off my guard as I found myself thinking I had discovered the perfect guide to Tokyo. To be honest, left to my own devices, I was even terrified of the conductors when I set foot on a train. I yearned to see a Kabuki play but was frightened of the young, female ushers who lined either side of the red carpet leading up the theatre steps. At restaurants I was scared of the busboys, lurking silently behind me, waiting to clear my plate. And when it came time to pay the bill – oh, how I fumbled. I grew dizzy when it came time to hand over the money. My head spun, the world went dark, and I thought I was going half mad. Not out of parsimony, you see, but because I was so nervous, so embarrassed, so anxious and terrified. Far from trying to haggle the price down, not only would I often forget to take my change, it was so bad that I often even forgot to take the thing I had just purchased. It was utterly impossible for me to go walking about Tokyo on my own. That was the real reason I spent whole days lazing about at home.

(Gibeau 39)

As Yōzō meets Horiki, the audience is presented with a sentence far longer than could be sustained in English, using commas as its only form of punctuation in the ST, describing Yōzō's inability to live in Tokyo. The three rapid fire は at the beginning immediately prepare the audience for what is to be a fumbling speech, as we can see again in his triplicate repetition of おそろしく and あまり, only for it all to be contained, finally, as an expansive relative clause to という内情もあったのでした. Yōzō presents the audience with a variety of verbs strung together to create a feeling of hyperactivity, as if it is all too much all at once, and thus give readers the same feeling of desperation that he himself feels.

Keene's translation captures this by repeating "I was afraid" and connecting the clauses via semicolons, alongside the repetition of "excessive"; however, in contrast to the earlier example, he does not use parataxis in place of hypotaxis, and instead groups ideas into sentences with often fewer than two clauses, much like Gibeau in the earlier example.

Gibeau's translation instead replaces the three "おそろしく" with "terrified", then "frightened", and finally "concerned", making Yōzō's speech seem far more controlled than in the ST, though he does keep the three "あまり" as "so". Further, he largely uses the shorter, sharper sentences that Keene utilized in the earlier example, creating a sense of rapid-fire examples in which we can see Yōzō falling over himself repeatedly. While each case of hypotaxis is individual and should be treated according to the effect at the time, Dazai often

uses hypotaxis in this way, flooding the reader's view with a variety of examples. In such cases it appears that parataxis, as used by Keene in the first example and Gibeau in the second, is the ideal way to capture this sense in English.

While it may initially seem counterintuitive to use these shorter sentences to express rambling, it is also important that readers appreciate that Dazai is attempting to overwhelm them with numerous examples, and parataxis achieves this effect. It is important that translators approach these techniques not only with an eye to being faithful to them, but also to the effect it has on the audience and, particularly in this case, the characterization of the protagonist. This is particularly important in texts such as *Ningen Shikkaku* where the character's journey and self-image are the driving force of the novel, rather than necessarily the events that occur around them.

### **Example 3: Parentheses**

To summarize briefly, stream of consciousness is a form of writing in which a person's thoughts and impressions are written down as they occur, including the mistakes, dead ends, recursions, and so on that one might expect within their own thought patterns (Wales 393-5); Dazai often relegates his innermost thoughts to within the parentheses, or, in other cases, goes on extended tangents about unrelated events or memories, similar to stream of consciousness. Let us consider the below example:

秋の、寒い夜でした。自分は、ツネ子（といったと覚えています、記憶が薄れ、たしかではありません。情死の相手の名前をさえ忘れていような自分なのです）に言いつけられたとおりに、銀座裏の、或る屋台のお鮓やで、少しもおいしくない鮓を食べながら、（そのひとの名前は忘れても、その時の鮓のまずさだけは、どうした事か、はっきり記憶に残っています。そうして、青大将の顔に似た顔つきの、丸坊主のおやじが、首を振り振り、いかにも上手みたいにごまかしながら鮓を握っている様も、眼前に見るように鮮明に思い出され、後年、電車などで、はて見た顔だ、といろいろ考え、なんだ、あの時の鮓やの親爺に似ているんだ、と気が付き苦笑した事も再三あったほどでした。あのひとの名前も、また、顔かたちさえ記憶から遠ざかっている現在なお、あの鮓やの親爺の顔だけは絵にかけるほど正確に覚えているとは、よっぽどあの時の鮓がまずく、自分に寒さと苦痛を与えたものと思われます。もともと、自分は、うまい鮓を食わせる店というところに、ひとに連れられて行って食っても、うまいと思った事は、いちどもありませんでした。大き過ぎるのです。親指くらいの大きさにキチッと握れないものかしら、といつも考えていました）そのひとを、待っていました。

(Dazai 61-2)

It was a cold autumn night. I was waiting at a sushi stall back of the Ginza for Tsuneko (that, as I recall, was her name, but the memory is too blurred for me to be sure: I am the sort of person who can forget even the name of the women with whom he attempted suicide) to get off from work. The sushi I was eating had nothing to recommend it. Why, when I have forgotten her name, should I be able to remember so clearly how bad the sushi tasted? And I can recall with absolute clarity the close-cropped head of the old man – his face was like a snake's – wagging from side to side as he made the sushi, trying to create the illusion that he



was a real expert. It has happened to me two or three times since that I have seen on the streetcar what seemed to be a familiar face and wondered who it was, only to realize with a start that the person opposite me looked like the old man from the sushi stall. Now, when her name and even her face are fading from my memory, for me to be able to remember that old man's face so accurately I could draw it, is surely proof of how bad the sushi was and how it chilled and distressed me. I should add that even when I have been taken to restaurants famous for sushi I have never enjoyed it much.

(Keene 78-9)

It was a cold, autumn night. At Tsuneko's request (I think that's what she called herself but my memory has faded so I can't be sure. That says a lot about the kind of person I am. I even forget the name of the person I tried to commit suicide with), I went to a sushi stall in one of the alleys of Ginza and, eating truly terrible sushi (though I can't recall her name, the sushi – or rather, how bad it was – remains firmly fixed in my memory. I remember the old man running the stand had a crew cut and a face like a Japanese rat snake. He made a show of flailing about as he made the sushi, pretending he actually knew what he was doing. I can see all of this as clearly as if it were right before me. Years later and more than a few times I have caught myself looking at a face that seems oddly familiar before realizing, with a wry smile, that it looks like that old man from the sushi stand. Though the woman's name and, by now, even her face have faded from my mind, the fact that I can still recall that old man's face so clearly I could draw it from memory shows how bad the sushi was and how cold and miserable it made me feel. In any case, though I've been taken to supposedly famous sushi restaurants, I've never enjoyed sushi. The pieces are too big. Why couldn't they just make them smaller? Why not just make them thumb-sized?), I waited for her to finish her shift.

(Gibeau 52-3)

Here we see that Yōzō discusses the events prior to one of his many suicide attempts. Within the brackets, specifically the second in which he includes six individual sentences, we see that Yōzō's mind wanders, seemingly more interested in the sushi that he ate than the woman with whom he is about to commit suicide. Nonetheless, it is obvious that this is an attempt to deflect from the situation unfolding, and despite Yōzō's protestations, the audience is aware of the importance this moment holds for him: ironically, in his attempts to hide what he truly feels behind glib humour, Yōzō instead brings greater attention to it. Whether Yōzō is truly trying to hide this information, or instead highlighting it, is largely up to the reader: we are left to wonder whether Yōzō is the callous individual who forgets the name of the woman he commits suicide with, or instead so thoroughly ashamed of the event that he tries to palm it off with more "clowning".

The most obvious difference between the ST and Keene's translation is the lack of a second set of brackets. While Yōzō interrupts himself twice within his sentence, Keene elects to make this interruption once and instead push the second set of brackets out so that, instead of an interruption, it appears as a more natural flow of mind from Tsuneko to the sushi he is eating. Unsurprisingly, this creates something of a departure from the ST: while Yōzō brings us back to the present by ending his sentence with “そのひとを、待っていました”, emphasizing Tsuneko's existence when outside of his brackets, Keene's translation instead leaves the audience focusing on the sushi at the end of the paragraph. As a result, it appears that Yōzō is indeed more focused on the foul sushi than Tsuneko, creating a much more callous

appearance than is present in the ST. Furthermore, Keene also removes Yōzō's more strange musings on sushi, in that they are "too big" and should be "thumb-sized", which again adds to his strange and desperate clowning even in this situation.

In contrast to Keene, Gibeau's translation does include the second set of brackets, as in the ST. Interestingly, he opts for several instances of parataxis within the brackets, breaking up often much longer sentences. It is otherwise a fairly direct translation that keeps the emphasis on Tsuneko at the end of the paragraph, and manages to place the brackets within the same area as the ST; given the opposing syntax of Japanese and English, alongside Dazai's intent to delay the final verb in the sentence to emphasize Yōzō's evasiveness, this is an ideal, if at times difficult, way to translate the use of brackets in this instance and others.

## Discussion

Unsurprisingly, there are many differences between the translations of Keene and Gibeau; even Gibeau himself notes that if this were not the case, his translation would need not exist. We shall begin, then, with surface level differences indicative of the shift in translation and the view of Japan over the past sixty years: the role of foreignization within the texts. While Keene makes note that the text is an "unquestionably Japanese product" (3), it is obvious that the average reader at the time did not know much about Japan aside from the propaganda that had been involved in WWII (Fowler 6), a war that had ended little more than a decade before the translation was published. This is reinforced by Keene's translation of what are now more commonly accepted words: 鮎 is *sushi* (italicized as foreign), 浴衣 is "summer suit" or otherwise "kimono" (despite being a different article of clothing), 焼酎 is gin, and several other minor changes abound in the book. Aside from the lack of commentary on sushi, as was noted earlier, this rarely manifests as a complete omission or edit within Keene's translation, but it does speak to a softening of the Japanese-ness of the text that Keene himself champions. In the 60 years since, Japanese culture (at least in clothing, food, and beverages) has become significantly embedded enough that these changes do not exist in Gibeau's translation, and while only a minor shift towards the ST, it certainly speaks to a change in views of Japan, as well as creating a more Japanese image of the world as presented within the text.

There are, however, much greater differences that exist between the two in terms of their language use. As has been discussed, the major concern in translating Dazai is the effect on the reader, as the author is both dead and mysterious, and so it is important to consider the context of the technique being used, rather than considering the technique in isolation. For example, while Dazai frequently uses hypotaxis, it was noted that in some areas parataxis better replicated the emotional frenzy in English, though this was not always the case. In Example 2, while Gibeau changes hypotaxis to parataxis, which is more apt for representing Dazai's repeated fumbles, Keene presents this just as well using semicolons and repeating "I was afraid" in the beginning, though the latter end is perhaps better represented through Gibeau's parataxis. Keene appears to be of the same mind that parataxis is an apt replacement for a linguistically impossible level of hypotaxis, as we see in Example 1, though he uses it infrequently in comparison to Gibeau. In short, effective techniques depend on the surrounding context, so while parataxis has been effective in many instances, it is not definitively the "correct" choice.

Dazai's lack of quotations are perhaps easier to make a definitive suggestion upon, given that Keene's translation reintroduces quotation marks. It is understandable, given the outright strangeness and confusion this technique can bring to a reader, and he does attempt to recreate this strangeness by eschewing English quotation style, but it is still undeniably a significant change that does not meet the ST's effect on the reader. With the benefit of hindsight, Gibeau's translation opts to keep this technique, which does undeniably help the

effect on the reader, and while it is not perfect (Dazai relegates the quotative clause from a new speaker to the end of the sentence, if it is included at all, which is not as simple in English where an audience is familiar with this clause in the middle) it is certainly a closer translation to the ST. This is perhaps Dazai's most idiosyncratic technique, and one with few similarities to English, so it is understandable that it caused issues for both translators.

Finally, Dazai's use of brackets is more inline with the Western canon and accepted techniques, and so we would assume to find few issues with it in translation; despite this, Keene once again decided to drop the extended brackets as seen in Example 3. While it is difficult to ascertain Keene's exact reasoning, it would not be unreasonable to assume that, as with the lack of quotations, it was deemed to be too strange for the average English reader, despite similar examples existing in Western literature. Regardless of the reasoning, Gibeau's translation shows us that it is possible to recreate the use of brackets in translation, and indeed that it works well with a very similar effect on the audience. While the hypotaxis within the brackets could not be recreated, parsing it to relatively short sentences and including Dazai's musings on sushi make for a very close translation. This is in contrast to Keene's, which can leave the reader thinking more of sushi than Yōzō's desire to avoid thinking about Tsuneko.

In summary, while various techniques have been trialled by both authors, and while they are not always exactly the same as the ST, it appears that the 60 years that have passed since the release of *No Longer Human* have given Western audiences greater insight into Japan and allowed for wider understanding of less familiar techniques such as Dazai's lack of quotations and extreme hypotaxis. Whether this is true, or whether modern audiences will still refer to Keene's translation, remains to be seen, but the difference in translations speaks to an increasingly globalized world of literature.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, this research has aimed to explore how Dazai's style has been translated over sixty years by considering the translation of Keene and the contemporary Gibeau. In doing so, it has become evident that close analysis of both the *meaning* and the *style* of any given text are important to fully achieve a translation, notwithstanding that the translator's interpretation of a text is only one possible interpretation. As a result, translators should aim to preserve the style of the text as much as the meaning, as the two are interconnected and combine to produce effects on the reader.

One of the more surprising revelations of this research was that a one-to-one translation of style will not always yield the same effect on the audience: while Dazai regularly used hypotaxis, this was often better relayed in English through parataxis. Once again, this reinforces the need for translators to focus on the effect of any given style and consider how this might best be shown in their own language. Particularly, Dazai was known for novel stylistic techniques, and a desire to make the text more accessible, as was seen in Keene's translation at times, only removed the markedness of certain sections, denying the audience of the TT a deeper understanding of the character's emotions. While translation norms, particularly in Japanese-English, have changed with respect to such domestication strategies, it remains a balancing act for translators.

Finally, while this research has focused on Japanese-English translation, and on a single author, it should be noted that many of the suggestions made here could be related to other authors, and indeed other languages. This research encourages translators to be conscious of their approach to translating style and make use of the possibilities of their target language, noting that changing the stylistic technique may sometimes create a better outcome in translation if it more closely renders the effect of the source text. As always, however, research can always be improved, and such is the case here: Dazai wrote a variety of stories using a

variety of techniques, and this research has barely covered the surface of *Ningen Shikkaku*, let alone his numerous short stories. Furthermore, the entire premise of this article, “style”, is one with varying views and definitions, and leaves it open to further criticism and research beyond the limited scope I have ascribed it.

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**Translating the Bestiary:  
Roque Larraquy and Diego Ontivero's *Informe sobre ectoplasma animal***

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*Informe sobre ectoplasma animal* (*Report on Animal Ectoplasm*) written by Roque Larraquy and illustrated by Diego Ontivero, is an unorthodox bestiary, with entries that enclose the ectoplasm of animals that perished in the cities of Buenos Aires and Montevideo. Published by Eterna Cadencia in 2014, *Informe* is part of the larger phenomenon of bestiary resurgence in contemporary Hispanic literature. Briefly, the bestiary was a medieval literary genre which employed animal plasticity in short entries to indoctrinate readers with Christian values. This resurgence in contemporary Hispanic literature is supported by the eighty bestiaries published in the past twenty or so years, media coverage of said works, and a growing academic interest on the subject. Despite this fascinating appropriation of a medieval genre by contemporary Hispanic authors, not many of the bestiaries have been translated. While more established bestiaries, including Jorge Luis Borges' *Manual de zoología fantástica* and *Libro de seres imaginarios*, Juan José Arreola's *Punta de plata* and Augusto Monterroso's *La oveja negra y demás fábulas* have been translated, in part due to the renown of their authors, contemporary experimenters with the form have received little acclaim beyond the Spanish-speaking world.

There are several reasons as to why no full, purchasable translation exists of *Informe* despite the media attention both book and author have garnered. The first is the uncertain space bestiaries occupy in contemporary Hispanic literature. The genre has only recently begun to attract media and scholarly attraction. While foreign readers anticipate experimentation and idiosyncratic interpretations of old forms from Latin American Avant-garde authors like Nicolás Guillén and Jorge Luis Borges, as well as from the Boom movement as with Julio Cortázar, translation from Spanish is largely reserved for "safer genres"—novels and poetry, vessels for more established exports such as magical realism. Another likely reason for the translation lacuna is that *Informe* is, a priori, an unconventional text. The premise of the bestiary evades classification even for those already familiar with the genre: the "beasts" in this work are not live animals that function as vessels for Christian dogma, rather, they are leftover ectoplasm from dead creatures spread through mid-century Buenos Aires and Montevideo. As foreshadowed by its title, elements of *Informe* read much like a pseudoscientific report, abounding in impersonal sentences, jargon, and staccato prose, elements which mark the text as peculiar even in the source language.

Achieving effect equivalency (Nida 159) with this translation posed a challenge, as the text narrates supernatural, mystical events with a style and detail most often found in scientific reports. This balance between the absurd and the sterile, the abnormal and the scientific is pivotal to the ruse interweaving *Informe*. To reproduce the jarring and comical effect of such a mixture I translated as closely to the original as possible, conveying the supernatural with clinical rigor. The humour in the source depends on this play between form and content, and so, was as difficult to convey as humour depending on idioms, wordplay, puns, or colloquialisms. I avoided literalism as it is often and commercially perceived as "bad translation" (Grieve 103), so, while respecting the style, I maintained syntax, grammar, and usage most natural to English readers. Working to adhere to Tytler's second principle ("the style and manner of writing should be of the same character with that of the original" 209), I have tried to preserve the unique characteristic of the prose, peppered with objective-sounding constructions such as those the impersonal "se" produces. To render this same distance obvious

in the translation, I opted for passive constructions: “Se cubre la zona con carne vacuna a medio cocer”, for instance, became “The zone is covered in semi-raw bovine meat”. “Semi-raw bovine meat” maintains the effect produced by an equally rare term, “carne vacuna” in the original text, as opposed to more common words such as “beef” or “meat”. Along these same lines, phrases like “habitantes de la casa” are better rendered as “house inhabitants” and not “family members”, preserving the surgical edge of the prose. Admittedly, this “scientific style” of writing was not the most challenging aspect of the translation. As Venuti stated, current translations favour a “plain style” of prose (5) and Bernstein described as “the historical movement toward uniform spelling and grammar, with an ideology that emphasizes non idiosyncratic, smooth transition, elimination of awkwardness, &c.— anything that might concentrate attention on the language itself” (27). I thus found that Larraquy’s short, unadorned sentences lended themselves remarkably well to translation.

Another challenge was choosing between a foreignizing or domesticating approach to the translation. Venuti’s identification of scientific style of prose and translation as the most pervasive correctly predict that the syntax itself would not be the main difficulty, not posing many turns of phrase that could be identified as characteristic of Spanish. Where the content is concerned, however, there were a number of variables for which to account. I opted to maintain cultural elements and most names, aiming to mediate a compromise between Schleiermacher’s author and reader. The contrast between *Informe*’s hyper-specific context and its impersonal, scientific prose made way for several possibilities. *Informe* conspicuously anchors itself in mid-century Buenos Aires and Montevideo, referencing landmarks, cultural elements like titles and customs, and the 1930 overthrowing of Hipólito Yrigoyen’s government by those loyal to General José Félix Uriburu. Because the early to mid-twentieth century, Latin American context is intrinsic to the work, I did not adapt or anglicize any aspect of the content. In the entry “Fairy”, two aspects of the entry’s namesake pose difficulty. The first is that the English word “Fairy”, is presumably an eccentric nickname for an eccentric man. To side-step the offensive connotation that the term might have when applied to a man in specific contexts, especially when the fact that the events described in the entry unfold in 1930, long before English was as ubiquitous in Latin America as it is today, I changed the name to “Hada”. This change preserves the eccentric effect of someone choosing a foreign nickname in a largely monolingual culture, and also hints at the character’s predilection for showmanship and “magic” tricks. Fairy is also referred to as “Licenciado”, a commonly used term to distinguish someone with a university degree. Since there is no real English equivalent, I changed the title to “Doctor”. This title conveys the effect of someone who is presumably learned and cultured performing a rather vulgar trick and sending his ex-wife spectral tadpoles in the mail.

Closely linked to my choice to forego adaptation, there were instances of linguistic untranslatability which exercised my creativity. The term “confitería” in Argentina, is not, as the name suggests, an establishment which exclusively sells confections and sweets. Because one can dine and enjoy other foodstuffs at confiterías, including, as the entry reveals, duck, I chose to translate it as “Richmond Café”, which also communicates casual, albeit tasty, dining. Confitería Richmond is a known Buenos Aires landmark, frequented by authors like Jorge Luis Borges and Leopoldo Macheral, and it is sometimes translated as the “Richmond Tea Rooms”, which necessarily brings up a British connotation, by changing it to café the sense of the place is maintained, while also referencing the cultural and intellectual heritage of the now gone institution. Related to the bistro, I translated the word “baño” as “lavatory”, instead of bathroom or washroom, thus keeping the fact that the entry took place in 1952 and avoiding siding with any particular English dialect. The word “asado”, for instance, is specific to Argentine and Uruguayan culture, distinct from, say, North American barbecue, so I chose to keep the word as a calque, italicized.

Following Jakobson's axiom that languages vary not in what they can convey, but rather in what they must convey (Jakobson), I found some challenges at the code-unit level. In Federico, for instance, the source text mentions a family member ("Un familiar se ofrece para ahuyentarlo" 9) without specifying the gender, and the sentence following this introduction contains a tacit subject: "Reza frente a él, le grita" (9). I thus defaulted to a male family member as the entry is most concerned about the science of capturing an ectoplasm and delivering objective facts, and a female pronoun might have proven distracting. English also does not inflect for gender, so I translated all animal pronouns to "it". The phrase "El cocinero lo reconoce" (13), for instance, yields "The cook recognizes it". This rather obvious observation is important when the larger goal of keeping the prose objective and sharp, at times allowing me greater word economy due to not having to clarify between subjects.

A few words which encode more than one meaning posed challenges as well. In the phrase "para estimular la aparición" (9) could be translated with "apparition" or "appearance". The scientific treatment of supernatural events makes the translation of this word rather tricky, as the tone of the text would demand "appearance", but the subject matter suggests that the reader is before an "apparition". Given that the most striking feature of the entries is the treatment of the supernatural and mystical as ordinary, I chose to keep the objective, distant tone and translate "aparición" as "appearance". The word "amaestrado" in the entry "Mono albino" could be translated as a "trained monkey" or a "performing monkey". No decisive conclusion could be made from the text, however, so to not coerce the original meaning, and not start the reader with the possibilities behind a "performing monkey", I chose "trained", the more general of the two meanings.

It is worth mentioning that short sections of *Informe* were used as part of a translation exercise by Fundación TyPA's Contemporary Argentinian Literature Translation Workshop. TyPA's translation is a collaborative effort, rendering the Spanish source text into German, English, French, Portuguese, and Italian. The bestiary lends itself to these "vignettes" of translation, as the genre—and consequently the book—is comprised of short entries, each no more than 250 or so words. To my knowledge, this is the only attempt made at translating the book. Said translation is not complete, the translators have picked entries that do not follow the order of the source text. TyPA's translator, Mara Faye Lethem and I have both translated "Federico", "Mono albino" and "Confitería Richmond", but I chose to follow the order of the source text and translated "Fairy", "Palacio del pollo al minuto" and "Viñedo" as well, which were not translated by the workshop and thus, I can assume, since there are no full existing translations of the source text, by anyone else.

Despite having received significant media attention and being considered a text representative of contemporary Argentine literature, *Informe sobre ectoplasma animal* has not been translated into English. The bestiary merits a wider reputation for both its aesthetic contribution and value, and for its role as a text representative of how contemporary Hispanic authors interpret a medieval genre, merits a wider circulation. While there are certainly difficulties to rendering the text into English, the prose style lends itself well to translations and its humour, so often impossible to translate properly, relies on mechanisms not beyond the scope of what can be gracefully rendered in a target text and enjoyed by an audience far removed from that of the source text. Translating the full text of *Informe sobre ectoplasma animal*, as well as other bestiaries belonging to this resurgence would also invite further study on the curious phenomenon of resurgence, and what about the genre resounds so strongly today.



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**Informe sobre ectoplasma animal  
Roque Larraquy & Diego Ontivero**

**Report on Animal Ectoplasm  
Roque Larraquy & Diego Ontivero**

**Translated by Ailén Cruz**

**Federico  
Buenos Aires, 1949**

Los habitantes de la casa dicen que algo invisible les interrumpe el paso en la puerta de entrada. Creen que es Federico, perro querido de la familia, que murió en el umbral en 1948.

Para estimular la aparición se cubre la zona con carne vacuna a medio cocer, su alimento preferido. El ectoplasma de Federico se presenta ovillado en el piso, en fulgor de 2 a 5 watts, con los ojos cerrados. Un familiar se ofrece para ahuyentarlo. Reza frente a él, le grita. Lo atraviesa con un fósforo encendido. No hay reacción. Con las horas el perro se disipa, pero sigue siendo un obstáculo para entrar a la casa.

Se contrata al ectografista Julio Heiss para documentar el hecho y tentar una solución. Heiss, promotor de la ectografía materialista, concluye que la única perduración de Federico es la de su gusto por la carne. La imagen, los ojos cerrados, la respiración en su vientre, son materia tenue residual, sin sobrevida: no es posible pedirle que se vaya. Sobre él se construye un peldaño que resuelve el problema de la entrada.

**Mono albino  
Montevideo 1940**

El 31 de diciembre de 1939 un mono albino escapa de un barco amarrado en el puerto de Montevideo. Por las marcas en sus manos, y por su habilidad para romper la cerradura de una puerta de la iglesia y subir al campanario, donde se refugia, los vecinos deducen que es un animal amaestrado.

A la hora del nuevo año el párroco acciona la campana con su peso, ignorando que el mono cuelga del carillón. 1940 comienza con el sonido de un cráneo roto. Desde entonces el espectro del mono reaparece periódicamente como una mancha nocturna.

**Federico  
Buenos Aires, 1949**

The house inhabitants state that something invisible obstructs their front entrance. They believe it is Federico, beloved family dog that died on the threshold in 1948.

To stimulate its appearance, the area is covered in half-raw bovine meat, his favourite sustenance. Federico's ectoplasm presents itself curled up on the floor, glowing between 2 and 5 watts, its eyes closed. A family member offers to chase him away. He prays before Federico; he yells at him. He pierces it with a lit match. There is no reaction. With the hours the dog dissipates but continues to obstruct the entrance.

Ectographist Julio Heiss is hired to document the event and find a solution. Heiss, advocate of the materialist ectography, concludes that the only remaining aspect of Federico is his preference for meat. The image, the closed eyes, the breathing in his belly, are residual matter, with no excess of life: it is not possible to ask him to leave. Overtop of him a step is constructed, resolving the matter of entrance.

**Albino monkey  
Montevideo, 1940**

On December 31, 1939, an albino monkey escapes from a boat docked at the Montevideo port. By the marks on its hands, and its ability to break the lock on a church door and climb to the bell tower, where it takes refuge, neighbours deduce it is a trained monkey.

On New Year's Eve, at the stroke of midnight, the priest uses his weight to ring the bell, ignoring that the monkey hangs from the chain. 1940 begins with the sound of a broken skull. Since that day, the spectrum of a monkey periodically reappears like a blot in the night.

Para conseguir su imagen se sigue el procedimiento habitual: series de veintidós ectografías por segundo disparadas en automático, con el ectografista en puntas de pie sobre una placa de cesio en frío. Se obtienen seis segundos de giroscopio en los que el mono camina erguido como un ser humano.

### **Confitería Richmond Buenos Aires, 1952**

En agosto de 1952 cuatro clientes de la confitería Richmond dicen sentirse observados al usar el baño. En septiembre, un cocinero del local abandona el baño a causa de un horrible graznido que brota de los orinales. Luego, contrae glaucoma.

El ectografista Martín Rubens registra la imagen de un pato espectral con el cuello quebrado asomando entre dos mingitorios. El cocinero lo reconoce. Dice haberlo horneado tras una larga persecución. Rubens ironiza sobre la memoria del cocinero: “Conserva en ella a todos los muertos de su cocina”. Le explican que la confitería raramente sirve pato. La escena de su preparación es inusual y fácil de recordar.

El glaucoma empeora. Se habla de una venganza del pato. Rubens, promotor de la ectografía animista, comenta que se trata de un espectro con sentido del tiempo: “Para macerarse en rencor necesita una memoria, y para vindicarla requiere de un futuro, o una idea de futuro”. Julio Heiss señala que tales percepciones no se corresponden en grado alguno con las de un pato, vivo o muerto.

### **Fairy Buenos Aires, 1938**

El licenciado Fairy tiene la habilidad de tragarse una rana vivía y hacer que las patas delanteras le asomen por los agujeros de la nariz. La gracia no supera el minuto; durante ese lapso la rana se refriega con deleite contra la campanilla del licenciado, liberando una sustancia que humecta el conducto. Conforme el numerito se repite en cenas, asados y un vernissage inolvidable, la

To obtain its image the usual procedure is followed: a series of twenty-two ectographs per second, shot automatically, with the ectographist on tiptoe overtop a cold cesium plaque. Six seconds of gyroscope images are obtained, in which the monkey walks, upright, like a human being.

### **Richmond Café Buenos Aires, 1952**

In August of 1952 four clients of the Richmond Café claim they feel observed while using the lavatory. In September, one of the café’s cooks abandons the lavatory because of a horrible squawk emanating from the urinals. He later develops glaucoma.

The ectographist Martín Rubens records the image of a spectral duck with a broken neck peeping from the urinals. The cook recognizes it. He claims to have roasted him following a long persecution. Rubens ironically says of the cook’s memory: “He retains in it all the deaths transpired in his kitchen”. They explain to him that the café rarely serves duck. The scene of its preparation is unusual and easy to remember.

The glaucoma worsens. There is talk of the duck’s vengeance. Rubens, an advocate of animist ectography, comments that they are dealing with a spectrum with a good sense of timing: “One needs memory to stew in such resentment, and to vindicate said memory one requires a future, or the idea of a future”. Julio Heiss points out that such perceptions do not correspond to those of a duck, dead or alive.

### **Hada Buenos Aires, 1938**

Doctor Hada can swallow a live frog and make its front legs poke out of his nostrils. The trick does not last more than a minute; during that time the frog enjoys rubbing itself against the doctor’s uvula, releasing a substance that lubricates his trachea. Satisfied with the show, he repeats it at dinners, *asados*, and an unforgettable vernissage. Hada’s throat, exposed to the

garganta de Fairy, expuesta a las emisiones químicas del anfibio, alcanza un alto nivel de lubricación.

Su esposa lo abandona. Esto conduce al licenciado a un pico de exposición social. Repite su acto con el guante de un amigo. Se mete la mano en la boca y saluda con los dedos desde su nariz, pero el público pide una rana. La saca de una, lata deja que sola le salte a los labios, se los cierra en la cabeza y la absorbe. Por error, el viaje concluye con el estómago. La concurrencia se entrega a comentarios en torno al tracto digestivo de Fairy. Algunos sugieren purgantes, otros una visita a un médico de guardia. Otro compadece a la rana. Con la rana desovándole en las tripas, Fairy asiste a la destrucción de su vida social.

Esa misma noche vomita los huevos y se toma el trabajo de enviarlos en una probeta a su ex esposa por correo. Las manos de la mujer ser vuelven viscosas apenas abre la probeta. A causa de esta afección, que resulta ser crónica, ya no puede tocar a nadie. En las ectografías de la Colección Solpe se las ve cubiertas por un banco de renacuajos en fulgís de 3 a 4 watts.

### **Palacio del pollo al minuto Buenos Aires, 1955**

Un reloj cucú con pajarito minuterero preside el salón del Palacio del Pollo al Minuto, sobre la calle Corrientes. La noche del 16 de septiembre el pajarito se traba en su riel y el mecanismo de giro queda inutilizado. Una cuchara comienza a flotar sobre un omelette. La señora Celia Daumes, clienta ocasional, llama al encargado del restaurante y señala con el dedo la magia que ocurre frente a ella. El encargado intenta bajar la cuchara de un tirón, pero está elevada en el aire. A la par, Celia Daumes siente que algo le sujeta la cabeza desde el ojo. Dice que es una fuerza de tal magnitud que podría balancearse en el aire colgando del todo el peso de su cuerpo. El encargado intenta moverle la cabeza, pero también está clavada.

La cena queda interrumpida en su última posición. En lo que demanda

chemical secretions of the amphibian, reaches new levels of lubrication.

His wife leaves him. This leads to a peak in the doctor's social exposure. He repeats the act with the glove of a friend. He puts the hand in his mouth and waves with his fingers, through his nose, but the public demands a frog. He pulls the frog out of a tin, leaves it to jump up to his lips, which he closes over its head, absorbing it. By mistake, the voyage concludes in his stomach. The concurrence lends itself to commentary on Hada's digestive track. Some suggest purgatives, others a visit to an on-shift medic. Others sympathize with the frog. With the frog spawning in his guts, Hada partakes in his own social demise.

That same night he vomits the eggs and takes it upon himself to send them in a test tube to his wife in the mail. His wife's hands become viscous as soon as she opens the test tube. Because of this affliction, which turns out to be chronic, she can no longer touch anyone. In the ectographs belonging to the Solpe collection her hands can be seen covered in tadpoles glowing between 3 and 4 watts.

### **Minute Chicken Palace Buenos Aires 1955**

A cuckoo clock featuring a little bird presides the main hall in the Minute Chicken Palace, on Corrientes Street. The night of September 16 the bird becomes stuck in its track, rendering its spinning mechanism useless. A spoon starts to float above an omelette. Señora Celia Daumes, occasional client, calls the restaurant owner and points with her finger at the magic occurring before her. The owner attempts to yank down the spoon, but it remains elevated in the air. Simultaneously, Celia Daumes feels that something is gripping her head by her eye. She says it is a force of such magnitude that she could be balanced in the air, hanging from all the weight of her body. The owner attempts to move her head, but it is also fixed in place.

conseguir un ectografista, el omelette comienza a pudrirse y deja al descubierto el pico cartilaginoso de un pollo neonato.

Martín Rubens se encarga de obtener las imágenes. Muestran el ojo de Celia Daumes envuelto por el ectoplasma calcáreo de un huevo, y en su interior el espectro de un pollo en gestación. Rubens teme que al nacer destruya el ojo y asome por la cuenca. “Y cante la hora”, bromean los mozos del Palacio.

El ectoplasma que rodea la cuchara es más sutil. Rubens lo describe como un “Girón informe de vapor etérico”. (Julio Heiss deploró esta metáfora en la Sociedad Ectográfica Argentina. La primera edición del Nomenclador fue aprobada pocos meses después).

Dando el ojo por perdido, Rubens propone esperar los veinte días que corresponden al tiempo de incubación del huevo y documentar la ruptura del cascarón. En giroscopio se ve al pollo etérico naciendo del ojo de Celia Daumes, y la cuchara que cae.

## **Viñedo**

### **General Alvear, Mendoza, 1947**

El ectografista Martín Rubens recorre un viñedo de noche, sin linterna; sabe que los lugares abiertos suelen ser ricos en espectros animales. Un perro etérico, pequeño, asoma a sus pies. Rubens casi tropieza con él; trata de no pisarlo, pero no es posible porque el perro literalmente le brota de la pierna.

Sentir algo ajeno en su cuerpo produce en Rubens la necesidad de huir. La obedece. De todos modos realiza más de cien tomas en automático a lo largo del recorrido. En giroscopio se obtienen cinco segundos en los que el perro dirige la huida de ambos como siempre el miedo le fuera propio y siempre hubiera sido un pie.

The dinner is interrupted in this last position. In the time that securing an ectographist demands, the omelette begins to rot and leave behind the cartilaginous beak of a newborn chick.

Martin Reubens works to obtain the images. They show Celia Daumes' eye enveloped in the calcareous ectoplasm of an egg, and inside the spectrum of a chick in its gestation stage. Rubens is afraid that when the chick is born, it will destroy the eye and poke out of the socket. “And sing the time,” the Palace waiters joke.

The ectoplasm surrounding the spoon is more subtle. Rubens describes it as an “uneven fabric of etheric vapor”. (Julio Heiss deplored this metaphor at the Argentine Ectographic Society. The first edition of the Nomenclator was approved months later).

Assuming the eye lost, Rubens proposes that everyone wait the twenty days that correspond to the egg's incubation time and document the breaking of the shell. The gyroscope shows the etheric chick being born out of Celia Daumes' eye and, and the fall of the spoon.

## **Vineyard**

### **General Alvear, Mendoza, 1947**

The ectographist Martín Rubens walks through a vineyard at night, without a flashlight; he knows that open spaces tend to be rich in animal spectrums. A small, etheric dog gets near his feet. Rubens almost trips over it; he tries not to step on it, but it is impossible as the dog literally sprouts from Rubens' foot.

The feeling of something foreign in his body produces in Rubens the need to escape. He obliges it. Regardless he manages to get more than a hundred automatic takes during his trek. The gyroscope obtains five seconds in which the dog leads both their escapes, as if the fear were its own, as if it had always been a foot.

**Jean Jacques-Bouchard *The Holy Week in Naples***

ALESSANDRO GIARDINO  
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Born in Paris in 1606, Jean-Jacques Bouchard is rarely mentioned by scholars due to the scarcity of his literary output and the philological nature of most of his works. With the exception of classicist renditions of Greek and Latin texts, Bouchard's *Oeuvre* can be subsumed to his volume *Confessions* and a few travel journals. *Confessions* was reprinted a number of times under different titles, since it was considered a seminal work on European libertinism. Bouchard's journals, instead, were published only once in the 1970s by G. Giappichelli Editore – a specialized academic press –, but they were never translated or made available to the general public. The translated excerpt that follows is drawn from Bouchard's *Voyage to Naples*, as this is his most voluminous work, but also a veritable *unicum* for the sociological and cultural understanding of everyday life in seventeenth-century Naples. In the writings of *Voyage to Naples*, in fact, Bouchard identified a number of urban itineraries consisting of must-see venues, but also of alternative sites discovered through city-strolling. By depicting a fresco of Neapolitan ceremonies, trends, and ways of living that went well beyond the impressionist reports of his predecessors, Bouchard acted less like a philologist and more like a travel writer.

Details on Bouchard's life have been recorded by the many detractors, and notably by René Pintard. Expelled from the family because of a scandalous relationship with a servant (in fact, this episode represents the central theme in *Confessions*), Bouchard joined the prestigious Academy of the Dupuy brothers, quickly gaining entrance into Parisian cultural circles. In February 1631, however, Bouchard decided to set off for Rome by taking a long detour in Southern France where he met the famous savant and antiquary Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc. Bouchard's decision to arrive in Rome with Peiresc's support was based on the assumption that a clean slate, recommendation letters, and the possible acquisition of an ecclesiastic title could grant him full freedom of movement as a libertine. Besides, the Vatican constituted the best employer for linguists and philologists and, as evident in his studies, Bouchard's curiosity extended well beyond the sphere of sexuality. Emanuel Kanceff, for instance, has poignantly highlighted how Bouchard can be considered both an example and a protagonist of that shift from erudition *per se* to proto-journalism which occurred in the early Modern age.

At the time of his departure for Italy, Bouchard had planned to spend one year in Rome and then travel to Constantinople with Parisian libertines Gassendi and Lullier. However, when the trip to Constantinople fell apart, Bouchard decided to leave for Naples instead. Bouchard remained in the city between March and November of 1632, journaling his presence in town and the many events he witnessed. The excerpt below is a perfect example of his ideas on Neapolitan religious practices as at once gory, performative, and baroque. Upon his return to Rome, Bouchard was offered the position of Secretary for the Latin letters by Cardinal Francesco Barberini. Barberini was the nephew of Pope Urbano VIII. From that moment on, he was offered a series of commissions that made him various enemies in Vatican circles. He died an early death because of an ambush planned by his professional contenders.

Bouchard's testamentary provisions portrayed him as a perfectly religious man, though a slightly narcissistic one. Indeed, he financed one hundred masses for the day of his death and a perpetual mass on the day of his death. Bouchard also opted for an Italian burial at the Chiesa di Santa Maria degli Angeli and bequeathed all his journals and more personal writings to the

Roman erudite Cassiano del Pozzo. Yet, while Del Pozzo did attempt to censor his friend's most scandalous passages, Bouchard's writings soon became the object of rumors and speculations. For instance, shortly after his death, Christophe Dupuy wished "that everything went burnt", (Pintard 238) and characterized Bouchard's youth journal as shameful (later published as *Confessions*). In reality, Dupuy was not only dismayed by Bouchard's sexual experiments with the housemaid, but he also feared *Confessions*' numerous references to Bouchard's homosexual encounters during his college years; in fact, many college friends of Bouchard had turned out to be key figures of the French political establishment.

Rather fortuitously, following Del Pozzo's death, the section of his library containing Bouchard's travel journals was dispersed and, most likely, versed in the Albani library. It then resurfaced on the antiquary market as two separate volumes in the 1850s, that is around the time of the library's dismemberment. The first volume – that is the one that immediately garnered the interest of critics – was the one containing *Les Confessions* and *Du Voyage de Paris à Rome*. This volume was brought to the attention of Paulin Paris in 1840 upon request of a Parisian bookseller and attributed to Bouchard by the former (Talleyrand des Réaux 161). After that, the manuscript fell in the hands of Isidore Liseux, who would donate it to the National Library, after publishing its first commercial edition as *Les Confessions de Jean Jacques Bouchard, Parisien, suivies de son Voyage de Paris à Rome en 1630, publiées pour la première fois sur le manuscrit de l'auteur*. This edition, however, appeared in a limited edition and ran out of print. A second edition was then published by Gallimard in 1930 as *Confessions*, and the next-to-last edition, before the Skira edition of 2003, came out in 1960 with the Cercle du Livre Précieux, under the controversial title of *Les confessions d'un perversi*. In these late editions, however, the travel sections had been left out. On the other hand, Del Pozzo's second volume – the one titled *Voyage dans le royaume de Naples*, from which the translated excerpt is drawn – was bought by the Marquis de Chennevières; it was then bequeathed to the Library of the École des Beaux-Arts and only published in 1897 by Lucien Marcheix for the Éditions Léroux as a single, considerably abridged, and soon forgotten book titled *Un parisien à Rome et à Naples en 1632, d'après un manuscrit inédit de J.H. Bouchard*, Paris.

Today, the erudition and potential contribution of Bouchard's work to the studies are hardly acknowledged. Mauriès, as one of his early biographers, depicted him as a dandy ante-litteram, by also claiming he consciously made his life as art (Bouchard, *Confessions* III-XIX). Unsurprisingly, in fact, it was among the homosexual circles of the European intelligentsia that the name of Bouchard kept some of his original resonance. For instance, there is an unforeseen reference to Bouchard and his *Voyage to Naples* in Roger Peyrefitte's biographical novel on Jacques d'Adelswärd-Fersen, published as *L'Exilé De Capri*. This is certainly because Bouchard wrote the first modern journal on Capri and his inhabitants, all the while hinting to their sexual practices and "perversions". One can therefore assume that Adelswärd-Fersen and Peyrefitte were among the very few readers of Lucien Marcheix's abridged version titled *Un parisien à Rome et à Naples en 1632*. Indeed, it seems unlikely, though not impossible, they read the original handwritten manuscript at the Library of the École des Beaux-Arts. While the *Confessions* was certainly the work that brought Bouchard back from oblivion and gave him some infamous notoriety in the first half of the twentieth century, it is my opinion that his travel journals represent his most significant legacy for scholars and readers alike. Most importantly, for having been dismembered, lost, and displaced, Bouchard's *Voyages to Naples* deserve the attention it never received.

The following excerpt from *Voyage to Naples* focuses on the Holy week that Bouchard spent in Naples during April 1632. In the left column, readers will find the French text, transcribed in its original spelling and accentuation. In the right column, they will find my annotated translation into English. In this respect, a number of observations might be in order.

First, it is important to state that the translation from early modern French to contemporary English, and most importantly the translational shift towards a different epistemic context could only be achieved here through an imperfect compromise. Indeed, on the one hand, there was an attempt to remain as close as possible to the source text by creating a calque of Bouchard's seventeenth-century idiolect (that is, the cursive language of a French scholar with a penchant for old languages and seventeenth-century Italian dialects); on the other hand, it seemed crucial not to sacrifice the intelligibility of the text and the pleasure of reading. Secondly, should one situate this translation on the scale evoked by Hervey and Higging in *Thinking French Translation* (i.e. literal, faithful, balanced, idiomizing, free), one could opt for "balanced", but it would also be possible to recognize a sense of "faithful" for what relates to lexicon, and a rather idiomizing approach in regard to syntax and matrix. Furthermore, in spite of my quest for historical exotism, annotations were used any time a pedantic translation might have marred the reader's experience. Overall, one can claim the translation was written for the contemporary reader, but it was a translation that tried to conjure up the same curiosity and sporadic estrangement a seventeenth-century reader would have felt when learning about the vice-kingdom of Naples. In other words, the translation incorporated the principle by which "the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as the one which existed between the original receptors and the message" (Nida 159). What is more, in selecting such an approach, a new sensibility towards translation – that is the one that had emerged in Bouchard's century – was involuntarily captured and echoed. And as Munday reiterated after Flora Ross Amos, this approach did not aim to emulate; rather, this was the method that permitted the 'spirit' of the ST to be best reproduced. Finally, my hope is that the wealth of ethnographic, historical and cultural details unlocked by this exceptional text will stir a novel scholarly interest towards Bouchard, inasmuch as he was a very unique protagonist in seventeenth-century culture.

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*Semaine Sainte à Naples*  
Jean-Jacques Bouchard

*The Holy Week in Naples*  
Jean-Jacques Bouchard

Translated by Alessandro Giardino

Le mercredi saint septième Avril.

Holy Wednesday, April 7h.

Le plus belle musique que l'on fasse est au vieux palais, à la chapelle du viceroi, mais pour ce que la vicereine voulut ce jour là assister aus tenebres, les dames y entrerent seulement, et n'ouvrit on à aucun home. Le soir, à une heure de nuit, se dirent tenebres à l'oratoire de St Jan des Florentins, où la plus part des musiciens du palais se treuverent. La musique fut assez bone, mais courte, car ils ne chanterent que les respons et antienes et une seule leçon.

The most beautiful music which is out there is performed in the old palace, in the chapel of the viceroy, but since on this day the vicereine wished to attend *le tenebre*, only the ladies had access, and no man was let in. At one o'clock at night, there was a celebration of the *tenebre* in the oratory of St. John of the Florentines,<sup>1</sup> and the great majority of palace musicians attended. The music was quite good, but short, because they sang only responsories, antiphons, and a single lesson.

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Le jeudi l'on dit qu'il se fait une grande solennité à l'archevesché, et l'on feste ce jour là, toutes les boutiques estans serrées, qui ne s'ouvrent que le vendredi matin et samedi ; *Orestes* fut au palais où, la messe dite, toute la famille du viceroie communia, puis le viceroi et sa femme furent en procession derriere le St. Sacrement, lequel estant posé dans une cassette faite en forme de sepulcre, le prestre ferma la cassette à clef et pendit cette clef au col du viceroi avec un ruban de soye blanche ; lequel en doit respondre et la remettre ès main du prestre le lendemain à la messe, lors que l'on va tirer Iesus Crist du sepulcre. Et pendant tout ce temps là, du midi du jeudi jusques au midi

On Thursday, it is said that a solemn ceremony takes place at the archbishopric, so there are celebrations on this day, with all stores being closed, and only reopening on Friday morning and Saturday. *Orestes*<sup>2</sup> was in the palace where, once the mass said, all the family members of the viceroy took communion. Then the viceroy and his wife followed the procession, standing behind the Holy Sacrament, which was put in a box shaped as a sepulcher, locked by the priest with a key that he then attached to the neck of the viceroy with a ribbon of white silk. The viceroy, in fact, must answer for it and hand it back to the priest the following day during the mass, that is when one is going

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<sup>1</sup> The Church of St. John of Florentines was originally located on the Via Toledo, as the regional church of the many Florentine merchants and bankers who had started to flow into the city under the reign of Frederick II. Having been established by Viceroy Pedro di Toledo in the sixteenth century (Vice-Kingdom: 1532-52) in order to replace a smaller church founded by Isabella Chiaromonte, wife of Ferdinand I of Aragon, King of Naples (Kingdom: 1458-1494), the church hosted the works of the best Naples-based Tuscan artists, such as Balducci and Naccherino, as well as the tombs of Artemisia Gentileschi and Bernardo Tannucci, tombs irremediably lost after the demolition of the church in the 1950s. For a complete study of the church, see: Francesco Strazzullo, *La chiesa di San Giovanni dei Fiorentini a Napoli*, Arte tipografica, Napoli, 1984. For the original sixteenth-century artistic program by Giovan Battista Dosio, see P. Leone Castris, *Dosio e la chiesa di San Giovanni dei Fiorentini a Napoli*, in "Napoli Nobilissima", serie 6, III (2012), 5/6 pp. 225-236.

<sup>2</sup> Bouchard alternates between Greek and Latin letters for the handwritten rendition of his pseudonym *Orestes*. There is no apparent logic in the choice of one or the other.

du vendredi, il est deffendu à toute sorte de personnes, de quelque qualité qu'ils puissent estre, horsmis les soldats, de porter espée, sur peine de prison, perte de l'espée, et 2 écus d'amende ; comme aussi d'aler en carosse : et en tout ce temps là *Orestes* ne rencontra par Naples que le seul carosse de la Princesse de Stiliano, tout le reste de la noblesse allant ou à pied ou dans une chaise.

“to draw Jesus Christ out of the sepulcher”. And throughout this time, that is from noon on Thursday till noon on Friday, it is forbidden for everyone except soldiers, and regardless of their status, to carry sword, on penalty of prison, loss of the sword and two *scudi* of fine; similarly it is forbidden to ride in a carriage and, in fact, in those days Oreste did not encounter any carriage, with the exception of the Princess of Stigliano's coach,<sup>3</sup> the whole nobility going either on foot or by sedan chair.

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Le Viceroi estant descendu du sepulcre, qui estoit come un dome assez eminent derriere le grand autel, et tout revestu par le dehors de luminaires, lava les pieds à douze pauvres dans la salle qui tient à la chapelle, et leur dona à manger ; puis leur fit distribuer à chascun six escus, outre l'habit. À la sortie du palais, *Orestes* rencontra quantité de gens qui aloint nuds en chemise et deschaus, se fouetans jusques à grande effusion de sang, aus sepulcres et par les rues, et d'autres portans de grandes et lourdes croix de bois sur l'espaule, et ne vit on autre chose par les eglises et les rues de Naples tout ce jour là, et le vendredi suivant. L'après disnée il fut ouir tenebres à la congregation que les cavaliers napolitains font *al Gesù nuovo* dans une salle particulière, où les Jesuites ont attiré tant de noblesse que les six dernieres leçons furent

[Later on] after having descended from the “sepulcher,” which had the appearance of a rather impressive dome behind the great altar and which was covered in lights, the viceroy washed the feet of twelve poor men who gathered in the room outside the chapel and he then served them food. He then demanded six scudi and some clothes be distributed to each one of them. Outside the palace, Orestes met a large quantity of people who went around shirtless and barefoot, flogging themselves with great effusion of blood in front of the sepulchers<sup>4</sup> in the streets, while others were carrying big and heavy crosses of wood on their shoulders. Indeed, on that day and throughout Friday, it was the only spectacle one could see, not only in the proximity of churches but pretty much on every street of Naples. In the afternoon, he attended the

<sup>3</sup> Anna Carafa della Stadera, Princess of Stigliano, was one of the richest women of early seventeenth-century Naples, and the first vicereine actually born in Naples. As the only surviving daughter to Antonio Carafa della Stadera and Elena Aldobrandini, she became the only heir of a large estate and an immense fortune. She would be remembered for the entitlement, capriciousness, and privilege her position allowed. For instance, as recounted by Onofrio Melvetti, in the year 1632, at the time of Bouchard's presence in Naples, she ordered the execution of several Spanish soldiers, due to the annoyance and fear generated by some shots accidentally fired at the windows of the Palazzo Cellamare at Chiaia, where she was currently residing. Similarly, in 1639, in spite of the extreme poverty experienced by the Kingdom of Naples she threw lavish parties, and in particular a masquerade ball in which she decided to dress as an Amazon, together with twenty-four ladies at her court, thus defying the current standard of female modesty (14). See Onorio Melvetti, Anna Carafa. *Una viceregina napoletana*. Torre del Greco, 2018. Her presence remains visible in Naples through the Palazzo Donn'Anna she had built during her regency as vicereine.

<sup>4</sup> It was common to call the altars of repositories for the ciborium as “sepulchers”. Therefore, the processions were often planned by using the altars of churches as stations. From Thursday to Easter, in fact, those altars would be decorated as sepulchers and no holy wafer would be dispensed. The tradition as well as the denomination of “sepulchers” is still used in several areas of the Christian world.

chantées par six princes. La musique fut fort bone. Les tenebres finies, l'on apporta sur l'autel quelque deus ou trois cents disciplines, et lors les confreres, qui sont tous cavaliers *di seggio*, s'enfermerent.

*tenebre* at the congregation that the Neapolitan chevaliers formed at the *Gesù Nuovo* in a special room, wherein the Jesuits attracted so much nobility that the last six lessons were sung by six princes.<sup>5</sup> The music was really good and when the *tenebre* were over, two or three hundred disciplines<sup>6</sup> were brought to the altar; at that point, then, the confreres, who are all chevaliers of *Seggio*, locked themselves in.

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Le vendredi neufviesme, il fut visiter les sepulcres, dont il avoit ouï faire tant de cas autrefois, qu'il treuva neantmoins assez simples et ordinaires, n'estant composez que d'une façade de portiques et colonnes peintes en prospective sur la toile, sans aucune statue ni autres representations, fors que quelque deus ou trois petites poupées d'enfans. Ce qui estoit de plus beau estoit la quantité et bel arrangement des lampes et cierges qui estoient allumées par dedans, autour du St. Sacrement, qui presque partout estoit enfermé dans des vases faits en forme de sepulcre, sans qu'on le peust voir ; come aussi le grand nombre d'agenterie, entre autres à St. Claire, il Gesù Nuovo, San Paulo, Monte Oliveto, etc., mais par sus tous *alla Concettione d'i Spagnoli a strada Toledo*, où il y avait une quantité inestimable de pierreries, entr'autres un ange qui tenoit un dragon enchainé, aussi hault presque que le naturel, tout de diamants et de perles ; l'on dit aussi que les dames de la Trinité *delle Monacelle* en avoient fait un fort riche, mais *Orestes* ne le put voir pource qu'à Naples l'on deffait les sepulcres à l'heure mesme que l'on en a auté le St. Sacrement, le vendredi à la Messe.

On Friday the 9<sup>th</sup>, he visited the sepulchers, which he had heard so much about in the past, but which he found to be quite simple and ordinary, consisting of nothing else but a facade of porticos and columns painted in perspective on a canvas, without any statue or other representation, except for two or three small dolls. Instead, what was the most beautiful thing about them was the quantity of lamps and candles lit inside them, as well as their nice arrangements around the Sacred Host, which almost everywhere was enclosed in vases in the shape of sepulchers, so that it was not possible to see inside them. What was also worthy of attention was the great quantity of paraphernalia in silver one could see in churches such as Santa Chiara, the Gesù Nuovo, San Paulo, Monte Oliveto, but above all in the *Concezione dei Spagnoli* in Toledo, where it was accompanied by an inestimable quantity of gems and, among other things, the statue of an angel holding a chained dragon, almost as tall as the original one and entirely made of diamonds and pearls. He also heard that the ladies of the Trinity of the *Monacelle* had built a very rich sepulcher, but *Orestes* could not see it because in Naples the sepulchers are undone at the same

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<sup>5</sup> It was only in the early 1620s, a decade before Bouchard's trip, that the church had become the meeting site of a number of congregations. Moreover, at the time of Bouchard's visit the church was probably under partial renovation due the earthquake of 1631 that had damaged a section of the dome. See Luigi Catalani, *Le chiese di Napoli*, Naples : Tipografia fu Migliaccio, 1845: p. 71; and p. 81.

<sup>6</sup> In absence of context, it is not possible to determine whether Bouchard wished to refer to volumes of study or to instruments for flagellation, instead. The term discipline had a plurality of meanings by the time it was used by the author.

hour that the Blessed Sacrament is placed away, that is on Friday during the mass.

*End of Page 15.*

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L'après disnée, il fut ouïr les tenebres du viceroi; la musique fut assez mediocre, horsmis à la fin, qu'il y eut un echo repetant trois et quatre fois, qui fut excellent. La chapelle où le viceroi estoit, et où il vient toutes les fois qu'il oit la Messe en public, est dans les vieus chasteau, au bout de la salle; cette chapelle est mediocrement grande, toute incrustée de marbre blanc, avec sept ou huit grandes statues de mesme fort bien faites. Elle estoit tendue de damas incarnat à franges d'or. Aus deus costez il y a come deus chapelles vis à vis l'une de l'autre: dans celle de main gauche est l'orgue et le lieu des musiciens; elle estoit ce jour là toute pleine de cavaliers; dans l'autre est le lieu du viceroi, divisé en deus estages; celui d'en hault est tout bouché de treillis de bois, et d'ordinaire la vicereine s'y met avec ses femmes pour n'estre pas vue, et celui d'en bas a deus grandes fenestres qui regardent sur l'autel. Ce soir le viceroi, sa femme et une siene cousine estoient en celui d'en bas, et tout le reste de la chapelle estoit pleine de dames napolitaines; pour ce à la porte de la chapelle l'on avoit fait un retranchement avec des bancs au milieu du passage, et y avoit des *portieri* de son Excellence qui faisoient passer les femmes d'un costé et les homes de l'autre, lesquels se devoient tous tenir sous le portail, n'estant par permis de passer jusques au large de la chapelle sinon aus moines, pour lesquels l'on avoit fait un petit parquet de bancs. La vicereine se fit aporter une ou deus fois à boire, come aussi la plus part des dames, ausquelles l'un des portiers portoit simplement un grand verre d'eau sous le manteau. L'office fini, environ les deus heures de nuit, se comença la procession; ce sont les Espagnols de la confrairie de la Solitaire qui la font faire, où ils font porter *li*

In the afternoon, he attended the *tenebre* performed for the viceroy; the music was rather mediocre, except at the end, when there was a refrain which was repeated three or four times and which was excellent. The chapel where the viceroy was and where he comes every time he listens to the mass in public is located at the end of the hall of the old castle; this chapel is relatively large, all inlaid with white marble, and with seven or eight large and very well-made statues. For the rest, the chapel is covered by crimson damask curtains with golden tassels, and is flanked by two smaller chapels facing each other: in the chapel of the left hand, there is the organ and the area for the musicians; on that day, however, it was full of knights. The other chapel, instead, is destined for the viceroy and it appears divided in two floors; the top floor is covered by a trellis of wood, and it normally hosts the vicereine and her ladies, as it allows them not be seen; the lower floor has two large and open windows which look onto the altar. That evening the viceroy, his wife and a cousin of hers were all in the lower level, while the rest of that side chapel was occupied by Neapolitan ladies. For this, at the door of the main chapel, benches had been added as an entrenchment in the middle of the passageway to the main chapel's portal, and there were doorkeepers of his Excellency who let the women pass on one side and the men on the other side. All of them, however, had to stand under the portal and nobody was allowed to get to the central chapel with the exception of the monks, for whom benches had been set close together. The vicereine had a drink brought to her once or twice, as so did most of the ladies, to whom one of the porters simply carried a large glass of water under his coat. The office finished around

*Misterij della Passione* qu'ils appellent : ce sont des representations des principales actions de la Passion, faites de statues à hauteur du naturel, de bois, peintes et vestues d'habits, qui sont posées sur des grands eschaffauts quarrez portez sur le col de sept ou huit homes. Or, à chasquun de ces Mystères les Espagnols invitent quelque persone eminente et chef de quelque principale famille à Naples, à ce qu'il aie à le vouloir accompagner à la procession et à ceste heure ceus qui sont invitez invitent tous de leur famille, clients, dependents, etc. , et font à l'envi à qui amenera plus des personnes : lesquelles aportent toutes un grand cierge de cire blanche, et accompagnent le chef qui les a invitez, lequel va immediatement après le mystere auquel il a esté invité, de sorte que par ce moyen la plus grand part de la noblesse et de tous les corps des arts se treuvent à cette procession. De plus les Espagnols louent quantité de gents à deus *tari'* ou trois carlin par teste, qui doivent se foueter jusques au sang. La procession part de la Solitaria, chappelle sise au dela de Santa Croce in Palazzo, descent par l'escalier de Santa Croce, passe par devant le palais au milieu de deus barrieres que le viceroi fait faire en cet endroit avec des hauts pieus sur lesquels sont alumez de grandes lampes ; puis entrant *nella Strada di Toledo*, tourne vers *il Lago del Castello*. L'ordre qu'elle tient en marchant est tel : premierement vien un vestu en perlerin, la face couverte, qui sont une trompette fort

two o' clock at night when the procession began. It was the Spaniards of the Brotherhood of Solitaire who had the task of organizing it and who carried *Li Misteri della Passione* as they call them; these mysteries are reenactments of the principal scenes of the Passion with life-sized statues in wood,<sup>7</sup> which are painted and clothed, and then placed on big square scaffolds and so carried on shoulders by seven or eight men. Now, for each one of these Mysteries, the Spaniards invite one eminent figure who is at the head of one of Naples' most prominent families, so that he can accompany the mystery throughout the procession. And at this time those who are invited can in turn invite their family, customers, dependents, and therefore compete as to who will bring more people. All guests, in exchange, bring a large white wax candle and accompany the head of the family who has invited them, while he stands immediately below the mystery to which he had been invited. As a result, the majority of people hailing from the nobility or the liberal arts participate in this procession. In addition, the Spaniards hire a lot of people at two or three *carlini* per head, who must whip themselves to the point of drawing blood. The procession leaves from the Chapel of Solitaire (that is situated beyond Santa Croce in the Palazzo), walks down the staircase of Santa Croce,<sup>8</sup> then in front of the palace, between two fences got made out of tall poles on which big lamps are lit; then, having exited into the Strada Toledo, it veers towards il Largo di Castello.

<sup>7</sup> The chapel, then Church of Santa Maria della Solitaria, was situated on the east side of Via Solitaria. It must have given the name to the Via (of Vicolo) perpendicular to what just below is the current Via Santa Lucia, previously called Via Guzman and built between 1599-1620, that is during the last years of Enrique de Guzman, Count of Olivares's vice-kingdom. For information about the Cappella, also mentioned in Celano, see: [www.lascuolaadottaunmonumento.it](http://www.lascuolaadottaunmonumento.it).

<sup>8</sup> The Church of Santa Croce in Palazzo was one of the many ancient churches located in the area surrounding the current Piazza del Plebiscito. Like many others, it would disappear after having been encapsulated in other buildings and progressively dismantled, to then be replaced by the current Church of San Francesco di Paola during the restoration of the Bourbon family. In its heyday, Santa Croce in Palazzo was part of a larger complex made up of church and monastery, and located in the corner of the square now leading to Via Cesario Console. The complex had been built over the nucleus of an ancient church under the auspices of Sancia of Majorca, wife of Robert I of Anjou, as a space for the Clarisse nuns who would be relocated to Santa Chiara shortly after. For a detailed history of the religious institutions on site and the construction of the Church of San Francesco di Paola, see Fernanda Capopianco and Katia Fiorentino. *Il tempio dei Borbone. La Chiesa di San Francesco di Paola in Piazza Plebiscito*. Napoli: Altrastampa: 1999.

lugubrement sur le mesme ton qu'ils sonent  
lors qu'ils menent pendre quelqu'un ;

The order of the procession is the following:  
first comes a man dressed as a pilgrim, with  
his face covered; he plays the trumpet very  
mournfully and in the same tone they play  
when they hang someone. \*\*\*\*

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Puis suivent *li battenti*, qui vont vestus  
d'une longue aulbe de toile, avec un certain  
accoustrement de teste haut de deus pieds,  
tout rond, et qui va tousjours en apointissant  
vers la pointe come une mitre à la persiene;  
cela est couvert d'un long capuchon de toile  
blanche, qui leur couvrant toute la face,  
hormis qu'à l'endroit des yeus il a deus petits  
trous, leur descend jusques sur l'estomach,  
de sorte qu'ils en tiennent le bout de la main  
gauche et avec la droite se fouettent vers le  
milieu du dos, où leur aube est trouée tout  
exprez, sur la chair nue, avec des grosses  
poignées de petites cordelettes qui ont au  
bout certaines petites pointes de fer qui  
entrent dans la chair, et en font couler le  
sang, de sorte que tous leurs habits en estoient  
couverts, jusques mêmes au pavé. Ils font à  
l'envi à qui se fouettra plus fort et de  
meilleure grâce, y aiant un certain art  
particulier pour le pouvoir bien faire, et  
passants devant quelque dame favorite, ou  
quelque ami, ausquels ils ont doné certaines  
marques pour estre recognus, ils redoublent  
les coups; chose estrange que pour l'interest  
de 20 ou 15 sols, ou par simple vanité, ils  
puissent exercer sur eus une telle cruauté  
qu'elle fait horreur aus regardants, et qui ne  
cede en rien à celles que nous detestons si  
fort dans les religions ancienes du  
paganisme. Il y en avoit mesme à cette  
procession qui avec certains moreceaus de  
liege pleins de piquants se battoient les  
mamelles jusqu'à en faire pisser le sang. Ce  
n'est pas qu'il y en aie quelques uns parmi  
cette troupe qui se fouettent par simple  
devotion, et y voyoit on mesme quelques  
femmes. D'autre portoint de grosses croix de  
bois sur le dos, mais ceux ci n'avoient de paye  
qu'un *tari*

The *battenti* follow; they go dressed in a  
long cloth alb and have a hairdo which is two  
feet high, goes around the head and is  
pointed towards the top like a Persian miter.  
This hairdo is then concealed by a long hood  
of white cloth which covers the whole face  
(except for two small holes at eye-level) and  
reaches the belly, so that they hold one end  
of it with the left hand, and use the other  
hand to whip the middle of their backs,  
where their alb has an opening for that  
purpose and they can whip the naked back  
with a bunch of small strings with pointed  
ends in iron which penetrate the flesh and  
make the blood flow; indeed their clothes are  
drenched in blood down to the ground. In  
doing so, the *battenti* compete to see who can  
whip himself the hardest and with the most  
grace, having a certain technique to do it  
well; also, when passing in front of a favorite  
lady of theirs or some friend who will  
recognize them by some special signs they  
intensify the whipping. It is strange that for  
the price of 20 or 15 coins or out of mere  
vanity, someone can exercise on himself a  
cruelty such as to make the onlookers  
horrified; that is a cruelty that is no way  
inferior to the one we hate so much in the  
ancient religions of Paganism. Indeed, at this  
procession, there are some who go as far as  
beating their breasts with pieces of cork full  
of thorns until they piss blood. Of course,  
there are also those who whip themselves out  
of simple devotion, and among them even a  
few women. Some others wear large wooden  
crosses on their backs, but these latter only  
had one *tari* as payment. \*\*\*\*

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Après ces battans, suivent quantité de faquins tous vestus de longues aulbes de toile et la face couverte, qui portent les uns au bout de longues perches de grans chaudrons pleins de poix, graisse et huile alumez, les autres des cierges de cire blanches au bout de certains cannes fendus en quatre, en entourant tout le mystère, au devant duquel marche un chœur de musique, et au derrière le cavalier *il quale conduce il misterio*, avec tous ceus qu'il a invitez, ayant tous un cierge allumé en main. En ce mesme ordre suivent tous les autres mysteres, qui ont aussi chasqu'un leur troupe de *battenti* marchant au devant d'eus, dont il y eut sept ou huit : le premier fut Jesus Crist priant au Jardin des Oliviers, et le dernier, estant dans le tombeau.

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Le samedi matin, la Messe, outre le gros cierge paschal, ils en alument un autre petit, qui est divisé en trois branches en l'honneur de la Trinité, et le mettent au haut d'un chandelier de bois fait en pyramide, assez eslevé et tout couvert de feuillages et verdure ; et conservent dans une lampe le nouveau feu qu'ils ont alumé avec le fusil pour le cierge paschal, et à cette lampe le peuple vient alumer la siene, portants au logis ce feu saint d'une main, et l'eau beniste de l'autre. Alors, s'ouvrent les boucheries, où l'on voit une quantité incroyable d'agneaus, chevreaus, *vitelle aniccie* qu'ils appellent, c'est à dire d'un an, et de vaccina, le mouton et le vrai veau, qu'ils appellent *vitella di Sorrento*, laquelle ne cede rien en delicatessen à la *vitella mongana* de Rome, estant assez rares en cette saison. Ils prenent plaisir à orner la viande de quantité de

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Follow many *faquins* dressed in long albs and with their face covered, who carry either long poles holding cauldrons full of pitch, grease, and lighted oil or white wax candles at the top of canes split in four. These *faquins* surround the whole mystery, whereas at the front of the mystery march the chorus and at the back the chevalier – *il quale conduce il misterio* – together with all the people he has invited holding a lighted candle. And this was the order for the following mysteries – as they were seven or eight of them – each of them having their own troop of *battenti* at the front, the first one representing Jesus Christ praying in the garden of Gethsemane, the last one his entombment.

*End of page 16*

*Note: The passage between \*\*\*\* is at page 17. The compiler notes it has to be inserted in the middle of the text, as I did.*

On Saturday morning, at Mass, in addition to a larger Easter candle, they light another small candle which was divided into three branches in honor of the Trinity; they then put this latter candle on the top of a wooden candlestick that had the shape of a pyramid and was placed quite high and covered with foliage and greenery. They also kept rekindling the fire of another lamp; in fact, they had lit this lamp with the same starter used for the Passover candle,<sup>9</sup> and people came to this lamp to light their candles, thus bringing home the holy fire on one hand, and the holy water on the other. It was around this time that butcher shops open, putting out an incredible quantity of lambs, lambkins, *vitelle anniccie* – they are so named to highlight the fact they are one year old calves – *vaccina*, sheep and the true calf, which they call *vitella di Sorrento* and

<sup>9</sup> The word used by Bouchard is the Italian “fucile”, whose currently meaning is rifle but which was anciently used to refer to any steel instrument used to light a fire, often through striking against a flintstone ( See *Grande Dizionario*).



bouquets de fleurs, et la dorent mesme, entre autres les agneaus et chevreaus, comme aussi les vendeurs de salures dorent leurs jambons, saucisses, lard etc ; dont il y a de fort belles boutiques, come aussi de fromages, provatures, etc. Il faut acheter tout ce dont l'on a besoing ce jour là, car le lendemain, quand ce seroit pour mourir, l'on ne treuveroit ni pain ni vin ni la moindre chose à vendre.

is no way inferior for tenderness to its Roman counterpart, that is *vitella mongana*,<sup>10</sup> and just as rare during this season. They also take pleasure in decorating the meat with a lot of flowers, and they even gilded it (for instance, they often gild lambs and goats among others). Similarly, the sellers of salted meats gild their hams, sausages, bacon etc. and there are very beautiful stores selling those products, as well as cheeses, *provatura*, etc.<sup>11</sup> And yet, it is necessary to buy all one needs on that day, because on the following day, one would not even find bread, wine or the last thing on sale, were one even on the verge of dying.

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Le soir se fait *la processione della Resurrezione*, qui est beaucoup plus belle que celle du vendredi ; car premierement elle fait beaucoup plus de chemin, car se partant de Monte Calvario et traversant quasi toute la longueur de la Strada Toledo vient tourner tout autour de cette grande place qui est au devant du palais. Cette grande longueur de chemin par où elle passe, qui dure plus d'un grand mille.

The *processione della Resurrezione* takes place on that evening, and it is much more beautiful than the one on Friday, first, because it takes a longer tour – since it starts from Monte Calvario –, crosses almost the whole length of the Strada Toledo and turns all around the large square which is in front of the royal palace. This great length of road through which it passes is longer than a mile.

*End of Page 17*

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[Cette grande longueur de chemin est] bordée des deux costez de deux ou trois rancs de carrosses où sont les dames, qui, pour mieux voir et estre mieus vues, font tenir aus pages cinq ou six grans flambeaus de cire blanche allumez autour de la portiere ; et deux heures durant avant la procession c'est un perpetuel cours de cavaliers qui passent et repassent, quelques uns à cheval, mais la plupart à pied, saluant les dames, leur disant le mot en passant et leur jettant de confitures. *Orestes* passa par deux fois d'un bout à

[This great length of the road is] lined by two or three rows of carriages in which the ladies are seated. Now, those same ladies in order to both see better and be better seen ask their pages to light five or six big torches of white wax and hold them around the carriages' doors, so that starting two hours before the procession it is a perpetual coming and going of chevaliers who – some on horseback, but most on foot – greet the ladies, saying a word to them and offering them sweets.<sup>12</sup> *Orestes* passed between them

<sup>10</sup> Though it technically meant “unweaned”.

<sup>11</sup> The word *provatura* was formerly used in reference to fresh cheese prepared with freshly curdled buffalo milk; the pasta was shredded after salting and packaged in round shapes, especially in Central and Southern Italy (See *Grande Dizionario*).

<sup>12</sup> The precise translation from French would be “jams”, but the word would be restrictive today.

l'autre, et ne se ressouvient point d'avoir rien vu de si beau ni de si magnifique, premierement pour la grande quantité de dames, dont la plus part sont parfaitement belles, toutes vestues de riches estofes d'ou ou de soye et parées d'une infinité de pierreries, et ce qui paroissoit entre autre extremement estoit certains petis voiles de tafetas incarnat, avec de la grande dentelle d'or alentour, que la plus part s'estoient mise sur la teste, de peur du serein. Outre celles qui estoit dans les carosses, toutes les fenestres estoit pleines encore d'autres femmes, come aussi quantité d'eschafauts qui estoit dressez en divers endroit. Les portes, les boutiques et la rue, estoit toute bordée de peuple rengé en haye; et ce qui faisoit encore plus paroistre tout cela, estoit la grande quantité de luminaires dont estoit bordez non seulement les carosses, mais encore toutes les fenestres et portes et sur tout les boutiques, dont certaines, entre autres celles des epiciers, estoit remplies par dedans de lampes depuis le haut jusques au bas. Outre ce, d'espace en espace il y avoit sur des eschafauts des chœurs de musique d'instruments et de voix. *Orestes*, pour voir plus commodement, fut en la place du palais, vis à vis de la fenestre d'où regardoit le viceroy, lequel fit un tour ou deus en carosse par la place tout au travers des carosses des dames.

twice from one end of the road to the other and does not remember having seen anything so beautiful or magnificent, especially for the great quantity of ladies, who, for the most part, were perfectly beautiful and all dressed in rich cloths of gold or silk and adorned with an infinity of jewels, as well as small yet flashy veils of crimson taffetas with large gold laces that were particularly distinctive, the majority of them having covered their head with such veils in fear of *sereno*.<sup>13</sup> In addition to the women in the carriages, all the street windows overflowed with women, and so did the scaffolds which were set up in various places. The doors, the stores and the entire street were all lined with people organized in rows, and what made all this even more striking was the great quantity of lights that appeared not only on the side of carriages, but also on all windows, doors and stores, of which some, and among others the grocery stores in particular, were filled with lamps from top to bottom. Finally, at each corner, one could appreciate scaffolds with musical choirs of both instruments and voices. In order to watch the procession more comfortably, *Orestes* moved to that area of the palace which stands opposite to the viewing window of viceroy; the viceroy who, early on, made one or two tours of the square meandering through the ladies' carriages.

*End of page 18*

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Devant le palais il n'y avoit des carosses que d'un costé, le long de la barrière faite de pieus, sur lesquels il y avoit des lampes alumées, et de l'autre costé, le long des murailles du palais, estoit rengées les compagnies de la garde du viceroy. Enfin, sur

In front of the palace, there were carriages only on one side, that is along a barrier made of poles crowned by lighted lamps, while on the other side, that is along the walls of the palace, the viceroy's guards were lined up. Finally, at two o'clock at night, the

<sup>13</sup> This quite idyllic description is in more in line with the tradition of *Descrittione* for travelers generally written by local writers, and thus magnifying the beauty of the city. Among those, almost simultaneous to Bouchard's journal is Enrico Bacco, *Nuova descrittione del Regno di Napoli diviso in dodici province*. (Naples, 1629). Clearly the word "sereno" is used here for a slight alteration of weather tending towards cooler temperatures or light rain.

les deus heures de nuit, la procession partit de Monte Calvario et, après avoir passé la rue de Toledo et fait un grand tour dans la place, tout le long des maisons qui sont à l'opposite de la facade du palais, vint, par la haut de la place, passer sous les fenestres du palais en cet ordre ci : le regent Battaglino, qui est le chef de la congregation, et qui fait les frais principiaux de cette procession, qui luy montent à deus ou trois mille escus, en cierges, faquins, musiciens, et pour les mysteres, ausquels il invite les cavaliers, come nous avons dit que fasoient les Espagnols en la procession precendente, mais avec bien plus de choix, la pemiere estant meslée de toutes sortes de gents, et en celle ci n'y ayant presque autres que cavaliers ; ce regent, dis je, venoit à la teste, vestu d'une soutane et d'un roquet bleu, avec un chapeau de tafetas blanc, porté *in sedia*, laquelle il fit arrester sous la fenestre du viceroi, affin de voir passer devant soy toute la procession. Auprès de luy s'arrêsterent aussi trois ou quatre cavaliers vestus de belles aulbes, avec quantité de dentelles et mesmes quelques pierreries, et un roquet de tabis bleu, tenants une espece de bourdon doré en main, dont il rengooint et faisoint garder les rangs aus processionants. Les premiers qui passerent furent une troupe de petis garçons des plus beaux que l'on avoit pu trouver, vestus en anges avec ailes au dos et cierges aus mains, lesquels dancierent devant le viceroi; puis vint le premier mystere accompagné de son chœur de musique et de ses luminaires. Ce premier come aussi les cinq ou six autres suivants estoient la representations des epithetes que l'on done à la Vierge dans les litanies par exemple *Speculum Justitiae*, *Hortus Conclusus*, etc. Les autres suivants, qui

procession took off from Monte Calvario and, after passing through Via Toledo, made a great turn around the square – that is all along the houses that stand opposite to the facade of the palace –,<sup>14</sup> finally coming to the forefront of the square and passing under the windows of the palace, in the following order: at its head the regent Battaglino, who is the leader of the congregation and who covers the main costs of the procession, with these costs amounting to two or three thousand *scudi* in candles, *faquins*,<sup>15</sup> musicians, and mysteries; mysteries to which, not unlike the Spaniards in the previously mentioned procession, the Regent invites his chevaliers, yet with more selectiveness, since the former [ i.e. the Spaniards] mix all kinds of people while the latter only invites knights; this regent, I was saying, was at the head of the procession, and he was dressed in a cassock, a blue *roquet*<sup>16</sup> and a hat of white taffeta. Furthermore, he was carried in a *sedia*, to be halted under the window of the viceroy, in order to see the whole procession going in front of him. Next to him stood three or four knights dressed in beautiful vestment with abundant lace and even some jewels. They also wore a little blue tabis *roquet* and held a golden *bourdon*<sup>17</sup> in hand, with which they kept in check the rows of the procession's participants. The first order to pass by was a group of the most beautiful boys they were able to find, and they danced in front of the Viceroy dressed as angels with wings on their backs and candles in their hands. Then, came the first mystery accompanied by its choir of music and lights. This mystery, like the five or six others that followed, represented the epithets that are normally assigned to the Virgin in the litanies, as for

<sup>14</sup> It has to be noted that the façade of the new Royal Palace had been completed only in 1616, while the Palace and its decoration, with the exclusion of the chapel, were completed in 1631, that is just one year before the arrival of Bouchard. See Franco Strazzullo, *Architetti e ingegneri napoletani dal Cinquecento al Settecento* (Naples, 1968): 279-81

<sup>15</sup> Porters.

<sup>16</sup> The word *roquet* referred to a small cloak reaching to the elbow and with no collar. Over time, this type of little cloak would be passed down from the masters to the lackey, and was finally taken over by the buffoon of the *Commedia dell'Arte*. See: <https://www.lerobert.com>.

<sup>17</sup> Normally a long staff, adorned with a boule on top, and associated with the image pilgrims.

furent environ au nombre de 10 ou 12, representoient les principales actions de la vie de la Vierge, le premier estant l'Annonciation et le dernier son Assumption au ciel. Les personages estoient petits et tenoient de la poupée ; la magnificence estoit en la quantité de cierges en la quantité de cierges et de musiciens et joueurs de toute sorte d'instruments, dont il y avoit au moins 15 ou 16 gros chœurs. Mais ce qui estoit le plus digne d'admiration estoit la grande quantité de chevaliers, leur port majestueux, et leur bone mine, en quoi ils surpassent toutes les nations d'Italie, et ne le cedent à aucune de delà les monts ; et se faisoient tellement discerner d'avec ceus du peuple, dont il y avoit quelques uns à cette procession, qu'il sembloit qu'ils fussent de quelque differente espece. La jeunesse entre autres est divinement belle, et *Orestes* n'a jamais rien vu si ravissant come une troupe de ces petits cavaliers qui passerent en de cette procession, tous vestus de soutanes blanches et roquets bleus, avec le baston de confrairie en main. Les derniers qui passerent furent les capitaines, alfiers et sergents des compagnies nouvellement faites, tous gens encore de bone mine et fort lestement vestus de couleur avec or, portant chascun en main la marque de sa charge ; les capitaines leur *regimento* ou *ginetta* ou canne d'Inde, les alfiers leur *scettro* ou petit espieu et les sergents leurs hallebardes. Tout cela demeura plus d'une heure à passer. En somme, tant pour la quantité et beauté des dames et autres regardants comme aussi des processionants, que pour cette grande multitude de luminaires et musiques qui fait dans les tenebres de la nuit un effet mille fois plus admirable que l'on ne sçauroit s'imaginer, l'on peut dire que cette procession ci merite d'estre mise au nombre des choses (les) plus remarquables et singulieres de l'Europe. Aussi lorsque l'Infante passa il y a deus ans par Naples en allant en Hongrie, encore que ce fust en esté, les cavaliers la firent hors de temps, affin de

instance *Speculum Justitiae*, *Hortus Conclusus* etc. The others following, which were about ten or twelve, represented main scenes from the Virgin's life, the first one being the Annunciation and the last one her Assumption to heaven. The figures were small and doll-like, and the magnificence came through a quantity of candles, musicians, and players of all kinds of instruments, and organized in at least fifteen or sixteen large choirs. But what was most worthy of admiration was the great quantity of chevaliers, as well as their majestic posture and good complexion, since it surpassed that of all nations of Italy, and had nothing to envy to the one of those on the other side of the Alps. Indeed, it was so different from that of the commoners (commoners were present at this procession in droves), that it seemed as they belonged to a different species. Among other things, the youth was divinely beautiful, and Orestes never saw anything so delightful as the troop of little knights who passed in this procession, all dressed in white cassocks and blue roquets and with the rod of their brotherhood in hand. The last groups to pass were the captains, the standard-bearers, and the sergeants of the newly formed companies, all of them also of good appearance and very elegantly dressed in colours and gold, with each one carrying in his hand the mark of his office: the captains their *regimento* or *ginesta* or cane of India, the standard-bearer their *scettro* or *venablo*,<sup>18</sup> and the sergeants their halberds. The whole thing took more than one hour. In brief, for the quantity and beauty of the ladies and other spectators, as well as of the procession members, as for this great multitude of lights and music which makes in the darkness of the night, an effect thousand times more admirable than one could imagine one can say that this procession deserves to be listed as one of the most remarkable and singular of Europe. Indeed, when two years ago the Infanta

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<sup>18</sup> Small sword

la luy voir come l'une des choses les plus remarquable(s) de leur ville.

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passed by Naples on her way to Hungary, the chevaliers recreated the same procession in spite of the fact that it was Summer, and therefore out of season, in order to show it to her as one of the most remarkable attractions of their city.

*End of Page 19*

*An epistolary story by Artyom Vesoly, translated from Russian*

KEVIN WINDLE  
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The name of Artyom Vesoly, pseudonym of Nikolai Kochkurov (1899-1938), is less familiar to English readers than those of some other Russian writers of his time, such as Isaak Babel, Konstantin Paustovsky, Boris Pasternak, Mikhail Bulgakov or Vesoly's close friend Mikhail Sholokhov. If he has suffered from neglect in the Anglophone world, this may be attributed to a combination of circumstances: first, his early death in Stalin's Great Terror cut short a promising career and meant that he was "unpersoned" in the USSR. His works were removed from libraries and destroyed, while no public mention of the author could be made until his posthumous rehabilitation in the 1950s. Second, his prose does not lend itself easily to translation: in an afterword to a German version of his major novel, *Jekatherina Lebedewa*, described it as "so gut wie unübersetzbar" [virtually untranslatable] (Wesjoly 632).

The work in question was Vesoly's masterpiece *Russia Washed in Blood*, a modernist novel written in the 1920s and early 1930s about the Russian Civil War of 1918-1921. Though published in the USSR and widely applauded, within a few years it was found to be ideologically suspect and therefore proscribed, while the author, a veteran of the Civil War, found his loyalty to the regime called into question. He was accused of failing to recognize the leading role of the Communist Party and slandering the regime and its rulers. He was duly arrested in October 1937 and shot in April 1938 (see Vesoly xi-xvi).

Despite Lebedewa's comment on Vesoly's untranslatability, his novel has long been known in translations into Polish, Czech, Bulgarian and French; an excellent German version is now available, and in 2020 an English version was published by Anthem Press (Wesjoly; Vesoly).

His short story "The Barefoot Truth", written concurrently with parts of *Russia Washed in Blood*, marks the onset of his serious difficulties with the guardians of ideological purity. When it appeared in the journal *Molodaya gvardiya* in 1929, the Central Committee of the Communist Party reprimanded the journal's editors for allowing into print a "one-sided, tendentious caricature of Soviet reality". It was, they declared, "of value only to our class enemies" (see Vesoly 160). Clearly, the story gave deep offence by expressing the feelings of those who, like Vesoly himself, had fought to establish Soviet rule in a savage conflict, yet soon found themselves neglected, their service and suffering dismissed as of no account while the new bureaucracy took root.

The story takes the form of a letter from a group of Civil War veterans to their former commander, describing the plight of some of their comrades-in-arms and seeking his help in achieving justice for them. It describes village life in the Kuban region in the late 1920s, a time when a kind of stability had returned after the ravages of the Civil War. To the veterans, it is a highly unsatisfactory stability: well-to-do peasants and opponents of the revolution prosper at the expense of the poor, former Red Army soldiers are reduced to penury, and criminals such as the "rich Cossack" rapists go unpunished. The letter recalls scenes of fratricidal bloodshed and mayhem which have left their mark on the survivors. A note at the end states that "the commander's reply will appear in a forthcoming issue of *Molodaya gvardiya*". If Vesoly was indeed planning to publish such a reply, it did not eventuate. He and his protagonists were not to know that very soon the stability would end with the onset of collectivization, mass deportation of the wealthier peasantry (*kulaks*), and famine (the *golodomor*). The concluding

lines, warning that “our republic will still be licking its wounds in a hundred years”, may be seen to have prophetic resonance in the light of events in nearby Ukraine since February 2022.

Like *Russia Washed in Blood*, this story shows the author’s mastery of *skaz*, in which the narrative is heard directly from an uneducated participant, unmediated by any “intellectual” intervention. Vesoly’s unnamed narrator is a man of limited schooling but strong opinions, striving to master a genre – letter-writing – which does not come naturally. Nevertheless he is able to make his points forcefully, in colourful language. Much humour derives from incongruities of register: fragments of officialese conflict with earthy demotic expressions, eloquent colloquialisms and terms of abuse, and occasional poetic turns of phrase. Markers of sub-standard Russian are frequent, and seldom amenable to a close or “literal” translation. Instead the translation resorts to a compensatory method, introducing ungrammatical forms of English, not necessarily at the same points, to give some indication of the writer’s distinctive voice: double negatives, “ain’t”, “we was”, “they was” etc.

English lacks the resources to form the expressive diminutives favoured by the narrator: e.g. *rubliki* (from *rubli* [roubles]); *kupchishki* (from *kuptsy* [merchants]) and even *advokatishki* (from *advokaty* [lawyers]). A suffix which usually denotes young animals such as kittens and piglets is applied creatively to the young of the aristocracy and the bourgeois: *grafyata* (from *graf* [count]), and *burzhuyata* (from *burzhuy* [bourgeois]). “Princelings” will serve for *knyazishki*, but in other cases the translator has little choice beyond recourse to a compensatory adjective. The translator’s task is further complicated by two stanzas of song. These are clearly important in as much as they vividly encapsulate the theme. If the song moves war veterans to tears, as the writer claims, some indication of its emotive power must be given in the translation. To that end, it needs to appear singable (although we may not know the melody), and this can only be achieved by some semblance of the original rhyme scheme and dactylic metre.

A literal translation of a work such as this, assuming it were possible, would at many points give the reader considerable difficulty. The translation given below, while of the “domesticating” variety, makes occasional concessions to the “foreignizing” tendency when untranslatable Russian terms are retained and footnoted (e.g. *GPU*, *bandura*, *Komsomol*, *stanitsa*). Annotation is also needed for references to historical personages unlikely to be familiar to the new readership. The translation of *skaz*-like texts shares features with that of drama. Since we are dealing with a kind of performance, the product needs to be no less performable than the original. Two criteria proposed by Fabienne Hörmanseder for the translation of drama therefore come to the fore: *Sprechbarkeit* (“speakability”) and *Spielbarkeit* (*jouabilité*, “playability”) (Hörmanseder 97-111; Windle 156ff.). These concepts have served the translator of Vesoly’s “Barefoot Truth” as guidelines, along with Korney Chukovsky’s well-known warning against what he termed “imprecise precision”, or excessive literalism (Chukovsky 56ff.). In a similar vein, Walter Arndt, the distinguished American translator of Pushkin, spoke of conveying the “total effect”, in which the “import” and the “impact” need to be considered equally (Arndt xiv-xv). The aim here has been to create a performable text which produces in the reader or hearer an impression roughly equivalent to that made by the original on its audience, while acknowledging that such impressions cannot be in any way measurable.

The translation is based on the text published in Vesoly 1990. The translator is grateful to Dr Elena Govor, Vesoly’s grand-daughter, for much background material and advice on matters of translation, and to the journal’s reviewers for their detailed comments and suggestions.

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**Босая правда  
Артём Весёлый**

**The Barefoot Truth  
Artyom Vesoly**

**Translated by Kevin Windle**

Дорогой товарищ, Михаил Васильевич!

Проведав, что ты, наш старый командир, живешь в Москве и занимаешь хорошую должность, мы, красные партизаны вверенного тебе полка, шлем сердечный привет, который да не будет пропущен тобою мимо ушей.

Горе заставило нас писать.

Надо открыто сказать правду – в жизни нашей больше плохого, чем хорошего.

Известный вам пулеметчик Семен Горбатов голый и босый заходит в профсоюз, просит работу. Какая-то с вот таким рылом стерва, которую мы не добились в 18 году, нахально спрашивает его:

– Какая твоя, гражданин, специальность?

– Я не гражданин, а товарищ, – отвечает Семен Горбатов. – Восемь огнестрельных и две колотых раны на себе ношу, кадетская пуля перебила ребро, засела в груди и до сего дня мне сердце знобит.

– О ранах пора забыть, никому они не интересны. У нас мирное строительство социализма. Какая твоя, гражданин, специальность?

– Пулеметчик, – тихо ответил герой, и сердце его заныло от обиды.

– Член профсоюза?

– Нет.

– Ну, тогда и разговор с тобой короток. Во-первых, таковая специальность нам не требуется, во-вторых, у нас много членов безработных, а ты не член.

– Почему скрываете распоряжения нашей матушки ВКП? – спрашивает Семен Горбатов. – Не должны ли вы предоставлять работу демобилизованным вне очереди?

– Мы не скрываем распоряжений и даем работу молодым демобилизованным

Dear Comrade Mikhail Vasilyevich,

We have learned that you, our old commander, are living in Moscow and have a good job, so we Red partisans of the regiment you commanded send you our cordial greetings, which you shouldn't turn a deaf ear to.

Hard times have forced us to write.

We have to call a spade a spade: we're seeing more bad than good in our lives.

Semyon Gorbатов, the machine-gunner you will remember, goes to the Union office barefoot and skint, to ask for work. There some slut we didn't finish off in 1918 has the nerve to ask him,

“What's your trade, citizen?”

“ ‘Comrade’ to you, not ‘citizen’,” Semyon replies. “With eight bullet wounds and two stab wounds. A cadet bullet broke one of my ribs and lodged in my chest, so my heart's playing up to this day.”

“Time to forget about your wounds. Nobody's interested in them now. We're peacefully building socialism. What's your trade, citizen?”

“Machine-gunner,” says the war hero quietly, feeling his heart pained.

“Union member?”

“No.”

“Well, in that case, we've nothing to talk about. First of all, we don't need your trade. Second, we have lots of unemployed members, and you're not a member.”

“Why are you keeping our mother-Party's instructions secret?” says Semyon Gorbатов. “Ain't you supposed to offer jobs to demobilised soldiers first?”

“We aren't hiding any instructions; we give jobs to young soldiers demobilised in the

последнего года, а вас, старых, слишком много.

– Куда же нам, старым, деваться, ежели не всех нас перебила белая контр-революция?

– Профсоюз не богадельня.

– А скажите, сколько у вас в трестах и канцеляриях сидит кумовьев и своячениц?

– Не мешайте, гражданин, заниматься.

– Значит, – с бессильным презрением говорит Семен Горбатов, – вы смотрите на меня в моем отечестве хуже, чем на пасынка?

На эти слова он не получил ответа и голодный ушел от порога профсоюза.

Командир 2 эскадрона Афанасий Сычев, ежели вы, Михаил Васильевич, его припомните, боролся в наших рядах, начиная с Корнилова и включая до разгрома Колчака и Врангеля. В 1921 году названный Сычев вернулся на родину, чтобы поправить здоровье и разоренное хозяйство, но хозяйства никакого не оказалось, так как на плане двора торчали лишь горелые пеньки. Когда летом 1918 г. Деникин занял нашу станицу, то в ряд с другими товарищами была повешена 60-летняя мать Сычева, Авдотья Поликарповна. Жена его с перепугу из станицы убежала на хутор Лощилинский, где и вышла замуж за вдового казака.

Пришлось Афанасию со всеми своими бедами примириться. Принялся он, в силу партдисциплины, побивать бандитов; побивал их беспощадно до полного уничтожения и в камышах за войсковой греблей саморучно застрелил полковника Костецкого. Спустя сколько-то времени, за неимением капиталов, пошел Афанасий батрачить к неприятелю своему Гавриленке. Тайком от хозяина посещал он собрания ячейки, но тот дознался и выгнал его, крикнув на прощанье:

past year, and there are too many of you old ones.”

“So what are we old ones supposed to do if the White counter-revolution didn’t wipe us out?”

“The Union’s not a poorhouse.”

“So tell me: how many of your folks and relations do you have sitting in your branch offices and sub-branches?”

“Let me get on with my work, citizen.”

“So in the land of my fathers you see me as something worse than a stepson, do you?” says Semyon Gorbатов, filled with impotent contempt.

To that he received no reply and left the Union office empty-handed.

Afanasy Sychyov, commander of the Second Squadron, if you remember, Mikhail Vasilyevich, fought in our ranks, starting when we was fighting Kornilov and including when we beat Kolchak and Wrangel.<sup>1</sup> In 1921 the said Sychyov returned home to restore his health and fix up his ruined small-holding, but there was nothing left of it. Just a few burned stumps in the yard. In the summer of 1918 Denikin had occupied our *stanitsa*,<sup>2</sup> and Sychyov’s 60-year-old mother Avdotya Polikarpovna was hanged along with some other comrades. His wife fled in panic to the village of Loshchilinsky and married a widowed Cossack.

So Afanasy had to make the best of his troubles. Party discipline meant he went to work to lick the bandits, lick ’em mercilessly till they was completely crushed, and he shot Colonel Kostetsky with his own hand in the reedbed above the weir. Some while after that, not having no capital, Afanasy goes and takes up farm labour with his enemy Gavrilenko. Without telling his boss, he went to meetings of the Party cell, but Gavrilenko found out and kicked him out, shouting at him, “Out of my sight! If you like the Party cell so much, the Party cell can feed you.”

<sup>1</sup> Lavr Kornilov (1870-1918): general, commanded the anti-Bolshevik forces in southern Russia. Alexander Kolchak (1874-1920): admiral and leader of the White movement. Executed by the Bolsheviks in February 1920. Pyotr Wrangel (1878-1928): commander-in-chief of White forces in southern Russia after Denikin.

<sup>2</sup> Anton Denikin (1872-1947): general, assumed command of the White Volunteer Army after Kornilov’s death. *Stanitsa*: Cossack township.

– Сгинь с глаз. Как ты привержен к ячейке, пускай тебя ячейка и кормит.

Определили Сычева сторожем при исполкоме, но и тут его стерегла неудача. На пасху как большой любитель церковного звона залез он на колокольню и, для веселья сердца, позвонил в колокола. За такую слабость Афанасий и был изгнан из партии, как «интеллигент, зараженный религиозными заблуждениями», а он двух слов подряд правильно написать не умеет и бога не признает с первых дней революции. Когда прочитал в газете об исключении, то бедняга заплакал и сказал:

– Орловские... Отрывают они сердце от тела.

Собрались мы несколько партийцев, описали геройские подвиги Афанасия при взятии Ставрополя, вспомнили атаку под Лисками, изложили в подробностях действия 2 эскадрона на польском фронте и все это послали в райком. В ответ ни звука. Шлем еще одно заявление и опять ни гу-гу.

Тут мы и задумались...

Али и впрямь орловские такую возымели силу, что ни с беднотой, ни с нами, рядовыми коммунистами, и разговаривать не хотят?

Похоже – так.

Посиживают они в холодочке, чай гоняют, о массе не думают, сами себя выбирают, сами себе жалованье назначают.

Что же это за звери такие?

К концу гражданской войны, как вам, Михаил Васильевич, хорошо известно, красная сила толкнула и погнала из России белую силу. Хлынули с насиженных мест графы и графья, буржуи и буржуята и так и далее, и так и далее. Главные тузы утекли за границу, а всякая шушера – князишки, купчишки, адвокатишки, офицеры, попы и исправники – остались, как раки на мели, на кубанском берегу. Возвращаться в свои орловские губернии они побоялись – там их знали в лицо и поименно. Осели они у

The executive committee took Sychyov on as a watchman, but here again disaster was lurking. He really loved the sound of church bells, so at Easter he climbs up the belfry and rings them to gladden his heart. For that weakness, he gets expelled from the Party, as an “intellectual infected with religious delusions”, although he can’t write two words properly and rejected God as soon as the revolution started. When he reads in the paper that he’s been expelled the poor soul bursts into tears and says, “It’s that lot from the North, from Oryol. They rip the heart out of you.”

Some of us Party members got together and drew up an account of Afanasy’s heroic deeds in the capture of Stavropol and the attack on Liski; we set down in detail all the action of 2nd Squadron on the Polish front and sent it off to the District Committee. Not a peep in reply. We sent another statement, and again not a word.

Then we fell to thinking ...

Maybe the Oryol lot really were so strong they couldn’t be bothered even talking to the poor or the likes of us rank-and-file Communists.

That’s what it looked like.

They was sitting taking their ease, brewing tea, not thinking of the masses, electing themselves and setting their own pay rates.

What sort of creatures were they?

As you well know, Mikhail Vasilyevich, by the end of the Civil War the Red forces had kicked the White forces out of Russia. All the lords and lordlings and bourgeois and their brats and so on and so on had fled their lofty perches and run away abroad, and all kinds of riff-raff – princelings, merchants, pettifogging lawyers, officers, priests and police inspectors were left behind like so many stranded crabs on the bank of the Kuban. They was too scared to go back to Oryol, where everybody knew them. So they settled here and found themselves places in councils, trusts, the Party, in schools, co-operatives and so on and so on. Our local contras, who did all they could to harm us

нас и полезли в советы, в тресты, в партию, в школу, в кооперацию и так и далее, и так и далее. Не отставали от них и местные контры, которые при белой власти вредили нам сколько могли. Все они хорошо грамотны и на язык востры – для каждого нашлось местечко, а куда орловский втерся, туда еще не одного однокашника за собой протащит.

В станице нашей на 30.000 населения – 800 здоровых и калечных красных партизан. В ячейке 40 человек: партизан 4 (когда-то нас было 9); вдова-красноармейка 1; рабочий с элеватора 1; батраков 2; подростков 7; присланных из края 5; орловских и сочувствующих им 22.

Откуда орловским знать, с какой отвагой защищали мы революцию? Когда-то станица выставила два конных полка и батальон пехоты. В юрте нашем есть хутора, откуда все с мальчишек и до дряхлых дедов отступали с красными.

Время идет, время катится...

Сычев до того дожил, что харкает кровью и кормится при тетке из жалости.

Орловские все глубже пускают корень. Дети их лезут в комсомол, а внуки в барабанщики. Таких комсомольцев мы зовем золочеными орешками. Орловские нас судят и рядят, орловские ковыряют нам глаза за несознательность, орловские нас учат и мучат. Мы перед ними и дураки, и виноваты кругом, и должники неоплатные...

Эх, Михаил Васильевич, взять бы их на густые решета...

Описываем нашу жизнь дальше.

Боец Егор Марченко живет по-прежнему в своей бедной хижине, так как дворца ему не досталось, хотя и много покорил он земель и городов. Живет с той лишь разницей, что раньше было у него

when the Whites held power, weren't far behind. They could all read and write well and had the gift of the gab. They all set themselves up nicely, and where one Oryol man found himself a nice spot he brought all his mates along as well.

In our *stanitsa*, out of a population of 30,000, there are 800 Red partisans, fit and maimed. Our Party cell is 42 strong: that's 4 partisans (used to be 9); 1 Red Army widow; 1 granary worker; 2 farm labourers; 7 youngsters; 5 sent in from the district; and 22 from Oryol with their sympathisers.

How are those Oryol people to know how valiantly we defended the revolution? At one time our *stanitsa* fielded two regiments of horse and a battalion of foot. There are villages where all the menfolk from young lads to feeble old men retreated with the Reds.

Time passes, time rolls by ...

Sychyov reached the point where he was hawking up blood, and his aunt was feeding him out of pity.

The Oryol lot are putting down deep roots. Their children are getting ahead in the Komsomol, and their grandchildren in the Young Pioneers as drummers.<sup>3</sup> They're the kind of Komsomols we call gilded toffs ... It's Oryol who lays down the law, tells us to be more politically aware and deals out lessons and punishment. To them we're all stupid and to blame for everything and don't pay our debts ...

Yes, Mikhail Vasilyevich, we ought to put 'em right through the wringer ...<sup>4</sup>

Here's some more about the way we live.

Yegor Marchenko, the soldier, is back living in his shabby old cabin, since he didn't get himself a palace, although he'd captured lots of territory and towns. The only difference is that, before, he had that bit of property to call his own, even if it was small,

<sup>3</sup> Komsomol: the Communist Youth Organization. Young Pioneers: a mass organization for children, overseen by the Komsomol.

<sup>4</sup> The uncommon expression used here was repeated by Mikhail Sholokhov, quoting Vesoly, in a letter dated July 1929. Sholokhov denounced the new policies being applied to the peasants and the confiscation of their "surplus" grain. The letter was passed in edited form to Stalin. See Sholokhov M. A. – Levitskoy E. G., 18 iyunya – 2 iyulya 1929. <http://sholohov.lit-info.ru/sholohov/pisma/letter18.htm> (accessed 22 March 2022).

хотя и небольшое, но свое хозяйство, а ныне в погоне за куском ходит в плотничьей артели, имеет топор, пилу да полны горсти мозолей. Только сын Спартак поднимает дух Егора, а так хоть и глаза домой не кажи – теща ругает, жена ругает, прямо поедом едят. Иногда отгрызнется Егор, а чаще бывает – припрут его, и он, не находя ответа, убегает ночевать к кому-нибудь из приятелей.

И в самом-то деле, оглянешься назад, вспомнишь, сколько мы страху приняли, сколько своей и чужой крови пролили, – и чего же добились?

Землю есть не будешь, а обрабатывать ее и не на чем, и нечем. Из 6 купленных станицей тракторов 2 достались кулакам, 1 совхозу, 1 колхозу и 2 куплены середняцким товариществом. Плывет из-под бедняка завоеванная земля кулаку в аренду.

Много оголодавшего народа уходит в города на заработки.

Газеты пишут, что Москва отпускает на поддержку бедняцких хозяйств большие рубли. До нас докатываются одни истертые гроши, да и то редко.

От большой семьи вахмистра Бабенко осталась в живых одна старуха Печониха. Самого Бабенка, как вы, Михаил Васильевич, помните, белые зарубили под Царицыным. Старший сын его – Павел, командовавший бронепоездом «Гроза», геройски взорвал себя, не желая предаваться врагу. Младший сын Василий погиб в горах Чечни от тифу, а дочь Груню на глазах у матери казаки занасиловали до смерти. Ходит Печониха с холщовым мешком под окнами и выпрашивает милостыню у тех же богатеев-казаков, которые занасиловали ее дочь и загнали в могилу мужа и двух сынов. В прошлом году мы выхлопотали старухе пенсию в 6 р. 50 к. Три раза ходила она в район и не могла получить. Орловские отовсюду гнали ее как неграмотную, и ни один сукин сын не захотел войти в ее несчастье, и никого не

and now he goes around with a team of carpenters to keep the wolf from the door. He owns an axe, a saw and two fists full of calluses. Only his son Spartak keeps Yegor's spirits up. Otherwise, he'd best not show his face at home: his mother-in-law scolds him, his wife scolds him – they'd eat him alive. Sometimes he snaps back at them but mostly he's under their thumb and when he can't come up with an answer he runs off and spends the night at some friend's place.

And really, when you look back and remember the fear we went through, and all the blood we shed, our own and others', where did it get us?

You can't eat land, and we've nothing to work it with. Out of 6 tractors the *stanitsa* bought, the kulaks got 2, the state farm 1, the collective farm 1, and the association of middling peasants bought 2. Any land the poor peasants won is rented to the kulaks.

A lot of starving folk are going off to town to try and make a living.

The newspapers say that Moscow is allocating lots of roubles to support poor farmers. What trickles down to us is just worn-out pennies, and that not often.

Of Sergeant-Major Babenko's big family, only his old widow Pechonikha is still alive. As you will recall, Mikhail Vasilyevich, Babenko himself was cut to pieces by the Whites at Tsaritsyn. His elder son Pavel, who commanded the "Thunderstorm" armoured train, heroically blew himself up, rather than surrender to the enemy. His younger son Vasily died of typhus in the mountains of Chechnya, and some Cossacks raped his daughter Grunya to death before her mother's eyes. Pechonikha takes a canvas sack and begs for handouts under the windows of the same rich Cossacks who raped her daughter and drove her husband and two sons into the grave. Last year we took some trouble and got her a pension of 6.50 roubles. She went to the district office three times for it, and couldn't get it. The Oryol crowd chased her out for being illiterate and not a single son of a bitch would put himself in her position and

тронуло горе ее... Казаки редко кто подаст корку хлеба, больше надсмехаются – не могут они забыть, что Бабенко сам был природный казак и все-таки пошел за красных. От великого горя и обиды старуха стала полусумасшедшей, голова ее поседела и трясется, мальчишки дразнят ее трясушкой. Жалко ее нам, старым партизанам, но чем поможешь? Сами варим щи из крапивы, да и то через день.

Наш уважаемый старичок Черевков, израненный в схватках лихих за совет, ослеп, и ноги больше не держат хилого тела. В память о повешенной снохе и в память о сыне Дмитре, испутившем дыхание на офицерском штыке, осталось старику пятно от рода, то есть внучек Федька. Ночуют они где придется и кормятся кое-как. Вешает Федька деду на плечо бандуру и ведет его по базарам и трактирам. Старика кругом на сто верст знают. Сядет он в толпе, ударит по струнам перерубленной в бою рукой и дребезжащим голосом запоеет:

Слышу, как будто, грохочут удары  
 Прошлой войны, и тоска  
 Живо рисует вам страсть и кошмары.  
 В бурунах пустыни песка  
 Красных героев рассыпаны кости,  
 Жизнь положивших в бою...  
 .....

Кончились схватки, домой воротился  
 К участи горькой такой.  
 Старый, седой никуда не годился  
 Всеми забытый герой...

Кто испытал гражданскую войну, на ком горят еще раны, того эта песня до слез

they're all unmoved by her plight. A Cossack will hardly ever give her a crumb. Mostly they just make fun of her. They can't forget that Babenko was a native Cossack himself but still joined the Reds. The old woman's gone half mad with grief and resentment. Her hair's gone grey and she shakes, so small boys call her "Shaky". We old partisans feel sorry for her, but what can we do? We're reduced to making nettle soup ourselves, and that only every other day.

Our old respected Cherevko, who was wounded in fierce fighting for the Soviets, has gone blind and his legs won't hold up his ailing body. All the old man has left to remind him of his daughter-in-law, who was hanged, and his son Dmitro, who breathed his last on the point of an officer's bayonet, is his grandson Fedya, the last of all his kin. They spend their nights wherever they can and eat anything they can get. Fedya hangs a *bandura* round his granddad's neck and leads him round the markets and inns.<sup>5</sup> The old fellow's known for a hundred versts around. He sits himself down with a crowd round him, plucks the strings with a hand deformed in the fighting, and strikes up a song in his thin trembling voice:

Thundering echoes of past warlike actions  
 Are borne to my ears on the air.  
 Longing paints clearly our nightmares and  
 passions.  
 The sands of the desert lay bare  
 The scattered remains of our gloried Red  
 heroes,  
 Who laid down their lives in the fray.  
 .....

...  
 The fighting is over and home is the hero,  
 Home to a sorrowful fate.  
 Grey-haired and old and condemned to be  
 useless,  
 Abandoned by all to his fate.

Anyone who was in the Civil War or still has burning wounds from it will be moved to

<sup>5</sup> *Bandura*: Ukrainian stringed folk instrument, also known as *kobza*.

прошибает. И бросают, бросают старику медяки, а иные язвят: «Довоевался».

Много крови, много горя... На всей Кубани и одной хаты не найдешь, которая не была бы задета войной. Все воевали. Михаил Васильевич, кто топчет надежды наши? Или разливали мы кровь свою ни за-нет? Или, утратив силу в огне, кровью своей оконфужены?

Где-то и кто-то разъезжает по санаториям и курортам, а у нас в этом году на лечение 28 красных инвалидов совет ассигновал 47 рубликов. Прикинь, дорогой наш командир, по сколько это выйдет на голову. «Для нашего излечения, – сказал как-то страдающий ревматизмом бывший чекист Абросимов, – жалеют кубанской грязи, а ведь мы ее, эту грязь, своей кровью замесили».

Было время, мы протапывали для дорогой советской власти первые кровавые тропы, а теперь она забывает нас. Али Печониха и старичок Черевков не стоят маленького сожаления и товарищеской любви?

Кавалер золотого оружия Федор Подобедов, командовавший в разное время эскадрой, кавполком и бригадой в 20 году, памятным всем нам приказом РВС был отстранен от командования по несоответствию. А кто первым выступил на защиту молодой советской власти? Федор Подобедов. Кто, не жалея здоровья и не щадя жизни, гонялся по камышам за повстанцами-казаками?

Федор Подобедов! Кто под Фундуклеевкой вырубил три сотни махновцев? Федор Подобедов со своей бригадой. Он хотя и неграмотный, но многие ученые генералы и бандиты не знали, куда от него бежать.

tears by that song. But they just toss the old man a few coppers, and some sneer: “See where all his fighting spirit got him.”

Too much blood, too much sorrow ... In all of the Kuban you won't find one home untouched by war. Everyone was in it. Who's trampling our hopes into the ground, Mikhail Vasilyevich? Or did we shed our blood for nothing? Or have we burned up all our strength in the furnace and addled our blood as well?

Some people are swanning around sanatoriums and rest homes somewhere, while this year the Soviet allocated just 47 miserable roubles to treat 28 Red cripples. What does that come to per head, dear commander? Abrosimov, the former Chekist who's suffering from rheumatism,<sup>6</sup> once said: “They won't give out as much as a bit of Kuban mud to treat us, and we're the ones who mixed our blood in it.”

Time was when we was taking our first bloody steps towards getting a government of our beloved Soviets, and now that government's forgetting all about us. Don't old Pechonikha and Cherevko deserve a bit of sympathy and comradely love?

Fyodor Podobedov, holder of the St George's Cross for valour, who commanded a cavalry squadron, then a regiment, then a brigade in 1920, was removed from his command as unsuitable, by order of the Revolutionary Military Council, as we all remember. And who was the first to step forward and defend the young Soviet regime? Fyodor Podobedov. And who hunted the Cossack rebels through the reedbeds, unsparing of himself or his health? Fyodor Podobedov. Who cut down three hundred of Makhno's men at Funkuleyevka?<sup>7</sup> Fyodor Podobedov and his brigade. Even though he was illiterate, any number of educated generals and bandits didn't know how to get out of his way.

<sup>6</sup> Chekist: member of the Cheka, the Extraordinary Commission for the Struggle against Counter-Revolution, forerunner of the GPU, OGPU, NKVD and KGB. The term “Chekist” remained in use to denote members of the successor organizations.

<sup>7</sup> Nestor Makhno (1888-1934): leader of anarchist forces in southern Russia and Ukraine.

Не мимо говорит пословица: «Лаял Серко – нужен был, а стар стал – со двора вон».

Препоручили Федору должность базарного распорядителя, но ему, как мужчине красивому и молодому, стыдным показалось расставлять в порядок возы и собирать с торговок гривенники. К тому же и знакомые станичане зло насмеялись над красным командиром, дослужившимся до метлы. Послужил он неделю, пришел в исполком, сорвал с груди медную бляху базарного распорядителя и бросил председателю под ноги.

Покрутился-покрутился наш Федор и с горя запил. Потом назначили его в территориальную часть завхозом. К тому времени он уже окончательно пристрастился к водочке и однажды промахнулся – пропил двух казенных лошадей.

Потянули его под суд.

Сколько-то просидел он в городской тюрьме, потом вызывают на допрос. И кого же он встречает? А встречает он в трибунале прапорщика Евтушевского.

Вспомните, Михаил Васильевич, бой под Кривой Музгой. Федор с полком стоял от нас левым флангом. Так вот тогда он и захватил в плен рыжего полковника и двух прапоров. Полковника, как водилось, отправили в штаб Духонина, а за прапоров заступился дурак эскадронный Еременко: «Вручить им, – говорит, – по кнуту и посадить ездовыми, пускай кобыл гоняют, а мы над ними посмеемся».

И оставлены были оба прапорщика ездовыми в обозе второго разряда. Что с ними было потом – неизвестно, но война окончилась, и Евтушевский – вот он гад – незаменимый технический работник и следователь в трибунале. Сколько годов прошло, а сразу узнал Подобедова и с надменной улыбкой начал спрашивать:

– Помнишь, товарищ Подобедов, Кривую Музгу?

The old saying is spot on: “They needed Rover as long as he could bark, and kicked him out when he got old.”

They gave Fyodor the job of managing the market stalls but, being a young and handsome fellow, he felt ashamed at having to arrange carts in order and collect kopecks from the market-women. Besides, the townsmen who knew him were laughing at the Red commander who’d been awarded the order of the broom. He worked at that job for a week, then went to the executive committee rooms, ripped off his badge of office and threw it at the chairman’s feet.

Our Fyodor doesn’t know where to turn next and takes to drink to drown his sorrows. Then they made him bursar in a rear unit. By that time his drinking habit had a firm hold on him, and once he went too far – he sold two army horses for vodka.

He was hauled before a court and spent some time in the local lock-up before being called out for questioning. And who should he meet on the tribunal? Warrant Officer Yevtushevsky.

You will remember the battle at Krivaya Muzga, Mikhail Vasilyevich. Fyodor and his regiment were on our left flank. There he took three prisoners: a red-haired colonel and two warrant officers. They sent the colonel off to Dukhonin’s staff office, following regulations, and that fool Yeremenko, the troop commander, spoke up for the warrant officers: “Give ’em a whip each and use ’em as drivers. They can drive some mares while we have a laugh at ’em.”

So they were both made drivers in a rear-supply column. What became of them later I don’t know, but the war ended, and that snake Yevtushevsky becomes an irreplaceable technical worker and investigator on the tribunal. All those years have passed, but he recognises Podobedov at once, and starts questioning him, with this high-and-mighty smirk on his lips:

“You remember Krivaya Muzga, Comrade Podobedov.”



– Помню.  
– Помнишь, как все вы издевались надо мной?

– Помню.  
– Почему же такое, товарищ, был ты революционером, а стал конокрадом?

Разволновались в красном герое нервы, затрясся он от злости, но промолчал.

– Помнишь, – спрашивает опять следователь, – поход на Маныч? Косяки калмыцких лошадей гнали за собой, а тут и двух пропить не разрешают... Не восемнадцатый, верно, годочек?

Не стерпел Федор таких слов, выхватил у конвойного шашку и, потянувшись через стол, нарушил тишину – зарубил того незаменимого Евтушевского прямо в мягком кресле.

Дальше-больше, слышим, ушел Федор за Кубань в горы и увел за собой обиженных бойцов Коростелева, Хвороста, Шевеля, Сердечного, нашего батарейца Разумовского, Круглякова Гришку, что зарубил в поединке под Каялом гвардейского полковника, пулеметчиков Табаева и Калайду, однорукого Курепина, старика Бузинова, милиционеров Моисенку и Колпакова, бойцов Есина, Кабанова, Кошубу, Соченко и Назарку Коцаря. Долгое время бандиты гуляли по Закубанью – жгли совхозы, громили советы, вырезали коммунистов и комсомольцев, поезда грабили. Батальон ГПУ с помощью нас, местных коммунистов, хорошо знающих местность, расколотил банду, но самого Подобедова так и не удалось взять. Недавно из Турции прислал он брательнику письмо: клянет советскую власть и сообщает, что с курдами ему и то жить приятнее.

Горько и прискорбно...

Мы остались в живых по нашему счастью или по нашему несчастью. Тлеем в глухих углах, как искры далекого пожара, и гаснем.

“Yes.”

“Remember how you lot all laughed at me?”

“Yes.”

“How come you, comrade, a former revolutionary, became a horse thief?”

Our Red hero’s nerves were on edge and he was shaking with rage, but he kept quiet.

“You remember the Manych campaign?” asks his interrogator. “We was driving herds of Kalmyk mares along, and nobody gave us permission to sell two horses for drink ... That would have been in 1918, wouldn’t it?”

That was too much for Fyodor. He grabs his escort’s sabre, reaches across the table, breaking his silence, and cuts the irreplaceable Yevtushevsky to pieces right there in his easy chair.

It gets worse. We hear that Fyodor’s gone off to the Kuban, taking with him some ex-soldiers with a grudge: Korostelev, Khvorost, Shevel, Serdechny, our gunner Razumovsky, Grishka Kruglyakov, who cut down a colonel of the Guards in a duel at Kayal, the machine-guns Tabayev and Kalaida, one-armed Kurepin, old Buzinov, the policemen Moisenko and Kolpakov, and the soldiers Yesin, Kabanov, Koshuba, Sochenko and Nazarka Kotsar. For a long time the bandits roved over the southern Kuban region, burning state farms, sacking Soviets, killing Communists and Komsomols and robbing trains. A GPU battalion,<sup>8</sup> with help from us, the local Communists who knew the lie of the land, broke up the gang, but didn’t manage to catch Podobedov himself. Not long ago he sent his brother a letter from Turkey cursing the Soviet regime and saying he was better off living with the Kurds.

It’s a sad and sorry business.

For better or for worse, we got through it alive. We smoulder away in dark corners, like what’s left of some distant fire, fading away.

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<sup>8</sup> GPU: State Political Directorate. See Note 6 above.

Старая партизанская гвардия редет. Кто стал торговцем, кто бандитом, иные, как жуки, зарылись в землю и ничего дальше кучки своего дерьма не видят и видеть не желают, многих сломила нужда и, когда-то разившие грозного врага, теперь на мирном положении сами попадают в плен к кулакам.

Начальник конной разведки Яков Келень, при поддержке тестя, сумел обзавестись богатым хозяйством и не считает нас больше своими товарищами. Весной из города приезжал сотрудник истпарта и со всех нас, революционных бойцов, отбирал гром преданий о похождениях наших. Яков Келень не захотел с ним разговаривать и сказал только одно: «В Красной Армии я никогда не служил».

Как же так, спросите вы, Михаил Васильевич, али совсем нет в станице живых людей?

Есть, есть умные и понимающие люди, да только у одного руки короткие, у другого совесть сера, этот рад – пригрелся и жалованье получает, тот глядит, как бы хозяйство свое приумножить, пятый бывает сознательным только на собраниях, десятый и рад бы чего-нибудь хорошее сделать, да один не может.

Взять хотя бы секретаря нашей ячейки Маркина. Деляга парень – плакаты рисует, лозунги пишет, диаграммы составляет, уголки организовывает, на всех собраниях выступает, полы в ячейке и то сам моет: расходам экономия, – а на бархатное знамя и на приветственные телеграммы за год израсходовали больше двухсот рублей. Попадешь на Маркину на глаза и сейчас он сноровит разграфить тебя и занести в какой-нибудь список. На Троицын день встал на паперти и давай считать, сколько верующих заходит в церковь: для отчета. Старухи разодрали на нем рубаху и прогнали от церкви. На лекции или вечере обязательно переписет, сколько присутствует

The ranks of the old partisan guard are thinning. Some have gone into trade, some are gangsters, some have burrowed into the ground like beetles and can't see nothing beyond a heap of their own turds, and don't want to. Lots have fallen on hard times, and men who were once the terror of a fierce enemy now in peacetime are themselves falling captive to the kulaks.

Yakov Kelen, chief of the mounted scouts, with his father-in-law's support, has managed to get himself a wealthy farm and no longer sees us as his comrades. Last spring a Party historian came from the city and tried to strip away the glory of all our exploits as fighters for the revolution. Yakov Kelen wouldn't talk to him; he just said, "I never served in the Red Army."

You'll be asking, Mikhail Vasilyevich, how it's possible, and ain't there no living souls at all left in the *stanitsa*?

Yes, there are some with brains who understand things, but some have no power to do anything, others have uneasy consciences; some have found themselves cushy jobs and get a wage, some are looking for ways to add to their property, some are politically aware only at meetings, and others might be glad to do something useful but can't do it alone.

Take our branch secretary Markin, for example. The lad's an eager beaver, draws posters, writes slogans, drafts diagrams, organises propaganda sections, speaks at every meeting, washes the branch floors himself. He keeps an eye on expenses, but over 200 roubles went on a velvet banner and welcome telegrams in one year. If Markin so much as catches sight of you, he'll have you classified and in a box or list in no time. Last Whitsun he stood at the church door and counted all the believers coming in: for a report. The old women ripped the shirt off his back and chased him out. At any lecture or talk he'll be sure to list how many men, women and young people are present, their age, occupation, and how much property they

мужчин, женщин и подростков, по сколько им лет, чем занимаются, велико ли хозяйство. Из-за этой самой переписки многих теперь и насильно не затащишь в Народный дом. Прочитает Маркин газету и в дневник запишет: «Столько-то минут потрачено на читку». Подметет комнату, заправит лампу и опять в дневник. Пойдет в столовку обедать, поговорит со станичниками и запишет: «Выдано столько-то и таких-то справок». Не поймешь, по дурусти он это творит или от великого усердия – службист, сукин сын, как бывалосный фельдфебельшишка из учебной команды. Живет на свое бедное жалованье плохо и вообще такой же пенек, как и мы, но все старается возвыситься над нами, а чуть что – грозит.

Или вот другой наш вождь – заведующий кооперацией, бывший кузнец Евтихий Воловод. Закрыв глаза портфелем, прибил, гад, на кабинетной двери лозунг: «Без доклада не входить».

За что мы, Михаил Васильевич, воевали – за кабинеты или за комитеты?

Живет Евтихий с капитаншей Курмояровой, которую он забрал в плен под селом Кабардинкой, где, как тебе, дорогой товарищ, известно, мы прижали убегающих денкинцев к морю и вырубали их там счетом шесть тысяч. В самый разгар боя Воловод набросил на капитаншу – она сидела на возу – набросил бурку и сказал: «Моя. Никто не мог до нее коснуться – застрелю». Не дожидаясь окончания войны, уволок он ее в станицу, и поживают они с этих пор на шее советской власти и ох не скажут. В усадьбе у них стоит раскрашенный в две краски сортир на замке. Сходит в тот сортир сам хозяин и на ключ запрет. Сходит хозяйка и опять запрет. Кухарка с кучером на огород бегают. Евтихий партийную школу кончил, потом какие-то курсы кончил, теперь нас уму-разуму учит. Он нам про строительство социализма, а мы ему про сортир напомним, он про хозяйственный рост страны, а мы про то, что жрать нечего, а у

own. Because of that, wild horses won't drag many out to the House of the People. Markin will read from a newspaper and make a note in the minutes: "X minutes devoted to reading." He'll sweep the room, fix the lamp, and make a note in the journal. He'll go to the canteen for lunch, chat with some townfolk and write down: "X roubles spent and information dispensed." Is it because he's not too bright, or just so keen, you can't make out. Loves his red tape, the son of a bitch, like that little sergeant-major from the training team. Hardly gets by on his miserable pay, and he's just as dim as the rest of us, but keeps trying to put himself above us, and starts breathing down your neck at the first sign of anything..

Or take that other chief of ours, Yevtikhy Volovod, the former blacksmith who runs the co-op sector. He hides his face behind his briefcase, the snake, and pins a note on his office door: "No Unannounced Admittance".

What did we fight for, Mikhail Vasilyevich? For offices and committees?

Yevtikhy lives with Captain Kurmoyar's wife. He captured her at the village of Kabardinka, where, as you know, dear comrade, we pushed Denikin's fleeing army to the coast and slaughtered 6,000 of 'em. In the heat of the battle, Volovod threw a *burka* over the captain's wife – she was sitting on a cart – and said: "She's mine! I'll shoot anyone who touches her!" Without waiting for the war to end, he hauls her off to the *stanitsa*, and from that day on they've been sponging off the Soviet regime and living in clover. In the garden they have this two-toned outhouse with a lock on it. The owner visits it, comes out and locks it behind him. His missus visits it and locks it again, while the cook and the driver have to run to the vegetable patch. Yevtikhy finished the Party school, then took some other courses, and now thinks he can teach us something. He tells us about building socialism, and we remind him of that outhouse, he talks about the economic development of the country, and we tell him there's nothing to eat, and he

него полон двор птицы, поросят, две коровы, жнейка, косилка, четыре собственных лошади. «Вы, – кричит, – разложившийся элемент, в текущей политике ни уха, ни рыла не понимаете, мертвый груз на нашем коммунистическом корабле». «Чего же нам делать, спрашиваем, и куда деваться?» «Газеты читайте – и центральные и краевые, и окружные, и местную стенную». «Нас, – хором отвечаем мы, – на всю жизнь Деникин выучил, еще десять лет не будем ни одной газеты читать, а понять, чего надо, все поймем». И тут спускаем мы штаны, заворачиваем рубахи и показываем раны колотые, раны стреляные, следы шомполов и нагаек. Насчет газет, понятно, сгоряча брякнем, ну да все равно...

На первое мая вечером, после речей и парада, вышли мы радостные прогуляться, но радость наша скоро помрачнела. На площади в окнах – большой свет: «Кафе-ресторан Президиум». Подходим ближе и заглядываем в окна через занавески. На столах жратва и вина всевозможные. Музыканты играют, и по залу в обнимку с девками и с базарными торговками танцуют те, кто еще недавно говорил нам речи: секретарь исполкома, нечесе, фининспектора, два землемера, прикащики из хлебопродукта и славный наш кооператор Евтихий Воловод.

Скрепя сердце мы отошли.

Голоса наши когда-то гремели на кровавых полях, а нонче они робко звучат в стенах канцелярий. Много погибло наших дорогих товарищей, но о них и помину нет местной властью. Нас, защитников и завоевателей, восхваляют и призывают только по большим праздникам, да когда в нос колет – во время проведения какой-нибудь кампании, а потом опять отсовывают в темный угол. Закомиссарились прохвосты, опьянели властью. Ежели таковые и впредь останутся у руля, то

has a yard full of poultry, piglets, two cows, a reaper-and-binder and four horses of his own. “You lot,” he yells, “are degenerates! You don’t know nothing about politics. You’re a dead weight on our Communist ship.” “So what are we to do?” we ask. “Where do we turn?” “Read the papers! The central press, the regional and district press and the wall newspaper.” We answer as one: “Denikin taught us one lesson for life: we won’t read another newspaper for another ten years. But we’ll understand what we need to understand.” With that we drop our breeches, pull up our shirts and show our stab wounds and bullet wounds and the scars we carry from floggings. About the papers, we were a bit hasty of course, but what does it matter?

On May Day, in the evening, after the speeches and parade, we go out for a stroll, as happy as can be, but our happiness is very soon clouded. In the square we see this big sign lit up in some windows: “Presidium Café and Restaurant”. We go up close and look in through the curtains: tables groaning with grub and all sorts of wine. A band’s playing, and the lot who was speechifying to us just now are waltzing about the floor with tarts and market-women in their arms: the executive committee secretary, financial inspectors, two surveyors, some salesmen from the bakery and our glorious co-op manager Yevtikhy Volovod.

We went on our way with heavy hearts.

Time was when our voices thundered over fields of blood, but nowadays they whisper timidly in office walls. Many of our dear comrades perished, but our local authorities never mention them. We the defenders and conquerors get praised and called on only on major holidays, and when they’re feeling the heat, when there’s some sort of campaign on. Then they shove us back into our dark corner. A bunch of scoundrels drunk with power are playing at being commissars. If their type stay at the helm, our republic will still be

наша республика еще сто лет будет лечить  
раны и не залечит.

Ждем ответного письма.

С товарищеским приветом.

1928.

(Подписи.)

licking its wounds in a hundred years, and  
they won't have healed.

Awaiting your reply.

With comradely greetings,

1928

(Signed)

Ответ командира будет напечатан в  
одном из ближайших номеров «Молодой  
гвардии».

[1929]

The commander's reply will be published  
in a forthcoming issue of *Molodaya gvardiya*.

[1929]

## Translating “Opportunités” by Claudine Jacques

PATRICIA WORTH

“Opportunities” by Claudine Jacques is a short story about the choices required of a young man who unexpectedly inherits wealth. The story is included in Jacques’s collection *Caledonia Blues*, published in 2020, portraying a range of dramas from daily life in New Caledonia. Jacques was born in France but has lived in the French territory for more than fifty years, dedicating her life to Oceanian literature since 1994. She is now much-published in New Caledonia as a writer of novels, short stories, plays, and books for children and young adults. In 2020 Jacques won the *Grand Prix culture et littérature* for her entire body of work which comprises over sixty novels and stories. For *Caledonia Blues* she also won the *Prix Arembou 2020*, a literary prize created by the writers association *Écrire en Océanie*, awarded each year to a writer residing in Oceania and writing in French, in particular for the author’s contribution to the cultural development of the country and ability to bear witness to Pacific life today.<sup>1</sup>

Jacques’ writing often depicts the beauty of her Pacific territory, yet this collection is no island escape. She chooses to confront her world, holding a mirror to New Caledonian society, its complexity and mixture of races, customs and beliefs, its tensions, inequalities and violence. She is adept at making ordinary people speak in everyday words, but is equally able to imitate the privileged who speak with a sense of entitlement, as we see in “Opportunities”. Readers are carried along by her fluid writing style, her evocative imagery and power of suggestion, all the way to the unpredictable ending.

Many years ago I met Claudine Jacques in New Caledonia. At the time, she was the editor of a journal, *Épisodes*, in which she published my translation of one of her poems. Since then, I have had six translations of her stories published with her encouragement and help along the way. For “Opportunities” I sought and was given her permission to translate the short Drehu passage, though she did not reveal the reasons for leaving her own text untranslated. She had lost the French-Drehu translation she used when writing the story, but willingly obtained a new version for me.

Seeking a reader for my work, I contacted a literary translator, Nat Paterson, through an online forum. He offered to read my draft though he knew little about New Caledonia. He made some suggestions which improved my English expression generally, while there were others I disagreed with or simply dismissed because of his assumption the story was for a European readership, whereas I was translating for readers in Australia or the Pacific. Paterson recommended removing the translated Drehu passage since Jacques had not translated it in the original story. He believed it highlighted the mystery of Kanak culture for the protagonist. Drehu, the language of the people of Lifou, one of the Loyalty Islands, has about 17,000 speakers – more than other Kanak languages (Sorosoro) – and about fifty-nine per cent of them live in Noumea (Dotte et al. 6-7). Noumean readers of the source text may therefore have some understanding of the short Drehu speech, but my Anglophone readers would not. I considered an example in *L’Île des rêves écrasés* by the Tahitian author Chantal Spitz who began her novel with a five-page prologue in Mā’ohi language, which her translator, Jean Anderson, did not translate into English. One researcher of Oceanian writers, Katherine Hammitt, sees Anderson’s retention of these untranslated pages as “resistance to colonial silencing” and notes that there is “an online Tahitian-French dictionary, which allows the motivated reader access to the story told in the prologue” (par. 4 and note [3]). Another researcher, Michelle Keown,

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<sup>1</sup> Description of prize by Joël Paul. My translation.

writes that Anderson sought to “respect and reproduce” stylistic elements of the source culture “without making significant allowances for a foreign reader” (“The pragmatics and problematics of translation”, par. 2). For “Opportunities” I myself wanted to know the meaning of the Drehu words because there was a risk that I, and in turn the reader, would misjudge the speaker’s intent, in spite of the author’s defence of the passage in the next line: “This mysterious speech must have been friendly since the women and men came to kiss him”. Given that the Drehu words must remain in the target text to illustrate the “mysterious speech”, the reader is thus led “to understand the linguistic and cultural universe of the source text” (Eco 89), while the offering of an English translation adapts the original to suit the target reader’s universe. When both languages are present, the Drehu speaker is not silenced, and the reader can still experience the mystery.

Another phrase that Paterson challenged was “de facto” for *pacsé*. He believed it would be misunderstood if the story were published in Europe, but I am confident Australian readers will understand it means “not legally married”. His correction of Noumea to Nouméa led me to question my inclusion or omission of accents. In Australia, even on government websites, Noumea is spelt without the accent which prompted me to do the same. Similarly, Napoleon in English needs no accent. But I left Vallée du Tir, Quelès and André accented, as these words have no proper equivalent in English and do not create stumbling blocks. On the option to foreignize, Eco remarks that an untranslatable French phrase should remain untranslated as long as it does not sound like a mistake (90). Hence I have not anglicized *manou*, as its meaning is clear from the preceding lines, or *grand chef*, which Paterson disputed, believing the Kanak<sup>2</sup> would not use a French term, and recommended “great chief”. I did not agree since “great chief” is not an English title; *grand chef* is clear without translation and is written this way in many academic articles; and the Kanak speak French. One important request Paterson made was for more information about the common destiny, which I added in a footnote.

I am familiar with Claudine Jacques’ style and found this translation straightforward with only a few minor challenges, such as technical terms like *droits de succession*, or unfamiliar names and objects. I was aware that the name Fleural was a play on Jacques Lafleur, a deceased New Caledonian deputy, and read about his influence in society to better understand the effect of his name. Lafleur was known as a strongman with influence in Paris (Coumans). He opposed the Indigenous independence movement, and was from a prominent white New Caledonian family who made their wealth in nickel mining and real estate, activities which at times drew protests from conservationists due to reef damage from building projects and mine effluent (Coumans; Tolmé). Like Jacques Lafleur, the protagonist Alain Fleural finds it easy to make connections because of his family name, and is tempted by unscrupulous developers to invest in the acquisition of waterfront land from a Lifou tribe.

Regarding the *publicitaire reconnu* who made the claim about a Rolex watch, I discovered online that he was an actual advertising tycoon, Jacques Séguéla, and reading about him helped me translate the anecdote. Internet photos and maps were an invaluable resource when describing a grand Noumean villa, a bedroom with a rotunda, a vine with *fleurs aubergine*, the cemetery, Noumean streets, and Peng Beach. Of André Nerval’s adages, one in particular containing the term *ratiocinant* confounded me until I met a French speaker who read it and helped me understand it in context, after which I used the noun phrase “small affairs” rather than a verb. Finally, after many readings I picked up two intentionally contrasting phrases, pages apart: *une foule blanche* and *une foule bariolée*. At first I translated the former with “a

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<sup>2</sup> Since 1984 the use of *Kanak* in French has been invariable whether singular or plural. In English, therefore, the plural is “the Kanak” for one or many, though some translators may write “the Kanak people”.

crowd of white people” but later saw the three-word phrases in French were also ideal in English and changed it to “a white crowd” to highlight “a colourful crowd”.

Very little French Pacific literature has been published in English, yet there is much in common between New Caledonia and Australia, most notably the colonial history but also the ongoing dispute over land ownership, the importance of family and the unimportance of material wealth in the Indigenous cultures of both countries. In “Opportunities” the protagonist simply imitates his wealthy Western elders while observing a Pacific culture that places little value on possessions, but in a final twist is forced to decide whose values he prefers. Readers are left contemplating the consequences of the wrong decision, and asking “What would I do?”.

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**Opportunités**  
**Claudine Jacques**

**Opportunities**  
**Claudine Jacques**

**Translated by Patricia Worth**

Alain Fleural sortit de l'étude Clavet-Quelès un peu hagard et plus riche qu'il ne l'avait jamais été. Le soleil tapait fort et la rue, après la pénombre feutrée des bureaux, lui sembla floue, saturée par un ondoisement chatoyant, genre de grande ondulation bruyante qui venait jusqu'à lui, le rattrapait sous le parking couvert où il demeura un moment à l'abri, aveuglé et grelottant, le souffle haletant comme un jeune chien, les yeux mi-clos...

— Vous héritez, disait le jeune notaire, de votre lointain cousin André Nerval, intestat, ni marié ni pacsé, sans enfants ni famille proche, d'une maison située à la première Vallée du Tir et d'une somme en liquide de...

Charles Clavet examinait le document et suivait du doigt une ligne plus grasse.

— ...cent quinze millions deux cent six mille sept cent cinquante-trois francs cfp une fois les droits de succession, frais et honoraires payés, somme que nous vous domicilierons sur la banque de votre choix.

— Cent quinze millions, avait-il répété, c'est-à-dire, en euros, ça fait combien ?

— Il s'agit d'une somme de neuf cent soixante-cinq mille euros...

Le notaire crut sentir une réticence. Les yeux d'Alain Fleural semblaient s'être agrandis. Il s'empessa d'ajouter.

— Voyez le relevé comptable, vous payez les frais de succession au plus lourd, soit cinquante pour cent de ce que laisse monsieur Nerval, car vous n'êtes pas légataire en ligne directe. Des frais de recherche se sont accumulés également... En outre, vous héritez à la première Vallée du Tir d'une grande maison en pierres de taille, à proximité du centre-ville – mon grand-père qui a fondé cette étude notariale, habite d'ailleurs la même rue

Alain Fleural emerged from the Clavet-Quelès legal practice a little wild-eyed and richer than he had ever been. The sun was beating down, and after the muffled dimness of the offices the street seemed hazy, saturated with a shimmering undulation, like a great roaring wave coming towards him, catching him in the covered car park where he stood a moment in the shade, blinded from the sun and shaking, panting like a young dog, his eyes half-closed.

“You are inheriting,” said the young notary, “from your distant cousin, André Nerval, who died intestate, neither married nor in a de facto partnership, without children or close family, a house situated in the first Vallée du Tir and a cash sum of...”

Charles Clavet looked closely at the document and with his finger followed a line in bold.

“... one hundred and fifteen million, two hundred and six thousand, seven hundred and fifty-three Pacific francs – once the death duties, expenses and fees are paid – a sum we will deposit into a bank of your choice.”

“One hundred and fifteen million,” repeated Alain, “so, in euros, how much is that?”

“It's a sum of nine hundred and sixty-five thousand euros.”

The notary, detecting Alain Fleural's reluctance to speak and eyes that seemed to have grown larger, hastened to add:

“As you can see on the accounting statement, you're paying the heaviest death duties, being fifty per cent of what Mr Nerval left, because you aren't a direct descendant. Search fees have accumulated as well... Furthermore, you're inheriting a large stone house in the first Vallée du Tir, close to the city centre – my grandfather who founded this legal practice lives in the same street as it happens – which represents a very handsome capital valued at eighty million Pacific francs.”

—, ce qui représente un très beau capital évalué à quatre-vingt millions cfp.

— Quatre-vingt millions ?

L'air ahuri, Alain Fleural regardait le papier sans le voir.

— À peu près six cent soixante mille euros, si je saisis bien votre interrogation, précisa Charles Clavet, attentif et courtois.

Fleural sembla s'intéresser enfin au document.

— Ah, oui, très bien.

— Voici l'acte de propriété et le trousseau de clefs. Quant à la banque, pouvez-vous nous laisser un RIB pour le virement ?

— Je n'ai pas de compte à Nouméa, balbutia-t-il.

— Votre homonymie vous ouvrira les portes des banques sans problème.

— Mon homonymie ?

— Fleural est un nom très connu en Calédonie. Jacques Fleural était notre député, homme politique, homme d'affaires... c'est une famille très respectée et très aisée.

— Nous sommes peut-être parents.

— Sans doute, susurra Charles Clavet, en le raccompagnant d'un pas pressé jusqu'à l'ascenseur.

Alain Fleural l'arrêta au milieu du couloir.

— Où sont les toilettes ?

— À droite, la deuxième porte.

— Alain Fleural s'y précipita, referma la porte derrière lui et s'y adossa, blême sous la lumière bleue du néon.

Il eut à ce moment-là l'étrange sensation de ne pas être à sa place, il examina son tee-shirt chiffonné, son pantalon de randonnée à poches multiples, toutes protubérantes, un mouchoir dans l'une, un téléphone dans l'autre, son portefeuille, ses billets d'avion, mais quoi, après trente heures de voyage, une nuit écourtée, il n'avait eu le temps de rien. Son regard dégringola jusqu'aux baskets informes dont une semelle se décollait.

— Putain de merde, grommela-t-il en comparant aussitôt son apparence négligée à celle impeccable, chemise blanche et pantalon

“Eighty million?”

Lost for words, Alain Fleural looked at the paper without reading it.

“About six hundred and sixty thousand euros, if I understand your question,” clarified Charles Clavet, attentive and courteous.

Fleural seemed at last to be interested in the document.

“Ah, yes, very good.”

“Here's the property deed and the keys. And for the bank, could you leave us details of your account for the deposit?”

“I don't have an account in Noumea,” he stammered.

“Your name will open the doors of banks to you, no problems.”

“My name?”

“Fleural is a well known family name in New Caledonia. Jacques Fleural was our Deputy, our representative in parliament, a politician, a businessman... It's an affluent, well respected family.”

“We might be related.”

“No doubt,” whispered Charles Clavet, hurriedly accompanying him back to the lift.

Alain Fleural stopped him mid-corridor.

“Where are the toilets?”

“Second door on the right.”

Alain Fleural dashed in, closed the door behind him and leant on it, pale beneath the blue fluorescent light.

He had a strange feeling of being out of place. He took a close look at his ragged t-shirt, his cargo pants with multiple pockets, all of them bulging, a handkerchief in one, a phone in the other, his wallet, his plane tickets, but what can you expect after thirty hours travelling and a night cut short, he had not had time for anything. His eyes shot down to his shapeless trainers and one of the soles that was coming unstuck.

“Ohhhh shit,” he grumbled, immediately comparing his neglected appearance with the impeccable white shirt and perfectly pleated

au pli parfait, du grand jeune homme mince qui venait de le recevoir avec tant d'amabilité.

Il confronta alors son visage fatigué et bouffi à celui, plus noble, lui sembla-t-il, de Charles Clavet, front haut, barbe soignée, geste mesuré, l'homme avait ce qui lui manquait cruellement, ce petit quelque chose d'aristocratique qui change définitivement la donne. Il l'envia !

— Au revoir monsieur Fleural, je reste à votre disposition, bien entendu, articula Charles Clavet qui l'attendait patiemment sur le palier.

Alain Fleural eut le temps d'apercevoir dans le regard sombre une lumière amusée vite dissimulée sous le sérieux de la charge.

— Merci, merci encore, bafouilla-t-il les bras ballants avant de se jeter dans la cage d'escalier, ignorant maladroitement la main tendue et négligeant l'ascenseur ouvert.

Il sut immédiatement que le mot merci n'était pas ce qu'il aurait dû dire, pas avec cette intonation, mais à qui d'autre dire merci pour ce legs exceptionnel, au défunt dont il ne connaissait pas l'existence un mois plus tôt ?

Il sortit du parking et à grandes enjambées retourna à l'Auberge de jeunesse, il y parvint sans encombres, sans même s'en rendre compte, ramassa aussitôt, dans un petit sac à dos, toutes ses affaires laissées la veille, compta les quelques billets qu'il possédait, évalua combien il lui resterait après s'être acquitté de la nuit, conçut le projet fou de prendre un taxi mais choisit de repartir à pied, un plan publicitaire en main glané sur le présentoir de l'Auberge, cette économie lui permettrait d'acheter de quoi manger en attendant de toucher l'argent de l'héritage. Tant d'argent ! Il n'arrivait pas à s'en faire une idée.

Il longea bientôt les grilles du haut-commissariat, contempla longuement, parce qu'il aimait les arbres depuis sa plus tendre enfance, un baobab pansu qu'il n'avait jamais pu voir qu'en photo, et descendit l'air absent vers l'hôpital. À angle droit, il obliqua en

trousers of the tall, slim young man who had just received him so kindly.

He then contrasted his tired, puffy face with that of Charles Clavet which had seemed nobler with its high forehead, well-groomed beard and measured expressions. This man had what he was cruelly lacking, that little aristocratic something which changes the game altogether. He envied him!

“Goodbye Mr Fleural. Of course, if you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me,” said Charles Clavet, waiting patiently for him at the top of the stairs.

Alain Fleural had enough time to notice in the dark eyes an amused light, quickly concealed beneath the seriousness of the task at hand.

“Thank you, thank you again,” he spluttered, arms dangling, before launching himself down the stairs, awkwardly ignoring the hand held out to him and disregarding the open lift.

He knew right away that the words thank you were not what he ought to have said, not in that tone, but for this exceptional bequest who else could he say it to? To the deceased, whose existence he was unaware of a month earlier?

He left the car park and strode back to the youth hostel, reaching it without a hitch, without even trying. He immediately gathered into a small backpack all his things he had left there the day before, then counted what little cash he possessed, calculated how much would remain after settling his bill for the night, came up with a mad plan to catch a taxi but chose to leave on foot, a city map in hand that he had picked up at the display stand in the hostel. These savings left enough for him to feed himself while waiting to receive the money from the inheritance. So much money! He could not get his head around how much it was.

Soon he was walking alongside the High Commission fence. He gazed a long while at a paunchy baobab; he had loved trees since he was a small boy but had never been able to see one of these except in a photo. His mind miles away, he walked on towards the hospital. At

direction d'un carrefour planté d'une jeune cocoteraie, puis serra encore sur la droite et parvint à la Vallée du Tir.

— Quatre-vingt millions, une maison de quatre-vingt millions se répétait-il... Mazette ! L'excitation le tenaillait, son pas se fit plus rapide. Je la vends au plus vite, j'encaisse et je rentre en France, à moi la belle vie.

Cinq minutes après il franchissait la grille en fer forgé de l'entrée et pénétrait dans le jardin.

Une allée de très vieux Cycas, des dinosaures, songea-t-il, le conduisit jusqu'à la porte d'une imposante bâtisse en pierres de taille. Il fouilla dans sa poche, en sortit le trousseau de trois clefs que lui avait donné Charles Clavet et tourna la plus grande dans la serrure.

La porte s'ouvrit. Ce n'était pas un miracle en soi mais pour Alain Fleural, c'était davantage. C'était le «Sésame, ouvre-toi !» de Fernandel dans *Ali Baba et les quarante voleurs*. C'était la grotte et son trésor, c'était... inespéré !

Dès l'entrée, une intense odeur de moisi le fit éternuer, puis ce fut la poussière qui lui piqua les yeux. Il suivit la lumière oblique de l'entrebâillement et traversa le vestibule puis avança dans ce qui devait être un salon, distingua des fenêtres qu'il s'empressa d'ouvrir. Le premier volet poussé dévoilait un jardin désordonné, une belle friche sous des manguiers couverts de fruits. Le deuxième exhibait une tonnelle ancienne où paressait une somptueuse liane aux fleurs aubergine. Il se retourna pour découvrir, interdit, une vaste pièce meublée à l'ancienne, la surprise l'assit exténué entre les bras du premier fauteuil. Lorsqu'il contempla les tableaux sur les murs, les objets sur les meubles, il eut le sentiment d'entrer par effraction dans le passé d'André Nerval.

— Tout cela est à moi, bon Dieu, tout, tout, tout, s'exclama-t-il dans un fou rire nerveux. Tout, tout, tout, répéta-t-il en chantant à tue-tête. Tout, tout, tout...

the corner he turned off in the direction of a junction planted with a young coconut grove, then, keeping to the right he reached the Vallée du Tir.

“Eighty million, a house worth eighty million,” he muttered to himself. “Wow!” The excitement was building, he picked up his pace. “I’ll sell it as quick as I can, I’ll bank the money and go back to France, the good life for me.”

Five minutes later he passed through the wrought iron gate at the entrance and stepped into the garden.

A pathway lined with old cycads – dinosaurs, he mused – led him to the door of an imposing building of dressed stone. He dug into his pocket, pulled out the bunch of three keys that Charles Clavet had given him and turned the largest one in the lock.

The door opened. It was not a miracle in itself but for Alain Fleural it was something more. It was the “Open Sesame” of Fernandel in the film *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*. It was the cave and its treasure, it was... something he had never dreamt of!

No sooner was he inside than an intense musty smell made him sneeze and the dust stung his eyes. He followed the glancing light from the partly open door and passed through the foyer into what must have been a drawing room where he could make out some windows which he was quick to open. He pushed back one of the shutters to reveal an unkempt, abandoned garden beneath fruit-laden mango trees. The second shutter exposed an old gazebo where a luxuriant purple-flowered vine basked lazily. Turning round he discovered, dumbfounded, a huge room furnished with antiques. The surprise was draining and he sat in the first armchair he could find. As he contemplated the paintings on the walls and the objects on the furniture, he felt like a burglar breaking into André Nerval's past.

“All this is mine, good God, all of it, all of it, all of it,” he exclaimed in a fit of nervous laughter. “All, all, all,” he repeated, shouting at the top of his voice. “All, all, all of it.”

La visite lui révéla d'autres bonnes surprises, la maison était splendide, les meubles, les tapis moelleux et les objets rares qui la meublaient, somptueux. Il n'y connaissait rien en style, en époque, ou pas grand-chose mais il avait fait des stages de portier bagagiste dans de grands hôtels parisiens très chics et savait reconnaître le luxe. Son regard se posa sur un petit meuble noir et or, qu'il jugea prétentieux, néanmoins il était bien loin de sa colocation minable en banlieue, bien loin de ses étagères en bois compressé, de son dernier contrat à durée déterminée. À presque trente ans, il héritait d'une maison, d'un jardin ensoleillé et d'argent, d'un avenir murmura-t-il circonspect.

Il gloussa au souvenir d'Emma qui l'avait quitté en le traitant de raté, de minable. Il aurait aimé qu'elle le voie en cet instant. Quand il rentrerait en France, il se vengerait en allant la chercher avec une Mercedes dernier modèle, intérieur en cuir blanc et chromes étincelants, il l'inviterait au resto, un resto chic, hors de prix, ensuite il la déposerait devant son studio et c'est lui qui lui dirait adieu. Des filles comme Emma, il pourrait désormais en trouver en pagaille.

Après avoir dévoré les mangues sabots du jardin, il décida de s'installer dans la plus grande des chambres, sans doute celle d'André car elle jouissait d'une bibliothèque et d'un bureau installé dans une rotonde ensoleillée. Il ouvrit une porte sur une vaste penderie et s'extasia. Les vêtements placés sur des cintres en bois blond étaient rangés par couleur, des vestes bleu-marine, des pantalons gris ou beiges, des chemises bleu ciel ou blanches, toutes à manches longues et une ample collection de cravates en soie, de ceintures et de chaussures en cuir souple, des merveilles, alignées là comme dans un magasin, chaque paire avec son embauchoir en cèdre rouge, il s'assit sur un petit banc de cordonnier qui contenait des boîtes de cirage et essaya presque religieusement une paire de mocassins marron glacé. André Nerval chaussait du 42, lui aussi ! Quelle veine ! Pris d'une inspiration soudaine,

The visit revealed other pleasant surprises: the house was splendid, and the furniture, soft carpets and rare objects that filled it were sumptuous. He knew nothing of style, or of eras, or at least not much, but he had had a few work placements as a baggage porter in grand, elegant Parisian hotels and could recognize luxury. His eye fell on a small black and gold cabinet, which he deemed pretentious. However, he was a long way from his basic rental flat in the suburbs, a long way from his fibreboard shelves, from his last fixed-term contract. At almost thirty years of age he was inheriting a house, a sunny garden and money. A future, he whispered circumspectly.

He chuckled over the memory of Emma who had left him, accusing him of being pathetic, a loser. He wished she could see him right now. When he returned to France he would get his revenge by going to pick her up in the latest model Mercedes with a white leather interior and gleaming chrome, he would invite her to a restaurant, a pricey posh restaurant, and afterwards he would drop her back at her studio flat, and it would be him saying goodbye to her. Girls like Emma, he would now be able to find them in droves.

After gorging on sabot mangoes from the garden, he decided to make the largest bedroom his own; no doubt it had been André's since it had a library and a desk, in a rotunda bathed in sunlight. He opened a door to a huge walk-in wardrobe and fell into raptures. The clothes on blond wood hangers were arranged by colour, dark blue jackets, grey or beige trousers, pale blue or white shirts, all long-sleeved, a large collection of silk ties, and belts and shoes in supple leather, wonderful shoes all in a line as in a shop, each pair with its red cedar shoetree. He sat on a small shoemaker's bench that contained tins of polish, and in an almost religious experience tried on a pair of taupe loafers. André Nerval took a size 42, like him! What luck! In a flash of inspiration he ripped off his t-shirt to try on one of the long-sleeved shirts, then exchanged his cargo pants for some trousers. He studied

il arracha son tee-shirt et essaya une chemise, il en fit de même pour un pantalon, puis il s'observa dans le miroir, la carrure et la taille étaient sensiblement les mêmes mais il était à l'étroit, boudiné à vrai dire, dans le pantalon et la chemise, il tenta de rentrer le ventre, il ne pourrait pas rester ainsi, abdominaux contractés, bien longtemps, Nerval devait être plus mince. Il songea spontanément à Charles Clavet, à son allure. Il perdrait le gras qui lui ceinturerait la taille, il s'en faisait la promesse.

Était-ce le décalage horaire ou cette demi-journée irréelle, la fatigue le projeta sur le lit où il s'endormit, fenêtres ouvertes sur le ciel bleu.

Il entreprit dès le lendemain les diverses démarches administratives indispensables, signa des contrats pour l'eau, le courant et la ligne téléphonique, constata que le nom de Fleural était bien un passe-partout et obtint miraculeusement dans la journée la toute première carte bancaire de sa vie, ce dont, bien entendu, il ne se vanta pas.

Pendant les semaines qui suivirent, il se consacra, avec un enthousiasme proche de l'exaltation au grand ménage de la maison qu'il faisait un peu plus sienne à chaque coup de balai ou de plumeau. Rien ne le rebutait, ni l'encaustique sur les boiseries ni le vinaigre d'alcool sur la robinetterie. Seul le rebutait le petit meuble noir et or. Puis vint la réhabilitation du jardin.

La maison pourrait bientôt être mise en vente.

En attendant il en profitait, la mine gourmande. Une maison, rien que pour lui, du matin jusqu'au soir ! Lorsque, éreinté mais satisfait, il s'installait dans le fauteuil d'André Nerval et feuilletait avec application les livres de la bibliothèque, il le savourait encore. Tout l'intéressait désormais et cet attrait nouveau rendait aisées sa lecture et son initiation. André Nerval avait inséré des marque-pages aux endroits les plus intéressants. «Ne pas corner monstrueusement la page d'un livre mais employer un marque-page» lirait-il plus tard dans un de ses cahiers. Il décida de suivre ces

himself in the mirror; the shoulder span and height were roughly the same but he had squeezed into the trousers and shirt, and in truth was bulging out of them. He tried pulling his stomach in, but could not stay like that with his abdominals contracted for very long. Nerval must have been slimmer. He automatically thought of Charles Clavet's elegance. He promised himself he would lose the fat around his waist.

Was it jet lag or this unreal half day that tired him out? Whatever it was, he threw himself onto the bed where he fell asleep, the windows open onto the blue sky.

The next day he took care of various essential administrative procedures, signed contracts for the water, electricity and phone line, noticed the name of Fleural was quite a door opener and miraculously obtained by the end of the day the very first bank card of his life, which understandably he did not brag about.

During the weeks that followed, he devoted himself with an enthusiasm close to exaltation to the great amount of cleaning needed in the house which he made more and more his own with every sweep of a broom or stroke of a feather duster. Nothing discouraged him, not the furniture polish for the woodwork nor the cleaning vinegar for the taps. The only thing that put him off was the small black and gold cabinet. Next came the renovation of the garden.

The house could soon be put up for sale.

In the meantime he would make the most of it, savouring the experience. A house all to himself, from morning till night! When, exhausted but satisfied, he settled into André Nerval's armchair, he took even more pleasure in its comfort by studiously leafing through some books from the library. Everything interested him now, and this new attraction made his reading and his rite of passage easy. André Nerval had inserted bookmarks in the most significant places. "Do not roughly dog-ear a book's pages but use a bookmark," he would read later in one of Nerval's notebooks. He decided to follow the trail of these page

signets, Petit Poucet cherchant sa route, il apprit ainsi qu'une coupe en cristal des verreries de Daum trônait dans l'entrée, qu'un triptyque de Klimt installé dans le salon de réception pouvait passer pour un original aux yeux des néophytes mais n'était qu'une interprétation fort réussie d'un tableau existant, *Les âges de la vie*, vendu par un faussaire en Malaisie, qu'un secrétaire obtenu à vil prix avait été réalisé par un élève en marqueterie de l'École Boulle, que les magnifiques tapis chinois ne provenaient pas des ventes de Drouot mais d'une saisie des biens d'un certain Donadieu, assureur sans scrupule parti à la cloche de bois après avoir escroqué nombre d'épargnants crédules. Deux pages étaient consacrées au petit meuble en bois noirci qui était enregistré comme un meuble d'entre-deux à profil découpé en marqueterie d'écaille et laiton, au plateau de marbre blanc, qu'André Nerval nommait affectueusement «mon inestimable Napoléon III».

Entrer insidieusement dans la vie secrète de Nerval valait chaque découverte : ses collections de timbres, de papillons, ses ivoires, ses dessins érotiques découverts dans le secrétaire et surtout son herbier, parlaient de lui, racontaient un bout de sa vie. Prudent, il n'essayait pas de le comprendre, c'eût été vain et prématuré, il souhaitait seulement s'en rapprocher, s'en faire un ami, un parent, quelqu'un dont il pourrait parler en société : mon lointain cousin de Nouvelle-Calédonie, dirait-il, mon grand-oncle, pensait-il déjà pour ajouter à cette relation une proximité affectueuse.

La vie, ou bien était-ce André Nerval, le gâtait jour après jour, et lorsqu'il ouvrit les persiennes sur un nouveau matin vaporeux, une douce lumière éclairant le bureau l'invita à passer une main caressante sur la marqueterie. Ce faisant, il manipula fortuitement une tirette, un déclic ouvrit une cache... À peine surpris, il découvrit de petits carnets reliés où courait une écriture fine ainsi qu'une montre Rolex en or dans un petit sac en velours cramoisi. Il referma la cache, mit la montre à son poignet et ne la quitta plus. Après

markers, like Little Thumbling finding his way back home. Thus he learned that a crystal bowl from the Daum glassworks sat proudly in the entrance; that a Klimt triptych hanging in the reception lounge could pass for an original in the eyes of novices but was only a well executed reproduction of the painting *The Ages of Life*, sold by a forger in Malaysia; that a secrétaire, obtained dirt cheap, had been produced by a student of marquetry at the École Boulle in Paris; that the magnificent Chinese rugs did not come from the Drouot auctions but from the repossession of goods and chattels of a certain Donadieu, an unscrupulous insurer who did a runner after swindling a number of naïve investors. Two pages were dedicated to the small blackened wood cabinet, recorded as a console table ornamented on the front with marquetry of tortoiseshell and brass with a white marble top. André Nerval had affectionately called it "my priceless Napoleon III".

Entering insidiously into the secret life of Nerval was worth it with every find: his collections of stamps and butterflies, his ivories, his erotic drawings discovered in the secrétaire, and especially his herbarium, all spoke of him and recounted a little of his life. Fleural was careful not to try to understand him; it would have been vain and premature. He wished only to get closer to him, to make him a friend, a relative, someone he could talk about in company: my distant New Caledonian cousin he would say, my great uncle he was already thinking, to add an affectionate closeness to this relationship.

Life, or was it André Nerval, was spoiling him day after day. When he opened the blinds one hazy new morning, the soft light on the desk invited him to draw his hand gently over the marquetry, whereupon he fortuitously put his hand on a catch, and click, a secret drawer opened... He was hardly surprised to find some small bound notebooks through which ran a fine handwriting, as well as a gold Rolex watch in a small crimson velvet bag. He closed up the hiding place, put the watch on his wrist and did not take it off. After a week it began to

une semaine, elle se remit à fonctionner normalement et ce fut pour Alain Fleural le signe qu'André Nerval l'acceptait comme légataire. Il se souvint qu'il avait grincé des dents et grogné contre les riches et les puissants, lors d'une polémique qui avait exacerbé la France parce qu'un publicitaire reconnu — son nom, mais quel était son nom ? —, avait assuré que le fait de ne pas avoir de Rolex à cinquante ans était un signe d'échec social. Désormais, il pourrait faire illusion et cela lui plaisait assez, malgré tout ce qu'il avait pu en dire. Il changeait, l'argent, l'aisance, la maison, la présence imaginaire de l'oncle le transformaient.

Il ne s'intéressa aux petits carnets noirs que le mois suivant, ils contenaient des listes très longues d'adages, de résolutions, de réflexions, émaillées d'anecdotes. Il sourit dès la première ligne : «On reconnaît un gentleman à ses chaussures de qualité.» Cette approche, somme toute partagée depuis peu, le détermina à engager la lecture.

«Ne pas se mettre en avant, préférer la discrétion et la réserve.»

«Ne jamais contredire qui que ce soit en public.»

«Rester discret sur soi et surtout sur les autres. Ne colporter aucun ragot.»

«Ne pas paraître ni trop brillant (cela énerve) ni trop bête (cela ennuie).»

«Laisser planer le doute sur la fortune et les biens que l'on possède, pour certains ce serait trop et pour d'autres, pas assez.»

«Préférer la marche qui rend svelte ou le taxi qui favorise le contact populaire à l'achat d'une voiture de petit standing.»

«Recevoir à dîner une fois sans compter plutôt que dix fois en ratiocinant.»

«Voyager peu mais utile afin d'évoquer des souvenirs exotiques en société.»

Il eut un moment de tournis. Les règles ainsi listées étaient sans aucun doute le fruit d'une grande expérience, «L'expérience n'est qu'une longue suite d'erreurs, une lumière que l'on a dans le dos», lut-il plus loin, ce qui le rassura sur ses maladroites et l'engagea à persévérer. Il regarda d'un autre œil l'inestimable petit meuble Napoléon III car il lui semblait

work normally again, and for Alain Fleural this was the sign that André Nerval accepted him as an heir. He remembered he had cringed and grumbled against the rich and powerful during a huge controversy that exasperated France because a well known advertising executive — his name, but what was his name? — had made it clear that if you did not own a Rolex by the age of fifty, it was a sign of social failure. From now on, he could almost look the part and he rather liked that, in spite of everything he had said about it. He was changing; the money, the material comforts, the house, the imaginary presence of the uncle were transforming him.

It was not until the following month that he took an interest in the small black notebooks. They contained long lists of adages, resolutions and reflections, peppered with anecdotes. From the first line he was smiling: "A gentleman is recognized by his quality footwear." This approach, which after all he had shared of late, induced him to keep reading.

"Do not put yourself forward, choose instead discretion and reserve."

"Never contradict anyone in public."

"Remain discreet about yourself and especially about others. Do not spread gossip."

"Do not appear to be either too smart (it annoys people) or too stupid (it bores them)."

"Allow doubt to linger over your fortune and possessions, for some it would be too much and for others not enough."

"Choose walking which keeps you slim, or a taxi which stimulates contact with the working class, rather than purchasing an everyday brand of car."

"Host one lavish dinner party for everyone rather than ten small affairs."

"Travel little but strategically so you can recount exotic memories in company."

For a moment his head was spinning. The rules thus listed were without a doubt the fruit of great experience. "Experience is just a long series of mistakes, a light that shines from behind you," he read further on, which reassured him about his blunders and encouraged him to persevere. He looked at the priceless little Napoleon III console table with



désormais qu'André Nerval lui parlait à l'oreille et que chaque mot avait le pouvoir de dicter sa conduite ou de modifier ses goûts.

En toute confiance, il décida de s'y conformer.

Trois mois s'écoulèrent, et parce qu'il avait lu «Les cimetières sont des lieux de vie», Alain Fleural décida de se rendre au cimetière du quatrième kilomètre afin de fleurir la tombe de son regretté grand-oncle. Il choisit une chemise bleue dans la penderie, un pantalon en beau tergal gris et tout lui alla. Il comprit qu'il avait maigri grâce aux travaux réalisés dans la maison et à cette diète qu'il s'était imposée loin des fast-foods. «Être toujours correctement vêtu et rasé de près.» Il se regarda dans le miroir, il était tel que l'oncle aurait aimé qu'il soit. Satisfait, il se peigna à la façon d'André, la raie bien à droite, les cheveux plaqués en arrière et appela un taxi qui le conduirait au cimetière.

Mais avant, il voulait vérifier quelque chose.

— Office notarial Quelès, monsieur, vous m'y attendrez, car ensuite je vous demanderai de me conduire au cimetière du quatrième kilomètre, je vous remercie bien, monsieur, lança-t-il au chauffeur, un métis pâle aux cheveux crépus, en s'asseyant dans la berline verte.

«S'adresser aux petites gens avec beaucoup d'égard et les voussoyer toujours», avait-il lu dans le carnet noir. Lorsqu'ils arrivèrent devant l'étude, le chauffeur sortit et se précipita pour lui ouvrir la porte, les préceptes d'André avaient du bon.

— Alain Fleural, s'annonça-t-il à la jeune femme de la réception avec un sourire convenu. Je désire parler à Charles Clavet. Je n'ai pas de rendez-vous. Pourriez-vous m'annoncer ?

— Veuillez patienter dans le salon, monsieur Fleural, je le préviens.

— Je n'ai que quelques minutes devant moi, insista-t-il avec dans la voix quelque chose de subtilement impérieux.

a fresh eye, for it now seemed to him that André Nerval was speaking in his ear and that every word had the power to dictate his behaviour or to modify his tastes.

With complete confidence, he decided to comply.

Three months passed, and because he had read "Cemeteries are places of life," Alain Fleural decided to go to the Fourth Kilometre cemetery to put some flowers on the grave of his dearly departed great uncle. From the wardrobe he chose a blue shirt and a pair of fine grey Terylene trousers. Everything fitted him. He realized he had slimmed down thanks to the work he had done in the house, as well as the self-imposed diet now that he was far away from fast foods. "Always be appropriately dressed and clean shaven." He looked at himself in the mirror; he was just as the uncle would have liked him to be. Feeling satisfied, he combed his hair in André's style, parted on the right and slicked back, and called a taxi to take him to the cemetery.

But first he wanted to check something.

"The Quelès notary's office, sir, where I'd like you to wait for me because I will then ask you to drive me to the Fourth Kilometre cemetery. Thank you kindly, sir," he said to the driver, a pale mixed-blood man with frizzy hair, as he sat in the green taxi.

"Speak to people of modest means with much regard and always address them formally," he had read in the little black book. When they arrived at the office the driver got out and dashed around to open the door for him. André's precepts had their benefits.

"Alain Fleural," he announced with the right smile to the young receptionist. "I'd like to speak to Charles Clavet. I don't have an appointment. Could you tell him I'm here?"

"Please wait in the lounge, Mr Fleural, I'll let him know."

"I only have a few minutes," he stressed, with something subtly authoritarian in his tone.

— Monsieur Clavet, monsieur Fleural pour vous, disait déjà la secrétaire au téléphone. Elle eut un sourire charmant. Il arrive, monsieur.

Charles Clavet arrivait en effet à grands pas et Fleural, faussement désinvolte, put voir sur sa mine combien il était surpris voire médusé par sa transformation. C'était ce qu'il était venu chercher, rien d'autre que cet étonnement qui faisait de lui un homme nouveau.

— Je ne veux pas vous déranger très longtemps. Je passais devant l'étude. Je tenais à vous saluer, j'ai été très pris par les affaires, ces derniers temps.

— Bien, bien, répondit le jeune notaire, interloqué mais conquis.

— Mais vous êtes occupé, je vous laisse, murmura Fleural sur le ton de la confiance, nous aurons l'occasion de nous revoir, n'est-ce pas ?

— Bien sûr !

La porte de l'ascenseur s'ouvrit au même moment, Alain Fleural s'effaça devant une vieille dame exubérante, toute vêtue de beige et couverte de bijoux. Il la complimenta sur son élégance puis redescendit les deux étages, seul et satisfait.

Il souriait encore dans le taxi qui l'emportait.

Il arriva en plein enterrement. Une foule se pressait sur le chemin qui montait en zigzagant vers la chapelle. Il s'inséra dans le cortège et s'installa jambes croisées sur l'un des derniers bancs pour écouter l'éloge funèbre et de là, observer les participants. C'était une foule blanche, plutôt aisée qui s'était rassemblée sur le parvis. Des groupes s'étaient formés, femmes et jeunes filles assises, hommes debout. Il comprit très vite qu'il n'était pas à sa place, une phrase du carnet disait : «Regarder autour de soi et se conformer aux us et coutumes», aussi se leva-t-il sans attendre et s'approcha des hommes présents.

— Numa Mitchell, dit l'un d'eux, débonnaire, le voyant arriver.

— Alain Fleural, répondit-il en prenant soin d'articuler.

Le nom fit son effet, les hommes se présentèrent à tour de rôle, les poignées de

“Mr Clavet, Mr Fleural is here to see you,” said the secretary, already on the phone. She had a charming smile. “He’s coming, sir.”

Indeed Charles Clavet was coming now, stepping lively, and Fleural, deceptively casual, could see on his face how surprised, in fact, how stupefied he was by the transformation. This is what he had come looking for, simply this astonishment that made a new man of him.

“I don’t want to keep you very long. I was passing your office and wanted to say hello. I’ve been quite caught up with all this business lately.”

“Good, good,” replied the young notary, taken aback but won over.

“But you’re busy, I’ll let you go,” said Fleural, subdued and confident. “We’ll have an opportunity to meet again, won’t we?”

“Of course!”

The lift doors opened and out stepped an exuberant elderly woman, all in beige and covered in jewellery. As Alain Fleural let her pass, he complimented her on her elegance. Then he descended the two floors, alone and satisfied.

He was still smiling as the taxi drove him away.

He arrived in the middle of a funeral. A large number of people were hurrying up the zigzagging road to a family mortuary chapel. He blended into the cortege, and sat legs crossed, on a seat at the back, from where he could listen to the funeral eulogy and observe the participants. It was a white crowd, rather well-off, who had gathered in front of the chapel. Some groups had formed, women and young girls seated, men standing. He quickly realized he was not where he was supposed to be, for an instruction in the notebook said “Look around you and conform to the ways and customs,” so without waiting longer, he rose and went over to the men.

“Numa Mitchell,” said one of them debonairly, seeing him approach.

“Alain Fleural,” he replied, taking care to articulate each word.

The name had its effect, the men introduced themselves by turns, handshakes were

main furent échangées et le cercle s'agrandit aussitôt. On l'acceptait d'emblée. On parla du défunt le juste temps qu'il fallait pour paraître correct, c'était d'ailleurs un brave homme qui possédait toutes les qualités dont celles suffisantes, d'être bien né et d'avoir des immeubles au centre-ville, il y eut une anecdote ou deux qu'Alain Fleural se promit de retenir pour les écrire dans un carnet qui serait son œuvre, puis on évoqua brièvement la politique du moment, le referendum, le destin commun et enfin on parla affaires.

Alain Fleural s'inquiéta, il n'était pas encore assez informé pour participer à ce genre de discussion. Il cherchait l'échappatoire en regardant autour de lui. Heureusement, la vieille dame exubérante croisée chez le notaire arrivait en haletant, la montée était raide. Il s'excusa auprès de ses interlocuteurs et descendit l'allée à sa rencontre, il offrit son aide et la conduisit à une place assise au premier rang. «Rester indifférent aux jeunes femmes, être galant sans excès avec les femmes mariées, choyer et complimenter les femmes âgées sans craindre l'exagération.» La vieille dame, enchantée par tant d'égards, s'appuyait sur son bras comme sur celui d'un ami fidèle, ce comportement ne passa pas inaperçu tant chez les femmes présentes, sensibles à la courtoisie masculine, que chez les hommes qui décelèrent à tort, mais sans rien en dire, l'évidence d'un lien de parenté qui confirmait, s'il en était besoin, qu'Alain Fleural était bien celui qu'il prétendait être.

Pour lui, ce fut une consécration silencieuse.

Un peu plus tard, il s'éloigna discrètement pour se rendre sur la tombe de son lointain parent. Il ne fut pas surpris de découvrir un caveau en granit noir, un prénom et un nom écrits en lettres dorées, une date de naissance, rien de plus, l'essentiel était là. Sous le granit, gisait la dépouille d'un homme volontairement solitaire qui avait préparé lui-même sa dernière demeure. Manquait la dernière date qu'il eût

exchanged and the circle immediately grew in size. He was accepted from the outset. They spoke of the deceased for just the right length of time to appear correct; besides, he had been a decent fellow who possessed all the right qualities including the essentials, coming from a good family and having properties in the city centre. There was an anecdote or two that Alain Fleural determined to remember and write in a notebook which would be his own work, then they briefly raised the politics of the day, the referendum, the common destiny<sup>3</sup> and finally they talked business.

Alain Fleural was fretting, he was not yet well enough informed to join this type of discussion. He looked around for an escape route. Fortunately the exuberant elderly woman he had run into at the notary's office was coming up the steep path, out of breath. He excused himself from the conversation and went down to meet her. He offered his help and led her to a seat in the front row. "Remain indifferent to young women, be gallant in moderation with married women, indulge and compliment older women without fear of exaggeration." The lady, charmed by so much respect, leant on his arm as on that of a loyal friend. This behaviour did not go unnoticed either by the women present who were sensitive to male courtesy, or by the men who wrongly detected, but without saying so, evidence of a family connection which confirmed, if proof were needed, that Alain Fleural was the man he was believed to be.

For him, it was a silent recognition.

A little later he discreetly left them and made his way to the grave of his distant relative. He was not surprised to find a vault in black granite, a first name and family name written in gold letters, a date of birth, nothing more, the main details were there. Beneath the granite lay the remains of a man, a loner by choice, who had prepared his final resting place himself. Only missing was the date of

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<sup>3</sup> The "common destiny" is an agreement between the indigenous Kanak and settler communities of the French-ruled Pacific island of Kanaky New Caledonia. Independence referenda were held in 2018, 2020 and 2021, with the result that New Caledonia remains French though the electorate is deeply divided.

été bien en mal d'ajouter. C'était à lui, Alain Fleural, de la faire graver pour, de la naissance à la mort, donner de l'épaisseur à sa vie.

Il reprit dès lors les habitudes de son oncle, vérifiées dans ses agendas, le matin, de très bonne heure, habillé, coiffé et rasé de près, certains préceptes étant définitivement intégrés, Alain Fleural descendait jusqu'à l'étonnante alimentation chinoise qui faisait l'angle de la rue pour y acheter son journal et son pain frais. La charmante jeune fille, comme il l'appelait, chargée de la caisse du magasin, le regardait de ses yeux bridés avec un peu plus que de l'admiration mais il ne savait quoi faire de cet appel muet, l'ancien Alain Fleural aurait su, sans doute, se serait précipité dans une aventure sans lendemain, le nouveau s'embarquait dans un tas de contradictions et de préjugés, aussi s'intéressait-il à chaque visite davantage à la chatte angora qui paressait sur le comptoir qu'à la petite Asiatique qui finit par lui offrir gentiment un chaton, sans doute pour le séduire. Il lui achetait donc depuis, un paquet de croquettes en plus du pain et du journal. Puis il remontait chez lui d'un pas souple, s'installait dans le jardin, le chaton à ses pieds, dégustait une tasse de café Le Roy, un arabica calédonien rare choisi pour la table du président de la République française, et là, proche de la béatitude, explorait le contenu du journal, «Tout savoir de l'actualité pour s'intégrer» était un enseignement d'André qu'il mettait en œuvre chaque jour. De page en page, il atteignait celle des décès et choisissait tranquillement l'enterrement auquel il assisterait. Pour lui qui n'avait ni amis ni connaissances, se rendre au cimetière était devenu une jolie promenade. L'endroit était gai et fleuri. Il découvrait des noms, familiers ou étonnants car venant de toutes les ethnies du pays, des tombes incroyables, certaines aux décors sobres et austères, d'autres ornées de tissus colorés, d'autres encore de colliers de coquillages, de photographies dans des cadres, de bibelots, il allait ainsi de l'austérité occidentale à la magnificence océanienne et notait scrupuleusement sur son calepin les

death, which André Nerval would have had a hard job adding. It was up to Alain Fleural to have it engraved, to record the extent of his life from birth to death.

He subsequently resumed his uncle's habits, verified from the diaries. Bright and early every morning, dressed, hair combed, clean shaven, certain precepts having been definitively incorporated, Alain Fleural would go down to the remarkable Chinese grocery store on the corner of the street to buy his newspaper and fresh bread. The charming young girl, as he called her, who was in charge of the checkout, would look at him out of her slanting eyes with a little more than admiration, but he did not know what to do about this mute invitation. The old Alain Fleural would probably have known, and would have thrown himself into a one-night stand, but the new Alain was caught in a muddle of contradictions and prejudices, therefore with each visit he showed more interest in the angora cat that lazed on the counter than in the little Asian girl who ended up kindly offering him a kitten, probably to seduce him. So from then on he bought a packet of cat biscuits as well as the bread and newspaper. At an easy pace he would go back up to his house, sit in the garden, the kitten at his feet, savour a cup of Leroy coffee, a rare New Caledonian arabica selected for the table of the president of the French Republic, and there, close to earthly bliss, he would explore the contents of the newspaper: "Stay informed about current affairs so you can fit in," was one of André's teachings that he put into practice every day. He would turn the pages until he reached the death notices and would calmly choose the funeral to attend. For him, a man with neither friends nor acquaintances, a trip to the cemetery had become a pleasant outing. The place was cheerful and flowery. He discovered some names, familiar or surprising because they came from all the ethnicities of the territory, some unbelievable graves, a few with sobre, austere decorations, others adorned with colourful fabrics, still others with shells, photographs in frames or trinkets strung together. And so he went from Western

informations qu'il jugeait utiles et ses propres réflexions. C'est ainsi qu'il assista, de près ou de loin, à une bonne cinquantaine de cérémonies où il se fit naturellement les relations auxquelles il n'aurait jamais pu prétendre autrement.

Ce jour-là, il y avait deux enterrements à quelques heures d'intervalle.

Un temps clément, les fortes chaleurs passées, il décida de passer sa matinée au cimetière.

Pour le premier, il ne s'agissait que d'une veillée, la dépouille royale rejoignait son île de Lifou le lendemain matin, accompagnée de ses sujets. Une foule bariolée avait envahi le parking, les allées et le chemin zigzagant. Il craignit de gêner, seul Européen parmi ces hommes et ces femmes d'une autre culture, population qu'il avait croisée dans les rues, au marché, dans les magasins depuis son arrivée, mais qu'il ne connaissait pas.

Pourtant, il s'aperçut vite que cela n'avait pas grande importance pour eux, en quelques minutes, il faisait partie du groupe, on lui disait bonjour, on lui donnait à boire, on lui proposait une place sur les premiers bancs à côté de la famille du défunt. Autour de lui des nattes posées sur le sol accueillaient les femmes et les enfants, les conversations étaient autant emplies de pleurs que de rires. Un homme d'un certain âge, chevelu, vêtu d'un tee-shirt Kanaky, une pièce de tissu jaune et vert lui ceinturant la taille, lui demanda son nom.

— Alain Fleural, dit-il.

C'est bien que tu sois venu pour aider le Vieux à partir, lui fut-il répondu avec émotion, et l'homme le serra dans ses bras puis il s'adressa en langue à ceux qui se trouvaient là.

Le silence se fit, l'homme se racla la gorge à plusieurs reprises.

— *Enia cile matre amamane koi nyishëti la ketre trejine ka madra Alain Fleural, ka traqa troa hane ce kapa me eashë la hace ka eje the shë, jëne la mecine la AngaJoxu shë.*

austerity to Oceanian magnificence, and in his notebook he scrupulously recorded information he deemed useful, along with his own thoughts. In this way he attended, directly or indirectly, a good fifty or so ceremonies where he quite naturally formed relationships to which he could never have otherwise aspired.

That day there were two funerals, a few hours apart.

The weather being mild, the worst of the heat over, he decided to spend his morning in the cemetery.

The first funeral turned out to be only a memorial service; the royal remains of the *grand chef* would be returning to the island of Lifou the next morning, accompanied by his subjects. A colourful crowd had filled the car park, the pathways and the zigzagging road. He feared he would be disturbing them, the only European among these men and women of another culture, people he had been passing in the streets, at the market and in the shops since his arrival, but with whom he was not acquainted.

However, he quickly noticed that this hardly mattered to them; in a few minutes he had become part of the group, they were saying hello to him, giving him something to drink, suggesting a place in the front rows beside the family of the deceased. Around him women and children were coming to sit on mats laid on the ground, and the conversations were filled with as much laughter as crying. A long-haired man in his later years wearing a Kanaky t-shirt and a piece of yellow and green fabric around his waist as a sash, asked him his name.

“Alain Fleural,” he said.

“It's good that you've come to help the Old Man to depart,” was his emotional reply, and he hugged Alain then spoke in Drehu language to all present.

Silence fell, the man cleared his throat several times.

*Enia cile matre amamane koi nyishëti la ketre trejine ka madra Alain Fleural, ka traqa troa hane ce kapa me eashë la hace ka eje the shë, jëne la mecine la AngaJoxu shë.*

*Tronyishëti a ce olene kowe la atre celë, ka tru  
ihnimine me ka nyipi ewekë ne la qenenoje shë.  
Oleti atraqatr koi nyipëti Alain Fleural.<sup>4</sup>*

Ce discours mystérieux devait être amical puisque les femmes et les hommes vinrent l’embrasser à tour de rôle, tête baissée, yeux humides, dans une sorte d’humilité bienveillante. Il remarqua que tous portaient le même coupon de tissu vert et jaune, les femmes en avaient fait des robes, les hommes des ceintures ou des écharpes, des couvre-chefs aussi. L’orateur avait suivi son regard, il interpella un groupe de jeunes, on déroula bientôt un long tissu autour de lui et on l’attacha autour de son buste. Puis, comme on l’avait accueilli, on l’oublia. Ce coupon de tissu était un signe d’appartenance, il suffisait. Ainsi adopté Alain Fleural faisait partie de cette grande famille en deuil qui honorait son défunt. Il resta assis un long moment au milieu d’eux à réfléchir sur le sens de ce qu’il vivait là. Lorsque le convoi se mit en route, il s’en alla par les chemins détournés du cimetière vers la tombe d’André Nerval, le manou vert et jaune plié en quatre sous le bras.

Le doreur avait accompli sa tâche, la date du décès, plus brillante avait été ajoutée. Elle se patinerait avec le temps. Alain Fleural n’en fut content que l’espace d’un éclair, un sentiment de tristesse l’envahit tout aussitôt avec l’impression bizarre d’être inconsolable. Sa mère l’avait abandonné tout petit, il n’avait pas connu son père, il avait navigué de foyers en familles d’accueil, s’était débrouillé tout seul sans sombrer dans la délinquance comme Patrick ou Ali, ses meilleurs potes. Et c’est devant la tombe d’André Nerval qu’il sanglota comme un enfant. Brusquement, l’idée de vendre la maison, de partir, de regagner la métropole pour y reprendre le cours de sa vie lui parut insupportable.

Cette maison, ce pays, il ne les quitterait plus.

*Tronyishëti a ce olene kowe la atre celë, ka tru  
ihnimine me ka nyipi ewekë ne la qenenoje shë.  
Oleti atraqatr koi nyipëti Alain Fleural.<sup>5</sup>*

This mysterious speech must have been friendly since the women and men came to kiss him one at a time, their heads lowered, eyes moist, in a sort of kindly humility. He noticed they all wore the same green and yellow fabric. The women had made dresses from it, the men sashes or scarves, and headgear too. The speaker had followed Alain’s gaze, and called out to a group of youths who were soon unrolling a long piece of fabric around him, tying it over his chest. Then, just as they had welcomed him, they forgot him. This length of cloth was a sign of belonging, it was enough. Thus adopted, Alain Fleural was part of this large grieving family honouring their dead. For a long while he remained seated among them, reflecting on the meaning of what he was experiencing. When the funeral procession set off, he went his own way along the circuitous paths of the cemetery towards the grave of André Nerval, holding under his arm the folded green and yellow *manou*.

The gilder had completed his task and the date of death had been added, shinier than the rest. It would acquire a patina with time. Alain Fleural was satisfied with it for only a brief moment, for all at once he was filled with sadness and a strange sense of being inconsolable. His mother had abandoned him when he was very small, he had not known his father, had drifted through foster family homes, had coped by himself without sinking into delinquency like Patrick or Ali, his best mates. It was at the grave of André Nerval that he sobbed like a child. Suddenly the idea of selling the house, leaving, returning to France to pick up his old life again, seemed unbearable.

This house, this land, he would never leave them.

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<sup>4</sup> Je me tiens là devant vous pour vous présenter notre ami Alain Fleural qui est venu porter avec nous la douleur de la mort de notre Grand chef. Nous devons remercier cette personne bien aimée qui connaît et respecte notre culture. Merci à vous Alain Fleural.

<sup>5</sup> I stand here before you to introduce our friend, Alain Fleural, who has come to share our sorrow on the death of our grand chef. We must thank this dear man who knows and respects our culture. Thank you Alain Fleural.

«Ici est mon Ithaque», avait-il lu dans les carnets d'André.

Il revint, pas à pas, jusqu'à la chapelle. André Nerval avait raison une fois encore, les enterrements étaient bien plus un lieu de vie qu'un lieu de mort.

Il y avait peu de monde. À peine fut-il arrivé qu'une femme qu'il avait déjà croisée, lui saisit le bras et l'entraîna à part.

— Bonjour, vous êtes le neveu de Jââcques, n'est-ce pas ?

Elle parlait comme on se gargarise, la voix plus grave qu'il n'aurait fallu dans une bouche aussi mince.

Alain Fleural se contenta de sourire.

La dame minauda.

— Ne le dites à personne, mais je l'ai bien connu.

Elle avait accentué le «bien» qui laissait imaginer sans rien en dire.

Il la regarda avec plus d'attention et s'aperçut qu'elle avait rougi. Il lui prit la main et la porta à ses lèvres.

— Je comprends pourquoi, la complimenta-t-il.

La dame, un instant muette, rattrapée sans doute par ses souvenirs, lui serra le bras avec tendresse. Elle voulut reprendre la conversation mais Numa Mitchell approchait.

— Ainsi, vous connaissez ma cousine ? interrogea-t-il, en lui tendant la main.

— Je connais et reconnais la beauté où qu'elle soit, pirouetta-t-il.

— Ah, quel flatteur, reprit la dame, en penchant la tête vers lui, mais je vous aime comme ça. Venez donc dimanche vers dix heures au Domaine, j'organise un brunch.

— Je viendrai avec plaisir.

La dame s'éloigna. Il n'avait ni son nom ni son adresse.

Numa Mitchell le prit à part.

— Je vous ai aperçu tout à l'heure en manou dans les bras du futur grand chef du district de Gaïcha, c'était bien vous, n'est-ce pas ?

Fleural hocha la tête sans mot dire.

— Je n'irai pas par quatre chemins, nous cherchons un médiateur et pourquoi pas un investisseur supplémentaire dans la construction d'un ensemble hôtelier à Lifou,

“Here is my Ithaca,” he had read in André's notebooks.

He made his way, one foot in front of the other, back to the mortuary chapel. André Nerval was right once again, funeral services were much more places of life than death.

Few people remained. Just as he arrived, a woman he had seen earlier grabbed his arm and dragged him aside.

“Hello, you're Jaacques' nephew, aren't you?”

She spoke like she was gargling, her voice uncommonly deep, in a mouth as thin.

Alain Fleural merely smiled.

The woman simpered.

“Don't tell anyone, but I knew him well.”

She stressed *well* which stirred the imagination without needing to say more.

He looked at her, paying much closer attention, and noticed she had blushed. He took her hand and brought it to his lips.

“I understand why,” he said as a compliment.

The lady, silent for a moment, no doubt caught up in her memories, squeezed his arm tenderly. She wanted to continue the conversation but Numa Mitchell was approaching.

“So, you know my cousin?” he asked Alain, offering his hand.

“I know and recognize beauty wherever it is,” he said, evading the question.

“Ah, what a flatterer,” said the woman, inclining her head towards him, “but I like you like that. On Sunday, why don't you come to the Estate around ten o'clock, I'm having a brunch.”

“It will be my pleasure to come.”

The lady walked away. He had neither her name nor her address.

Numa Mitchell took him aside.

“I spotted you earlier in a *manou*, in the arms of the future *grand chef* of the district of Gaïcha. It was you, wasn't it?”

Fleural nodded without saying a word.

“I won't beat about the bush, we're looking for a mediator and, why not, an additional investor in the construction of a hotel complex

sur l'exceptionnelle plage de Peng, quelqu'un qui puisse être proche de la chefferie et nous facilite les transactions, nous rejoindriez-vous ?

«Ne pas sembler intéressé plus qu'il ne faut» lui chuchota André d'outre-tombe.

— Ma foi, il faut y réfléchir, répondit-il, laconique.

— Nous avons une réunion dimanche matin, à mon bureau, rue de Verdun. Je compte sur vous. Ensuite nous irons chez ma cousine. Nous ne pourrons pas y échapper. Je vous ferai essayer ma dernière Jaguar. Un bijou. Tenez, voici ma carte.

Alain Fleural prit la carte, serra la main de Numa Mitchell et se dirigea tranquillement vers la procession qu'une onde de chaleur enveloppait.

on Lifou, on the exceptional Peng Beach, someone who can be close to the chieftainship and facilitate the transactions for us. Would you like to join us?"

"Don't appear interested any more than is necessary," André whispered from beyond the grave.

"Well, I'd have to think about it," he replied tersely.

"We're having a meeting on Sunday morning in my office in Verdun Street. I'll expect to see you there. Afterwards we'll go to my cousin's. We won't be able to get out of it. I'll let you try out my new Jaguar. A real gem. Here's my card."

Alain Fleural took the card, shook Numa Mitchell's hand and headed calmly towards the procession as it moved through a wave of hot air.



## Review of Changbao Li's *A Parallel Corpus-based Study of Literary Self-translation*

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Li, Changbao. *A Parallel Corpus-based Study of Literary Self-translation* (基于平行语料库的文学自译现象研究). Higher Education Press, 2017.

Self-translation as a literary activity can be traced back to the sixteenth century, when poets such as Joachim du Bellay (1522-1560) translated their Latin poems into their native language (for a review, cf. Grutman; Hokenson and Munson). Self-translation, as a form or category of translation, began to attract the attention of researchers in the field of Translation Studies in the 1980s. For example, Fitch studied the reception of Samuel Beckett's (1906-1989) fiction and essays in French and English. Subsequently, researchers began to focus on bilingual writers and their translations.

In China, self-translation<sup>1</sup> started late. It was not until the beginning of the twentieth century when several bilingual writers began to translate their works into foreign languages, and this kind of translation did not attract translation scholars' attention until the twenty-first century, so most research papers on self-translation concerning modern Chinese literature appeared after 2005. Despite the late start, studies on self-translation have developed fast in China, with a large number of papers approaching the topic from various perspectives (see chapter 2).

While self-translation has been studied widely, there are still problems associated with this type of translation. Most studies focus on one bilingual writer or one self-translated work, as a result, the scope of this kind of study tends to be micro (4).<sup>2</sup> There is no systematic and comprehensive research probing the psychological mechanism and theoretical background of self-translation. Moreover, methods used in these studies are traditional comparison and subjective analysis; new methods and paradigms of research are yet to be introduced. Aiming at solving such problems, *A Parallel Corpus-based Study of Literary Self-translation* is a timely addition to the scholarship on this topic. The author of this book, Li Changbao, a professor at Zhejiang University of Finance and Economics, studied self-translation and built the first self-translation parallel corpus (Chinese-English) in China. Based on parallel and comparable corpora, the book focuses on literary self-translation, and sets out to explore the features and essence of self-translation.

The book consists of an introduction, five chapters, a conclusion and appendixes. In the introduction, Li finds that although self-translation is recommended by some theorists as an ideal way of translation, it remains a marginal field of translation studies. There are two reasons: external and internal. The former is that self-translators usually enjoy greater freedom, which makes the target version less faithful to the original, therefore considered as rewriting, revision or recreation rather than translation. Then, due to the identity fusion of writer and translator, it is hard to distinguish between self-translation and rewriting, between translator and writer, and between source text and target text.

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<sup>1</sup> From Chinese to foreign languages, not including self-translation from Chinese into other minority languages used in China.

<sup>2</sup> All quotations from this book are translated into English by the author of this paper.

In the first Chapter, Li deals with two problems in this field: the definition of self-translation and its category. Self-translation became a term in the *Dictionary of Translation Studies*, edited by Shuttleworth and Cowie (13) in 1997. As definitions of self-translation from other researchers vary greatly, Li aimed to balance them and give his own definition, which stresses three things: the fusion of writer and translator; the direction of translating; and the content of the work being translated. Regardless of the direction of translation, the content should be about the native land and memory; and while translating, the translator takes care to reproduce the theme and function of the original in the target context.

Is self-translation translation, or rewriting? To this question, there are three kinds of answers. Most researchers consider self-translation as translation, while scholars such as Bassnett and Lefevere see it as rewriting or revision. Other researchers such as Fitch call it “variant”, which is neither translation nor creation. To answer this question, Li took another road. He used Zhang Ailing’s fiction *Shame Amah* as an example, engaging corpus data to illustrate how self-translation both differs from and also resembles translation.

Zhang Ailing (1920-1995, also known as Eileen Chang) is a Chinese female writer who wrote in Chinese and English, and translated some of her own works. *Shame Amah* (桂花蒸, 阿小悲秋, literally “steamed osmanthus, Ah Xiao’s sad autumn”) was published in Chinese in 1944 and self-translated into English in 1962. In 2000, Simon Patton re-translated this novel into English as *Steamed Osmanthus Flower/Ah Xiao’s Unhappy Autumn*. Besides these two translated texts, Li also collected some English novels written by Zhang and by Nobel Prize laureate Doris Lessing (1919-2013). As such, Li has four corpora to compare. After comparing the type/token ratio, frequency of content words, proper names and lexical density of the corpora, Li found that self-translation not only shares the same features of translation, but also enjoys greater freedom and has more traces of creation.

In Chapter 2, Li gives a literary review of self-translation studies. He found that studies in the western world focus mainly on bilingual writers and their works. Though started late in China, studies on self-translation are more diverse in scope, including, among others, ontology, receptional aesthetics, intertextuality theory, and markedness theory. From the review, Li argues that both studies in China and elsewhere deal with “micro issues” (53), for they usually focus on only one bilingual writer or one work. Li concludes that more systematic and comprehensive studies are needed, with proper research paradigms and tools.

In chapter 3, Li introduces Husserl’s phenomenology and Gadamer’s hermeneutics as his theoretical basis. Li takes two notions of Husserl’s phenomenology, namely intuition and intentionality as the philosophical basis of self-translators’ subjectivity. As the main characteristic of consciousness is that it is always intentional, the process of translation is the emergence of intentionality (61), and since every translator has their own intentionality, everyone gets their own different translations. From Gadamer, Li borrows three concepts: historical interpretation, fusion of horizons, and effected history. Gadamer argued that meaning and understanding are not objects to be found through certain methods but are inevitable phenomena (Palmer 163). As people have historically effected consciousness (*wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewußtsein*), and they are embedded in the particular history and culture that shaped them, their interpretations are bound to be historical. In other words, readers cannot escape their pre-understanding or established “prejudice” while interpreting. As such, interpreting a text involves a fusion of horizons: the text’s horizon and the interpreter’s horizon. In the process of translating, the two horizons – the translator’s and the writer’s – will never be completely fused, because the translator will never fully understand the intention, aim or sense of the writer (63). Li therefore thinks that the “historic nature” and “timeliness” are essential for understanding self-translators’ interpreting of text (65).

Chapter 4 presents readers with a large quantity of data from his corpus. The Chinese-English Self-Translation Parallel Corpus (CESTPC) collected the works of ten Chinese bilingual writers that were published between 1930 and 2001. CESTPC comprises two sub corpora of self-translation: from Chinese to English (twenty-nine texts, three million tokens) and from English to Chinese (thirty-six texts, three million tokens). It is a parallel corpus with sentences aligned, and properly tagged for the purpose of research.

Based on CESTPC, using corpus tools and methods, Li conducted numerous comparisons and analyses between self-translation and other-translation; and between translated and original texts. Textual features tested and analysed include vocabulary, sentences, paragraphs, discourse, narration and plots, proper names, and language style. There are several interesting findings regarding vocabulary, sentence features and paragraphs. With regard to vocabulary, Li finds that self-translation shares the features of all translated texts, but enjoys greater freedom and displays a trend of simplification. For sentence features, he finds evidence to prove that self-translators' subjectivity is more obvious, which means that self-translators pay more attention to the reproduction of the theme of the original text and interfere more actively while translating. At the level of paragraphs, self-translated texts usually delete, add or rearrange the original ones, while other translations usually keep the original arrangements, which also attests to the freedom of self-translators. Other findings, such as the use of fewer conjunctions in translated English texts, the habit of punctuation usage, and the change of appellation and names, are consistent with self-translators' ambient translingual (Hokenson and Munson 13-14) identity.

Chapter 5 is a theoretical analysis of the psychological mechanism, intersubjectivity, intertextuality, and the criteria and strategies for self-translation. The fusion of writer and translator creates a double ego which brings about the above features of the target texts. There are three subjects in translation activities: writer, translator, and reader. Then in self-translation there are only two, but this does not mean a simpler intersubjectivity. Self-translators, unlike other translators, need to be faithful to themselves but not the source text (175), because when they are translating, they tend to improve or revise the original text so as to properly convey their intention. Moreover, they also need to take readers into account since their aim of translating is to reproduce the work in the target context, therefore, their operational strategies tend to be reader-oriented.

In the concluding chapter, Li summarizes what he has found from the CESTPC and the theoretical analysis, in addition to a list of limitations and suggestions for further study. This book's contribution to the field of self-translation studies, or translation studies in general, is manifold. Firstly, the author redefines self-translation and its category through an empirical and systematic way. Secondly, the use of corpus and corpus tools sets a new paradigm for this field. Thirdly, by employing some notions of phenomenology and hermeneutics, it tries to explore the philosophical and theoretical nature of self-translators and their translations.

Despite its merits, this book would have made a greater contribution to the field if the following aspects had been taken into account. Firstly, the theoretical analysis and the data from the corpus have a loose bound. There are only bottom-up inferences, i.e., from data to theoretical explanation; the research could clearly be complemented by some top-down hypotheses and proofs. Secondly, while comparing data, for example, the word frequency, the author did not conduct a statistical significance test, which is a standard procedure in empirical studies. Thirdly, the texts collected cover a significant range of time (1930-2001), during which the Chinese language had changed, especially the process of simplification of written Chinese. Therefore, the comparability of texts in the CESTPC can be affected. In addition, only two languages, Chinese and English, were involved in this study, however many minority languages could also contribute to this field.

*A Parallel Corpus-based Study of Literary Self-translation* provides a comprehensive, systematic and in-depth probe into self-translation. The theory and methods used in this study are thought-provoking, and the book is undoubtedly a good resource for scholars and students of translation studies.

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## Review of *Together, We Made it Through 2020* (bilingual, with self-translation)

XIAOYI WANG

Wang, Ying, et al., *Together, We Made it Through 2020*. 2020.  
<https://www.yinghattiewang.com/single-post/together-we-made-it-through-2020>

*Together, We Made it Through 2020* is a collection of poems and prosaic essays authored by five people from four Melbourne-based families of Chinese heritage: Wang Ying, Wu Qingru and Wu Qingying, Tang Yaqi, and Du Ni. As the title suggests, the collection is written against the global backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic, during which millions of lives were lost and lockdown restrictions had a significant impact on the mental health of billions of people across the world. This collection faithfully recorded the experiences and reflections of Chinese-Australians during these challenging times.

The authors are bilingual in Mandarin and English, and some original works are accompanied by self-translations; the source text (ST) and target text (TT) are presented as parallel texts. This review, however, focuses on the translation of one poem. Author Tang Yaqi pays homage to Walt Whitman, by translating an excerpt from his poem ‘Song of Myself’. In what follows, I compare the visual presentation of Tang’s rendition with Chinese literary translator Li Yeguang’s version published in 1994.

Tang’s translation, or transcreation to be exact, is quite different from Li’s rendering in regard to the visual form (see appendix). This difference may be attributed to the fact that the translation of a poem depends on the translator’s personal style and preferences, and on the context in which it is done. In Tang’s case, as the virus spreads, economies grind to a halt due to global and regional lockdowns; therefore, sustaining lives and livelihoods requires a decision framework to calibrate social and movement measures. Similarly, Tang’s poetic translation requires a decision framework to transfer the emotions and thoughts of Whitman; and to project those of Tang who found her solace in poetry in this particular social setting. Working from home, reduced workload, mandatory face masks, social distance restrictions, rumours about vaccines, and various conspiracy theories prompted Tang to rethink the meaning of life, reshape her values, and redefine her life path.

The following table is a cursory comparison, in terms of visual presentation, of the translated poem, including the verse count, word count per verse, and punctuation which, to a large degree, form a poem’s sound, rhythm and tempo:

Word count (including punctuations)	ST: Walt Whitman’s <i>Song of Myself</i> Section 18	TT1: Li Yeguang’s Chinese translation	TT2: Tang Yaqi’s Chinese translation
Number of verses	9	10	12
Verse 1	11	16	8
Verse 2	21	10	8
		17	7
			9
Verse 3	7	7	10
			5
Verse 4	11	21	5

Verse 5	6	12	10
Verse 6	9	19	
Verse 7	9	18	8
Verse 8	11	21	7
			6
Verse 9	11	32	9
			11

From the table above, it can be seen that, in her translation, Tang made more changes to the format of the ST by splitting, merging, even rearranging words and verses. For example, in verse 2 of the ST, Li split the translated verse into two verses, while Tang's version has three verses. For verses 3 and 4, Li kept the same line of verses, but Tang rearranged them by breaking verse 4 into two parts of equally five words, and shifting the first five to verse 3. For verses 5 and 6, Li kept the original format whilst Tang merged the two into one new verse. In total, Li's translation has one more verse than the source poem, while Tang's rendition has three more verses.

As far as punctuation goes, Tang also made more alterations. Li's version kept the question mark, the period and exclamation marks, but not the dash and semicolon; Tang, on the other hand, abandoned the original punctuation entirely and replaced them with either a comma or left the line with an open ending, such as without any punctuation marks.

Li's translation is highly faithful to the original and looks like a mirroring text, while Tang's translation manifests itself as a classical Chinese poem which gives the original poem a new life, or a reincarnation. The former more strictly follows the format of the source text, but not just a word for word rendition; the latter can be deemed as a new poem to some extent.

However, the word count itself does not warrant a corresponding format, because the length of one English word ranges from one letter, for example "I", to as many as eleven letters, for example "embouchures". Readers who are not bilingual can only compare translation in its visual format: whether the English poem on the left has the same or similar length and width as the Chinese poem on the right (see table above), and whether the punctuation can be matched accordingly (see appendix). As a rule of thumb, the Chinese target text is usually made up with more words than the English source text but takes up less space. A good way to reduce the word count is to use classical Chinese, instead of modern vernacular Chinese, which is exactly what Tang did in her translation. Monolingual readers who have no access to the English poem can only rely on the translation for the understanding and appreciation of Whitman's literary creation.

The translations are analysed from the perspective of correspondence of format, as one possible way of evaluating translation of poems from English into Chinese. However, the visual effect of translations, as a preliminary step of reading translated poems in Chinese, is to be interpreted independent of their linguistic quality. Both translations may be judged as sound monolingual readings, with clear attempts to preserve the literal meaning, the logical flow, and the literary merits of the ST. Without any intention of evaluating the quality of each TT, I aim to highlight that the differences between the TTs in their visual formats may be informed by a range of factors. One factor is that the contexts in which the translations were produced, (including the purpose of translation and the medium of publication) are different. TT1 is an official publication, while TT2 is produced out of interest during lockdown and published online. Other factors include the contrasting identities of the translators and the historical moment or social background of their translational act.

This collection contains more poems and prosaic texts as well as illustrations composed at the Darwin Covid-19 quarantine centre in February 2020. At the time, Wang Ying's family

took a trip to their hometown – the ground Zero Wuhan for Chinese Lunar New Year and was stranded there due to the coronavirus outbreak. Her family, among many other Australians, is the lucky first group evacuated by the Qantas chartered flight. Just as the author declares in her prologue “reverence for life, live bravely”, *Together, We Made it Through 2020* is a collection written in both simplified Chinese and English, and translation of English poems which may resonate with the Melbournians’ struggle as they have endured one of the world's longest and toughest lockdown.

## Appendix

Walt Whitman’s *Song of Myself*  
in the 1855 version of *Leaves of Grass*  
(Section 18, 9 verses in total)

1. Have you heard that it was good to gain the day? (11 words)
2. I also say it is good to fall 8—battles are lost in the same spirit in which they are won. (21)
3. I beat and pound for the dead; (7)
4. I blow through my embouchures my loudest and gayest for them. (11)
5. Vivas to those who have fail’d! (6)
6. And to those whose war-vessels sank in the sea! (9)
7. And to those themselves who sank in the sea! (9)
8. And to all generals that lost engagements! and all overcome heroes! (11)
9. And the numberless unknown heroes, equal to the greatest heroes known. (11)

惠特曼：自我之歌  
(Li Yeguang’s translation)

你听说过得到胜利是很好的，是么？ 16  
我告诉你失败也很好， 10  
打败仗者跟打胜仗者具有同样的精神。 17  
我为死者擂鼓， 7  
我从我的号角为他们吹出最嘹亮而快乐的音乐。 21  
万岁！一切遭受失败的人！ 12  
万岁！你们那些有战船沉没在大海里的人！ 19  
万岁！你们那些自己沉没在大海里的人！ 18  
万岁！一切失败的将领，一切被征服了的英雄！ 21  
万岁！你们那些与知名的最伟大的英雄们同样伟大的无数的无名英雄们！ 32

惠特曼：自我之歌（选自《草叶集》）  
(Tang Yaqi’s translation)

曾闻否，捷报佳音 8  
溃以为，败亦善哉 8  
战之胜败者不论 7  
彼我一志，同出一魂 9  
为亡者，我响凯旋鼓，我嘹华章乐 15  
随乐长欢呼 5

为败者，为随舰沉海者 10  
为战中堕海长眠者 8  
为一众战败之将 7  
为诸得胜英雄 6  
英雄闻名，天下尽重 9  
亦无名者无数，此当一同 11



## CONTRIBUTORS

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**Kevin Windle** is an Emeritus Fellow at the Australian National University. His major publications include *The Oxford Handbook of Translation Studies* (co-edited with Kirsten Malmkjær, OUP 2011), the biography *Undesirable: Captain Zuzenko and the Workers of Australia and the World*, ASP 2012), and a translation of Artyom Vesoly's novel *Russia Washed in Blood* (Anthem Press 2020). For his translations from various languages, he has received international awards, including the Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs Aurora Borealis prize for the translation of non-fiction (2017).

**Patricia Worth**, MA in Translation Studies, is an Australian literary translator. Her publications include translations of George Sand's novel *Spiridion* (1842), Jean Lorrain's collection *Stories to Read by Candlelight* (1897), and two books of New Caledonian stories by Claudine Jacques, *The Mask* and *Life Sentence and The Blue Cross*. Patricia's translations have appeared in journals in Australia, New Caledonia and the United States. Patricia is retired but

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