The AALITRA Review

A JOURNAL OF LITERARY TRANSLATION

No. 8, June 2014

AALITRA

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The AALITRA Review

publishes high quality material concerned with literary translation, as well as translations of literary texts from other languages into English, or, in exceptional cases, vice versa. It hopes to foster a community of literary translators and to be a forum for lively debate concerning issues related to the translation of literary texts.

We welcome submissions in the following areas:

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– original translations of poetry and prose

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Leah Gerber Translation, Transnation: A Note from the Guest Editor 5

Peter Morgan The Function of Translation in Global Literary Studies 6

Jessica Trevitt Fluid Borders: Translational Readings of Transnational Literature 12

Tomoko Takahashi Lost and Found in Poetic Translation – A Transnational Experience 22

Morgane Vernier Humour in Translingual Writing 33

Brigid Maher et al. Laila Wadia's "Introducing Signor Rosso" 41

Elise Foxworth et al. Works by Zhong Zhang and Kaku Aizawa 46

Ouyang Yu et al. Four Poems by Shu Cai 55

CONTRIBUTORS 61

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Translation, Transnation: A Note from the Guest Editor

LEAH GERBER

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Many of the contributions to this special issue featured as part of the second Literary Translation Winter School & Festival, held by Translation and Interpreting Studies at Monash University, in conjunction with the British Centre for Literary Translation and La Trobe University. "Translation, Transnation" assembled students, writers, professional translators, language teachers and others with a special interest in literary translation in a week-long residential program of hands-on translation practice accompanied by panel discussions and a number of public talks by international speakers. Working from Italian, Japanese and Mandarin Chinese into English, our resident writers and translators worked to produce a consensus translation of a work or works from each invited author. This unique way of approaching the task of translation highlights not only the great challenge in producing works of literature in translation, but also emphasizes the crucial dialogues that take place between writer and translator.

Literary translators Brigid Maher (Italian), Elise Foxworth (Japanese) and Ouyang Yu (Chinese) joined writers in exploring the challenges posed by the theme of transnationalism in translation. The Italian stream translated an excerpt from Indian-Italian writer Laila Wadia's novel *Amiche per la pelle* (2007), in which she explores multiculturalism in modern-day Italy. The Japanese stream translated poems by Zhong Zhang, a third-generation (*zainichi*) Korean poet in Japan. They also tackled the work of Kaku Aizawa, a Japanese poet, writer and translator, whose essays and poetry primarily take up Japan's relationship with the Korean peninsula, and the stigmatization of Koreans in Japan. In the Chinese stream, Melbourne-based writer-translator Ouyang Yu guided his group through the poems of Shu Cai, a Chinese writer and translator from French.

The articles that precede the translations in this special issue are closely connected with this theme. Peter Morgan opens with comments on the current state of literary scholarship, arguing for an appreciation of issues to do with language and translation, rather than of nation and identity, in order to respond to shifting national paradigms, which see the institutional framework for literary study as increasingly comparative and global. Jessica Trevitt picks up on some of these themes in her exploration of the works of transnational writers Nam Le and Janette Turner Hospital, drawing attention to the relationship between the translational and the transnational. Like Le and Hospital, Tomoko Takahashi also uses her personal background, writing and translation practice as a way of reflecting upon her multiple national identities, as she discusses in her article. Finally, Morgane Vernier bases her investigation of transnational writing on a comic play she wrote as a French exchange student at Monash University, composed in her adopted language, English.

This special issue of *The AALITRA Review* dedicated to the topic "Translation, Transnation", aims to give further prominence to the connection between transnational writing – literature that uncovers some of the effects of globalization on literature from all parts of the world, including travel writing, life writing, migrant, refugee and Indigenous fiction – and the practice of literary translation, adding emphasis to a more inclusive and multifaceted view of literature in translation.

The Function of Translation in Global Literary Studies

PETER MORGAN

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Abstract

Literary scholarship is in a state of crisis. The national paradigms have outlived their usefulness as the organizing structures for literary scholarship, and the institutional framework for literary study is becoming comparative and global. In response to these changes we are witnessing a new convergence between academic practitioners of literary studies and their "lifeworld" of readers and writers under the rubric of "re-connection". Issues of language and translation rather than of nation and identity have become indicative of broader developments in literary studies. The seminal reflections of Johann Wolfgang Goethe on "Weltliteratur" provide models for change in the teaching and study of literature in contemporary global literary studies.

The crisis in literary studies

"Departments of literature are feeling the cold winds of change", write Roberts and Nelson (53), and literary scholarship is indeed in a state of crisis, especially in the foreign language departments of English-speaking universities worldwide. On many campuses, literature continues to exist as an academic discipline in English departments only, leaving foreign language departments increasingly reduced to second language acquisition. Literary scholars in such departments find themselves isolated as students rely on generalist disciplines to provide the basis for postgraduate literary studies. This situation has come about as a result of institutional changes in academic departments in which literary studies are taught, as well as of disciplinary changes in literary studies themselves.

The root of the problem lies, for Roberts and Nelson, in the national paradigm that was put into place in nascent departments of literary studies in European and American universities. The problem is not romantic nationalism itself, but its institutionalization in university literature and philology departments. Institutional structures develop in ways that are different from ideational models. Roberts and Nelson thus take Pascale Casanova (*The World Republic of Letters*) to task for attaching the responsibility for the nationalization of literary studies to Herder and romantic nationalism, bringing an end to the Enlightenment "republic of letters". The problem of the nationalization, and hence limitation, of literature to "national boundaries" thus lies squarely with the universities and with what they term the "founding premise of linguistic originality" at a time when the nation was coming to exercise ever-greater influence on patterns of thinking in the humanities. The problem is linked primarily to the importation of national models into university language departments in such a way as to bind the study of literature to national languages. Literary studies entered a fatal institutional embrace with the problematic epistemological assumptions inherent in the national traditions of philology, literary history, interpretation and criticism.

In language departments, literary analysis had to be carried out in the authentic language of the text, namely the language of origin. Hence literatures remained separated, linked only by translation as a secondary form of literary communication at best. Translation was seen as inauthentic, as a crib or an excuse for not mastering the language sufficiently to read texts in their original form. As a result, language departments have maintained their special right to teach their particular literatures, but at the same time are unable to do so due to low student numbers and levels of linguistic ability. The consequence of the failure of literary

studies in the foreign language departments has been the development of broad-based cultural studies courses underpinned by nebulous Whorfian assumptions of uniqueness in the relationship of language and meaning, which leave much to be desired in terms of disciplinary and methodological scope and depth.

In this article I will discuss the crisis of literary studies in the wake of national and post-structuralist paradigms and in the context of new developments in comparative literature. My aim is to show that we are witnessing a new convergence between academic practitioners of literary studies and their "lifeworld" of readers and writers under the rubric of "re-connection", in which language and translation move to the forefront as a metaphor for literary studies *per se* in the era of globalization. The seminal reflections of Johann Wolfgang Goethe on "Weltliteratur" suggest ways of thinking about the relationship between literature and cosmopolitanism and provide models for change in the teaching and study of literature (Goethe, vol. 14, 898-917).

The rediscovery of the referent

The future of English and literary studies has been a hot topic since the nineties (cf. Bergonzi; Bender, Chodorow and Yu; Bérubé; Bloom; Denby; Ellis; Graff; Harpham Ch. 2; Hunter et al; Kernan, *What's Happened to the Humanities*, *The Death of Literature*; Kronman Ch. 2; Scholes; Woodring). For some commentators, literary studies had declined to the point where they were obsolete, or had transformed themselves into creative writing or cultural studies. Bernard Bergonzi identifies five phases in the historical emergence of English as a field of academic study: the nationalist, the religious, the ethical, the aesthetic and the rhetorical. For Bergonzi only the final – rhetorical – phase is still viable, mainly in the form of professional writing courses. Louis Menand goes even further in denying the ongoing validity of a literary mode of knowing and communicating. For Menand literature is a moribund discipline, the function of which had been to establish national philologies. The histories of national philologies have by and large been written, and literature departments are left chasing after ephemeral notions of literary essence. Even as early as 1999, Edward Said commented on the "disappearance of literature itself from the curriculum" and on the "fragmented, jargonized subjects" that replaced it (3).

Literature, more than any other field, has been left without a disciplinary home as global perspectives determine the frames of reference for intellectual endeavour in the contemporary university environment. Without the disciplinary framework of the national philologies, literature itself seems threatened as a mode of human knowing, an epistemology in its own right. Few literary scholars, however, will accept Menand's proposal that literature is as transient as the national ideologies or as ephemeral as the theoretical jargons which have carried it into and through the institutions. Similarly, few will be persuaded by Richard Rorty's suggestion that literary analysis is no longer compatible with institutional rigour. In the context of the new sobriety in the humanities, the "free play" of the interpretative imagination has come to an end and a new impetus can be felt toward connection and to the function of the referent as well as the signifier (cited in Menand 210-11).

Under the rubric of "return to life", a range of writers in a recent issue of *PMLA* address the needs of literary criticism in the twenty-first century as dominated above all by the need to reinstate the referent. *PMLA* is arguably the most important indicator of trends in global literary studies. These essays are written in the spirit of "forward to the past". From the vantage point of 2010, the first decade of the twenty-first century appears to be a time of climbing out of the post-structuralist abyss, rediscovering reference and the responsibilities of literature, not only to itself but to the human community in the widest sense. In her "Afterword", Cathy Caruth notes, "the force and fragility of literature and of literary criticism are bound up with the possible disappearance of the literary archive, which we implicitly confront in reading literature and in pursuing its forms and thoughts as literary critics" (1087). Literary criticism in the new century must meditate "on the loss and survival of literature" (Caruth 1087). In this context, Caruth makes a strong programmatic statement for reconnection:

> If literary criticism is bound up with questions of life, of *leben* and *erleben* (living and experiencing), […] – a mode of reflection, testing, and imaginative experience of "knowledge for living" – it is only insofar as literature links life inextricably with *überleben*, survival, and thus with death, with the precariousness that attends upon life and language, and with the peculiar sense in which literature emerges as a living on.
>
> (Caruth 1087)

This new awareness of the world has begun to make itself felt in literary theory under the sign of social and ecological crisis, history and the passing of memory. Literary studies is moving inexorably back to the lifeworld of writers and readers and away from the Möbius Strip of textuality. Developments in the USA over the past decade indicate that comparative or world literature will provide the most meaningful model for literary studies in the foreseeable future, that is, in a world in which global issues will continue to predominate. The dominant themes of literary analysis are international and global: migration, change as opposed to stasis in issues of socio-political identity and context, even within the English-language context. In this new model language can be viewed as either an impediment or an aid to understanding. Tied to obsolete concepts of nationality, language remains an impediment; freed into the neo-cosmopolitanism of the twenty-first century global environment, however, language becomes the defining metaphor.

Questions of language

On its journey toward the global, literary study is torn between the Scylla of national and linguistic identity and the Charybdis of translation and loss of linguistic authenticity. Can we base literary study in a non-national context while still paying attention to legitimate questions of language, in order to provide the epistemological foundations for a discipline of literature rather than one of national literatures? This would be a discipline of literature *per se*, in which all literatures are equal, rather than of the older models of comparative literature in which translation plays a secondary role. Or are we left, after the end of the twentieth century, with a radical denial not merely of the national in literature but of the ontological essence of literature itself?

David Damrosch uses the terms "source" and "target culture" to re-articulate this asymmetry in defining comparative literature as the study of the interrelationships between original texts and translations, based on a process of mutual loss and gain in which that which is "lost" in translation comes to the forefront of the literary encounter, and in which the translated text takes on an authority of its own in different linguistic and cultural contexts (Damrosch 329). Even in the case of English, pluricentricity involves semantic and other linguistic differences which require understanding, and hence translation, in cultural if not strictly linguistic terms. In this approach, we are brought to recognize what is gained in translation, namely the recognition of the otherness of the translated text through the recognition of the nature of the process of translation itself. That which is lost in translation is the true subject of world literature. Through this process the text is rewritten into a broader, supra-national context. The issue of translation remains, but it is no longer a question of the status of texts. Rather it is one of broadening the hermeneutic circle and using literature as a means of identifying and engaging with the other. "Only by deconstructing the linguistic asymmetry of original and translation" can a post-national literature become transnational, write Roberts and Nelson (55).

In these new frameworks, language is a beginning not an end. Language does not exist in a vacuum: language is always also cultural (Radhakrishnan 791). It requires translation and contextualization to be understood. The act of translating thus becomes representative of the act of encountering and attempting to understand, of the act of literary interpretation itself. Hence literary studies cannot be separated from the idea of translation, since all understanding is at some level a process of translation from, in Damrosch's terminology, a "source" to a "host" environment. Translation involves not only the assignment of signifiers but also the interpretation of environment and context. All literary interpretation is an act of understanding,

of entering the hermeneutic circle and participating in the act of comprehending and re-articulating. In this context linguistic translation is merely an extreme example of the hermeneutic processes. It dramatically broadens the hermeneutic circle, but in a global environment this is what is required. Translation is the necessary means of extending literature beyond the language and culture of its origins. Translation renders dialogue possible.

The "world" of literature

Goethe was the first to wish for this supra-national aspect to literature. In the unruly early years of the "Concert of Europe" he wrote of his hope for and belief in the emergence of a "world literature" which would ameliorate the relations among nations. He coined the term *Weltliteratur* in a series of short articles, letters, diary entries, notes and commentaries between 1827 and 1831. At that time he was following French affairs closely, interested in the fortunes of the *juste milieu* and observing the revival of French political order. Implicit in his idea of world literature is a view of Europe in which the open economies of western Europe rather than the states of the Holy Alliance would prevail in European and world affairs, and in which popular nationalism rather than feudal absolutism would be the dominant force. Writing as the European nations were beginning to take on the definitive forms for the next century, Goethe viewed with suspicion the emergence of the national, an epistemological category. "World literature" was his tip to his contemporaries not to allow the national to eclipse the cosmopolitanism of the past while keeping literature connected with the events of the present.

In Goethe's reflections translation plays a particular role. The Enlightenment was not a censorious era in respect of translations. That came later, as a consequence perhaps of romantic nationalism's concern to preserve the uniqueness of the national lexicon (cf. Valenza 143-45). What is noticeable is Goethe's lack of hesitation or reluctance in dealing with questions of translation. Indeed he uses translation as a metaphor for *all* communication from the level of the individual to the nation. Translation was not a story of loss for Goethe. Any loss is offset by gain, to the mutual benefit of all, in his concept of world literature. Translation is essential to this process as the means by which literary works can circulate beyond their source cultures and languages. Translation represents a form of added value in Goethe's market-place of world literature, or, in Valery Larbaud's terminology as quoted by Casanova, "enrichment" (Casanova 23).

So far Goethe's idea has been received and validated primarily in the sense of providing a theoretical matrix for the world's literatures as an infinite set of connections and interrelations. It is not literature stripped of its national characteristics or even its language, but rather literature which circulates beyond the nation and gains in its contact with other cultures and other readerships. However, there is a *second sense* in which we can understand the "world" in Goethe's idea, one which is implicit in his contextualization of societies and politics, readers and respondents, and in his acceptance of the principle of translation as *essential* to the literary endeavour. That is the sense of the world as the *matter* of literature. Regardless of the particular historical paradigm, whether political, religious, national or aesthetic, world literature is about connectedness with *its world*. The literary must remain in connection with the concerns of the people who live, read and write it, and in a *world* made up of language-communities, this involves translation as well as original language and culture.

Translation, literary studies and reconnection with the world

So where does this leave us in terms of the discipline and our institutions? The institutional framework for literary study must clearly be comparative and global. For literature *per se* to continue to exist as a discipline of study we need both to reconnect to the world and to change the way the university community views literature, not as a statement of national identity but rather as an epistemological field across nations and cultural boundaries.

Most importantly in the current context, this will involve the teaching of languages and literatures in an intellectual environment in translation, which is understood to be a hermeneutic of expansion rather than contraction. We must understand the nature of language in order to

accept the value of translation. Such an intellectual environment would necessitate broad general levels of language teaching and acquisition in schools and universities. The acquisition of languages teaches us to recognize the nature of and need for translations. The value of translation should emphatically not reside in the sense of the perpetuation of a tiny group of highly competent translators providing finalized texts to a mass of monolingual readers. We must recognize as a global society that translation is not a detour around the problematic language of the source text, but rather is a penetration of the language of the text, an inquiry into meaning and its possibilities and a testing of linguistic assumptions and relations (this is the particular task of *literary* translators). Translation is not something done once and then dealt with for the foreseeable future. Moreover all readers at one level or another are translators. Speakers of pluricentric languages such as English and Spanish, for example, regularly translate unfamiliar words and expressions into their own vocabulary. In this sense literary translation is the pinnacle of literary interpretation, and literary translators occupy a privileged – but not a technocratic – position in the community of meanings that makes up the global consciousness.

This is a time for the rediscovery of reference and of the responsibilities of literature to the human community in the widest – global – sense. We must link our existing academic strengths in literature to a broader undertaking, in which the focus is again on literature as an epistemological mode, capable of supporting the links to the world of readers, writers, teachers and publishers. Perhaps we should look back to Goethe's paradigm of world literature as "building a bridge" to the world in two senses: in the sense of opening our eyes to the literature of the world and in the sense of re-connecting to the world of literature.

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Fluid Borders: Translational Readings of Transnational Literature

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Abstract

In this article I analyze two short stories, one by Nam Le, the other by Janette Turner Hospital, via the relationship between the translational and the transnational. Le's "Love and Honour and Pity and Pride and Compassion and Sacrifice" (*The Boat*, 2008) and Hospital's "Litany for the Homeland" (*North of Nowhere South of Loss*, 2003) both explore individual transnational journeys that are based on the personal background of their authors. Their protagonists reflect upon what it means in their day-to-day lives to identify with multiple national entities at the same time as they engage self-reflexively with language as a means of expressing this experience. The result is an exploration of the fluidity of national and linguistic "borderlines", or of what scholars have referred to as the "translational" present *within* as well as *between* cultures and languages (Bhabha 10; Gentzler 347; Wolf; Tymoczko). By drawing specifically on the role and various manifestations of the "borderline", I illustrate how these stories can be understood as literary representations not only of the transnational, but of its relation to the translational.

Theorists such as Homi Bhabha and Edwin Gentzler have utilized – and called into question – the concept of the borderline as a way of presenting *non-binary* conceptions of translation, that is, those that occur "within" as well as "between". However, Naoki Sakai draws more comprehensively on the theory of "bordering" to outline the relation between non-binary translation and transnationalism. He explains, "only when people react to one another does a border come into being", so it follows that a borderline is always "posterior to social relations" or to a process of social negotiation that he calls the "act of bordering". Transnationalism and translation, respectively, are the very acts of bordering that must negotiate the borders around a nation and a language. Thus for Sakai they are not just processes in themselves but they are broad "schema[s] […] against the background of which our sense of nationality [and of language] is apprehended".

This broad, parallel relation that Sakai sets up between transnationalism and translation forms the basis of my analysis of "Love and Honour" and "Litany for the Homeland", and I explore it through two narrative figures that the stories share. First, each protagonist's engagement with story-telling demonstrates how language can mediate the borderlines within and between national and linguistic entities. Second, the recurring use of waterway imagery in the form of rivers, creeks and ditches draws attention to the fluidity of these borderlines. Both of these figures emerge at points in the narratives when national and linguistic negotiations are taking place, and thus they can be understood as representing the parallel acts of transnational and translational bordering. While on the one hand this reading presents us with a means of exploring Sakai's approach via contemporary literature, on the other it allows us to extend the discussion of transnationalism that has been focused upon in previous criticism of both Le's and Hospital's writing.

Two transnational/translational writers

Nam Le's transnational background has attracted various labels from critics and scholars who have described him as "Asian-Australian" (Massola), "Asian-American" (Lee) and just plain "Australian" (Ommundsen 2). This lack of a single, defined nationality has been reflected in

the critical attention paid to his debut collection of short stories, *The Boat*. For example, Ken Gelder notes how each story is set in a different country but that Australia "is a kind of trace woven into a larger, often incongruous transnational fabric" (9). This observation portrays transnationalism as a state or condition under which national borders and identities, while no longer acting as a mode of differentiation, are still present and significant (Trousdale 3). Using a slightly different approach, Goellnicht explores how Le creates a model of "ethnic literature for a transnational or global community"; that is, one that "emphasizes the complexities at the meeting points of different ethnicities rather than [attempting] to sell an exotic commodity from a minority culture to a dominant majority" (211). This conception of transnationalism focuses more on the interplay that occurs where those national borders lie (Ashcroft 73).

Here, it should also be noted that the discourse of "ethnic" or "migrant" literature has proven popular in critical approaches to Le's work, fuelled on the one hand by his personal background of migration and diaspora and on the other by his explicit use of the narrative of the Vietnamese "boat people" in the opening and closing stories of his collection (Lee 35). This focus on migration is important to acknowledge, as the discourse lends itself particularly well to transnational readings. In fact, in Rebecca Walkowitz's view, migration literature *demands* a "transnational perspective" (530) and an acknowledgement of a "transnational model" (533) within literary criticism. Ashcroft also notes how the notion of a "transnation" "begins within the nation" and is *enacted* in a "migratory […] aggregation of flows and convergences" (73). In other words, the migration narrative is mediated via a transnational perspective and the transnation is mediated through the act of migration. While this article is not concerned with this particular conceptual overlap, it is worth noting because it constitutes an important part of the contrast between Le's and Hospital's stories.

Like Le, Hospital has attracted several different labels as a result of her background, from the "Australian writer" (Jorgensen 1) to the "expatriate Australian" (Petter 210) to the writer of multiple national identities who holds a significant place in the Canadian literary heritage (Cameron 126). In comparison to Le's work, hers presents a much broader oeuvre developed over more than thirty years. It has, however, received a comparable amount of critical attention for its transnational explorations. Russell West-Pavlov has stated that she foregrounds a "process of disorientation and reorientation […] going beyond the traditional geographical parameters of nation-state" (145); in other words, she seeks to transcend accepted notions of borderlines. Thea Astley shows that she simultaneously *retains* the notion of borderlines, because for her they are "dynamic zones of contact" (7). Thus although national borders are present in her writing, they are not necessarily a means of differentiation. Selina Samuels also discusses how her characters experience that borderline interplay, showing in particular how their identities are explored through feelings of "isolation, transitoriness and dislocation" (88). Finally, in a similar observation to that of Goellnicht in relation to Le's work, West-Pavlov suggests that Hospital's writing could be seen to offer a "tentative model for (inter-) or (trans)national identities" (144, 155). While there are evident parallels between these transnational approaches to both Le and Hospital, the latter has been associated more frequently with the experience of the expatriate rather than with that of the migrant.[1] Again, for the purposes of this article, it is simply worth acknowledging that the exploration of borders and national identities within the discourse of transnationalism can be related to different *types* of movement, including migrational, diasporic or expatriate, and that this does not necessarily take away from those aspects common to transnational worldviews.

In comparison to the number of scholars who have taken a transnational approach, relatively few have acknowledged the importance of language or translation in the work of either author. In relation to Le's collection, there have been a couple of extended discussions about the role of language (Goellnicht, Lee) and a passing comment or two on how it engages with translation (Jose). In relation to Hospital's writing, there have been some brief references to language use (Davis, Greiner), while very little has been said about it from the perspective of

[1] For expatriate readings see Petter, Samuels. Helga Ramsey-Kurz presents a migrant reading of one short story by Hospital that draws upon a broader understanding of the notion of a migrant.

translation studies (see Trevitt). As Michael Cronin has noted, the concepts of transnationalism and translation are intimately related, to the point where he views transnationalism as the "intense traffic of influences from elsewhere through the medium of translation" (274); it could be argued then that where one concept is present, it is likely that the other can be found. By drawing on Sakai's application of the theory of bordering, we can extend the above discussions by using the transnational elements of these stories to uncover their embedded translational elements. I use the term "embedded" because, as the lack of critical attention will highlight, these stories do not explicitly engage with traditional processes of translation. Rather, as we will see in the discussion below, they engage with non-binary conceptions. Le's story utilizes a multilingual space where Vietnamese is scattered amongst his English, offering an example of what Meylaerts and D'hulst have referred to as an "ongoing process of translation" (10, my translation).[2] Hospital's story, on the other hand, relies almost entirely on the English language, which offers an example of what Gentzler refers to as "'monolingual' original writing" that "contain[s] many translational elements" (347). Thus both stories have the potential for readings which illustrate the transnational *and* the translational.

Transnational story-telling

"Love and Honour" and "Litany for the Homeland" are set in explicitly transnational environments illustrated not only through their narrative content, but through their structure and their use of particular narrative techniques. As noted above, the transnational borderline is simultaneously present and yet negated as a mode of differentiation; this is represented in these stories through their explicitly nation-based locations that exert a strong influence on the protagonists' identities, and yet whose definitive boundaries are transcended and thus negated. Looking first at Le's story, his protagonist Nam was born in Vietnam, moved to Australia as a child and then to the US as an adult. Each of these nations are related to a separate narrative within the story and yet there are strong parallels between them. Vietnam is associated with his parents' past, where at the age of fourteen his father first encountered an American soldier who "looked nothing like the Viet Cong" (15), where he survived mass murder, was imprisoned and at the age of twenty-five brought his family to Australia. Australia is associated with Nam's own past, where at the age of fourteen he heard his father telling the local Vietnamese community about his war experience, where the community used "words [Nam] didn't understand" (16), where Nam ended up working as a lawyer and at the age of twenty-five left for the US. Finally, the US is associated with Nam's present, where he is struggling with his identity as a perceived ethnic writer in a commercially-driven environment, where he is negotiating his father's presence, where the two of them begin a new dialogue and where the father helps Nam to write about their past. To do so he tells Nam the full story of his war experience, filling in the gaps of the earlier narrative, and when he falls asleep afterwards Nam watches him, feeling that he has become his father "watching his sleeping son" (28).

Thus the three national entities that have delineated three aspects or stages of the story are bound together through the recurring act of story-telling. The US is the site of Nam's act of story-telling for us the readers, as well as his father's most recent act of story-telling for Nam; Australia is the setting for Nam's story as well as the site of his father's original act of story-telling; Vietnam is the setting for his father's stories and ultimately for Nam's written story. Furthermore, it is this written story, or more precisely, it is the father's burning of this written story that merges the US, Australia and Vietnam as three simultaneous sites and settings. As outlined by Goellnicht, the scene in which the father allows the ashes of the story to be "given body by the wind" (Le 29-30) carries connotations of the ritual of burning the dead, suggesting a sense of ultimate merging and closure (Goellnicht 203). In this way, the three national entities and all the demarcations that they have represented are present and significant but ultimately they are reconciled and transcended through the creation and destruction of a story, rendering the narrative transnational.

[2] "Les processus d'écriture et de lecture de textes littéraires plurilingues sont á comprendre comme des processus de 'traduction' continue".

A similar transnational structure can be discerned in Hospital's story. Her unnamed protagonist was born in Australia, moving from Melbourne to Brisbane as a child and then to the US and Canada as an adult. Again, each of these national entities is clearly demarcated and is related to the act of story-telling. In Australia as a girl she meets Paddy, a young Irish-Australian boy who lives on a houseboat and who inspires her to "reinvent herself" as Stella, the girl "from the moon" who "had the stars at her fingertips" (260). As a local outcast, Paddy epitomizes for her the experience of living in the margins or borderlines of society and she is the only person in their small country town who pays any attention to his story. As an adult she remembers him fondly, having lost contact with him years earlier. She is reminded of him when she travels through the US and Canada: in each country she meets a character who, like Paddy, lives on the margins and has found no one apart from her who will listen to their story.

In the US she works as a creative writing teacher at MIT, where Lincoln D, an African-American ex-marine struggling to fit back into mainstream society, writes stories that "frighten" her (267). He relates two of them to her face to illustrate how he fits "*nowhere*" in society (268) and finally he asks if he can send her letters as a means of letting out the "clamour" in his head (269). This encounter contrasts with the next in Canada, where she is on a reading tour and a young Cree man gives her a ride into town. Although it is a ride "long enough for two entire life histories to be exchanged", it remains relatively quiet because "the bridge which divides strangers from kin had been crossed" even before leaving the parking lot (269). With the one simple question: "Were you born here?", she stimulates a response as if she "were Aladdin and had suddenly touched the magic spot on a lamp" (269). Rather than explaining himself fully in words, however, the man drives her to a frozen lake that only exists for part of the year, upon which his grandmother had helped his mother give birth. By indicating his birth place as one that is naturally unfixed he recalls Stella's encounter with Paddy's houseboat as "something that can move away" (263). Thus the Cree man becomes yet another character who lives on the margins of society. These two North American encounters, the first overflowing with the need to use words and the second supremely minimal in its story-telling capacity, represent for the protagonist two evocations of Paddy who is "like some ancient but ageless mariner" and who "keeps seeking [her] out to finish his tale […] setting his compass for [her] shores" (266). Significantly, whenever his story is told again, she finds she has "the mud of a Queensland creekbed under [her] feet" (269). Thus while the Australian, US and Canadian settings are differentiated in order to represent the stages of her journey, their national borders are reconciled and transcended through the re-surfacing of the Australian landscape with each act of story-telling.

Transnational waterways

In both Le and Hospital's narratives, a transnational structure is presented, in which the protagonists' identification with different national spaces and the simultaneous transcendence of their borders is mediated through the act of writing or listening to personal stories. Another point of comparison is the recurring image of the waterway, used to represent and explore the fluidity inherent in these borders. Whether a creekbed, a river, or a ditch, these images appear at least twice in each narrative at moments when the protagonist is experiencing a transnational exchange, and each time the writers approach them by describing their temperature, colour, consistency and action. Le's narrative moves from a "cold and black" river that is "slowing in sections" (11) to a "muddy" ditch that is "dark and wet and warm and sweet" (16), then back to a "black and braided" river that is "on the brink of freezing" (30). Hospital's narrative moves from a creek of "warm water [that] sucks at mangrove roots" (262) to a river that "slash[es] the white surface of March […] still mostly skating rink but part flow" and that "sucks away at the base of [the] limestone cliffs […] plucks and thaws, plucks and thaws, subtracting from Canada there, depositing American silt there" (271). The comparisons are palpable: while Le's images fluctuate between a river on the brink of freezing and a ditch made warm and sweet in its tropical environment, Hospital's move from a warm tropical setting to a frozen one in the process of thawing out. Thus in both narratives, the flowing water on the North American

continent is in the process of a seasonal change, while the water in Australasia is thicker, slower and almost stagnant.

These parallels become particularly relevant to this discussion when we note that Sakai uses the river to illustrate the man-made nature of the borderline; he writes that "physical markers such as a river, a mountain range, a wall and even a line on the ground become a border only when made to represent a certain pattern of social action". Considered in this framework, the waterways of these narratives hold the potential to act as a borderline at the same time as they resist the role. Instead, they are constantly participating in the "act of bordering", which can be seen in the above descriptions of them "sucking" and "plucking" and "freezing" and "thawing", being *active,* in other words, and in a state of constant change. In addition, these images occur at particular moments in the narratives when the borders between national entities are being transcended, which again suggests their engagement with the act of national bordering. For example, Nam and his father first discuss their family, opening up their transnational history, on a bridge overlooking the Iowa river, where the traffic makes a sound like "chopping wind" and "the east bank of the river glow[s] wanly in the afternoon light" (11-12). This scene parallels his father's story, told when they were in Australia, of being saved by his mother near the bridge of a ditch in Vietnam. By that waterway, which was "on the east side of the village", there were "helicopters everywhere" (16), recalling the sound of chopping wind. The Iowa river then returns as the resting place of Nam's – and his father's – written story, where Nam stands on the bridge watching its ashes drift away over the water. This final image unites the act of story-telling with the image of the waterway by noting how "it took hours, sometimes days, for the surface of a river to freeze over – to hold in its skin the perfect and crystalline world – and how that world could be shattered by a small stone dropped like a single syllable" (30). If the waterway is understood to be a representation of a borderline, related as it is to the meeting of Nam's various national affiliations, here the act of story-telling is shown to be capable of breaking or negating that borderline, reminding us of its fluidity and its transnationality.

The fluidity of borderlines is similarly explored in Hospital's narrative via her use of the waterway image. Her protagonist closely associates Paddy with the creekbed in her Australian hometown, which represents "no-mans-land" not only because of its position beyond the fence (261), but because the idea of living on it "suggests that seemingly immutable laws can be called into question" (263). In other words, it is an entity that may appear as a borderline but in fact, it simultaneously undermines the notion of clear differentiation. It is thus a place where Paddy and Stella can reinvent themselves because its "mirrored corridor of *why nots*" suggests that anything is possible (263). When she is a grown adult and has heard the stories of Lincoln D and the Cree man, the protagonist then finds the Australian creek paralleled with the St Lawrence river, where she sits and is reminded of Australia. In this moment "Queensland itself is fluid […] and refuses to be anchored in space", merging with the physical borders of the US and Canada either side of the St Lawrence in a new form of no-mans-land, where she can "see orchids in snowdrifts" and where "along the bare knotted trunks of maples and hickory trees, epiphytes and creepers have run rampant" (271). Again, it is the act of story-telling, that is, her reflection on her encounters with Paddy, Lincoln and the Cree man, that allows these national entities to flow into one another. The result is a waterway scene that is reminiscent of Le's in its sense of merging and closure.

Story-telling, waterways and translation

Having established how the act of story-telling supports the transnational structure of these narratives and how the recurring image of the waterway represents the fluid borders implied within this structure, I will now use these same narrative features to explore the translational elements of the texts. Beginning with Le's story, we can see that at those points where story-telling is breaking in upon national borders, located each time at a waterway, we also discover an interplay that calls into question the borders between Vietnamese and English. For example, on the first appearance of the bridge over the Iowa river Nam's father reverts to a "formal Vietnamese" in order to discuss their family. Rather than represent this in Vietnamese or

literary English, Le chooses to reimagine it for the Anglophone reader, which results in a foreignized form of English: "How is the mother of Nam?" (12). Nam's reply, "she is good" is said "too loudly" as he tries "to make [himself] heard over the groans and clanks of a passing truck" (12); this establishes a juxtaposition between the formal linguistic register used in Vietnamese for family references[3] and the lack of formality and resultant awkwardness of setting it within the American context. Thus Nam and his father's first attempt to return to their past in order to understand their different views is mediated or *translated* for the reader in such a way that the foreignized structure is retained, illustrating Meylaerts' and D'hulst's concept of the multilingual text as an ongoing process of translation (10).

This foreignizing approach contrasts, however, with the following scene where the father and son begin talking with a homeless man standing by an oil drum on the riverbank. From the point of view of the reader, this is the only conversation during which the two engage with a third speaker. The dialogue is relevant to this discussion because it presents three distinctly different linguistic situations. The homeless man, as far as the reader is able to understand, is American-born and his first language is English; Nam's father was born and grew up in Vietnam, moved to Australia as an adult and is currently visiting America, fluent in Vietnamese but speaking also a "lilting English" (12); Nam was born in Vietnam, moved to Australia as a child and now resides in America, speaking fluent Vietnamese and English. These three situations result in differing levels of conversational understanding: the homeless man is cut off from the interaction between Nam and his father which takes place in Vietnamese; the father addresses the homeless man in his "lilting English", but while addressing his son in Vietnamese, he appears to miss the homeless man's comment under his breath – "Welcome to America" (12); the son doesn't *say* anything throughout the interaction, but he is equally privy to each of these communications. Interestingly, rather than present his reader with a lilting or foreignized form of English as in the previous example, Le presents this entire dialogue in literary English, suggesting that the translation approach has now switched to domestication so that any nuances and differences present in the dialogue are hidden.

The process of translation is reflected upon again in a later multilingual scene where Nam recalls his father telling the story of his war experience in Vietnamese to a group of friends in Melbourne. Again, Nam creates a sense of awkwardness and presents an outsider's perspective, sitting "on the perimeter of the circle" and listening to "words [he] doesn't understand" (14-16). His outsider status could be due to his much younger age, but it could also draw upon the fact that he grew up in Melbourne and is listening to a group of men who grew up in Vietnam. There is a suggestion here of the complex intercultural and interlingual relations *within* perceived ethnic groups, particularly where "1.5" or second-generation migrants are simultaneously a part and not a part of both their home and ancestral communities.[4] We also have further examples of Le's reimagined Vietnamese, where the men welcome the father with "Thanh! Fuck your mother! What took you so long – scared, no?" and the father begins his story with "you remember that sound, no?" (13-14). Thus, as in the above examples on the banks of the Iowa river, in this scene we have contrasting translation processes that have first hidden and then highlighted the foreign elements of the source text. This illustrates an interplay between English and Vietnamese where the language borders are not fixed, but where they exist in a state of fluidity to create a *translational* – as well as a transnational – act of bordering.

In Hospital's narrative, multilingual spaces are much less utilized because in each of her encounters the protagonist interacts only in English. However, her use of story-telling and of the waterway helps to explore the negotiation present *within* language as a medium of

[3] Linguist Hy V. Luong explains that when common nouns such as "mother", "father" and "child" are separated from their relation to the addresser and the addressee, their meaning is derived from their contrast with other family members rather than from their personal relation to those present (23).

[4] The 1.5 is a term given to young Vietnamese refugees who fled immediately after the American-Vietnam war. Critic Bunkong Tuon describes the 1.5 as existing "between the worlds of the first and the second generation" of refugees, and holding "the various forces of the past and present together in a delicate balance" (6).

communication; that is, they are concerned with translation in the Sakaian sense as a broad "schema" against which we understand language to be constantly in the process of bordering. For example, while the act of story-telling establishes a transnational structure, as discussed above, that same structure highlights an important parallel with language. This is clearest in the way that the protagonist's narrative is *framed* by a broader one told by an omniscient narrator. Introducing the story with the inclusive pronoun "our", this narrator sets a transnational scene, referring to Earth as "our neighbourhood" and "our homeland" (256). It then refers to Australia as "*Terra Australis*", literally meaning "the land of the south", which reminds us that Australia as a national entity did not always exist; that it was in fact "wished […] into being and dreamed up" by European explorers (257). This provides an explicit illustration of Sakai's theory of the national entity existing only *after* the act of bordering. Using the phrase a "Once upon a time", the narrator goes on to remind us that before Europeans began this act of bordering, the land was "already home to Sam Woolagoodjah's people" who "*shifted from place to place*" (emphasis in the original), not presuming to draw definitive borders as did the "latecomers" (257-8). Finally, with "And it came to pass […]" (259), the narrator transitions into the central narrative. The form and language of this introduction present certain methods of Western and Indigenous Australian story-telling, as well as certain notions of "home" and "nation". Furthermore, embedded within these are Western and Indigenous Australian views on religion and language. For example, a reference to the Indigenous "Dreaming" leads toward the Christian "*Amen*", and Indigenous terms of reference such as "*bird Wandjinas, crab Wandjinas*" are drawn upon amongst the Anglophone "first ones" and "ancient ones" (258). These two perspectives are highlighted once more at the closing of the story when the narrator ends with the two words "*Milingimbi* – Amen" (272). By bringing together two cultures and languages and by drawing on them interchangeably, thereby resisting a clear differentiation, this framing narrative performs a parallel act of transnational and translational bordering.

The omniscient narrator then interrupts at two points in the central story of the protagonist. As Stella follows Paddy into the no-mans-land of the creek, she is aware that her actions are synonymous with denying the values of her society and it is here that the narrator intervenes to reflect on how language also resists established borders: it "puts forth glowing tendrils" and "fingers its way past borders" to engage with some "shifting space" where those who meet one another "anchor themselves" in a "mysterious way" (262). This observation shows that it is language itself, rather than any interlingual interaction, that participates in translational bordering. At this point the narrator also describes language in words used earlier to describe Paddy, both of them "beckoning" with "glittering eyes" (259, 262); this links Stella's transnational encounters with the Irish-Australian (and, by extension, with the African-American and with the Canadian Cree) to the narrator's translational reflections on language. To strengthen this translational reading, it is helpful to draw on Bhabha's discussion of border identities. He argued that it is *within* the "interstices" of subject positions – that is, those hyphenated identities of a postcolonial world – that the act of cultural translation takes place (10). Hospital's protagonist engages through the act of story-telling with just such interstitial identities. Moreover, these identities are linked to language in the act of resisting established borderlines; thus, the story can be positioned within a broader schema of translation, against which language as a medium of communication is constantly participating in bordering.

The second time the omniscient narrator intervenes is in the time jump between Stella losing Paddy and the protagonist travelling to the US. Here an explicit link is drawn between the margins found in a "text" and those found in a "homeland", where "absences and silences are potent" and where they "fissure any state more deeply than the moat […] around [… its] nationhood" (266). Again we have a parallel set up between linguistic and national entities which questions the established borders around them in contrast with the interstices within them; moreover, it is in these interstices that the notions of "absence" and "silence" suggest the need for negotiation and translation. This final point leads us to an important reiteration: it is in the very "absence" of multilingual processes that Hospital's narrative engages with the act of bordering, or of translation. Her writing illustrates how *embedded* translational elements can be present in the "fissures" of language itself, that is, in the use of language to question established

borderlines and to express border identities. In this way, Hospital's story *performs* Sakai's attempt – amongst the many other recent attempts – to "reverse the conventional comprehension of translation that depends on the trope of translation as bridging or communication between two separate languages". Indeed, we would be hard-pressed to present Hospital's story via a "conventional" translational understanding *precisely because* it does not presume to differentiate between languages, speaking instead from the fluid borders within them.

Conclusion

This brief comparative study illustrates Sakai's parallel relation between translation and transnationalism in two short stories, which to date have only been discussed at length in relation to transnationalism. Both "Love and Honour" and "Litany for the Homeland" create a transnational setting where the act of story-telling and the image of the waterway are used to highlight the fluidity of relations between three different nations. In Le's story, the act of interlingual translation is then reflected in his multilingual spaces where a mediating process takes place between the narrative dialogue and the reader. This illustrates through its alternating foreignization and domestication how the border between Vietnamese and English is not defined and solid. Hospital's story on the other hand draws very little upon interlingual movement. Instead, it presents language itself as a subversive and instrumental means of entering and transcending borderlines, reflecting translation as a broad schema against which language is constantly in the act of bordering. As noted above, from the point of view of translation studies this conception rejects the well-worn metaphor of translation as a "bridge", given this requires a definitive border between languages. Instead, these narrative illustrations of Sakai's theory can be contextualized within the broader shift toward a non-binary conception of translation. It could be offered in conclusion that just as Gentzler has observed the potential of migration studies to present a "set of new texts traditionally not included in the [translation] discipline to date" (347), so the same might be said of transnational studies that can be used to illustrate how narratives engage with translation beyond binary understandings.

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Lost and Found in Poetic Translation – A Transnational Experience

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Abstract

Poetic translation is a unique genre that requires special techniques and is notoriously difficult, perhaps even "impossible" according to some experts (Landers 97). At the same time, because of the challenge, poetic translation is found to be rewarding, particularly when it is done in a transnational situation. In this study I describe the "losses and gains" that I have experienced as a Japanese-American transnational in the process of translating Japanese waka (31-syllable poems) and haiku (17-syllable poems) into English.

In the field of literary translation, "more time has been devoted to investigating the problems of translating poetry than any other literary mode" (Bassnett, *Translation Studies* 83). Poetic translation "is so difficult as to be called impossible by most experts" (Landers 97). It is a unique genre that requires the use of special translation techniques. Mexican writer, poet and diplomat Octavio Paz remarks, "[the] greatest pessimism about the feasibility of translation has been concentrated on poetry" (155). He disagrees, however, with those "many modern poets [who] insist that poetry is untranslatable" (155). In so doing, Paz contends that the "good" translator of poetry is a translator who is also a poet (158), making a vital distinction between the task of the poet and that of the translator:

> The poet, immersed in the movement of language, in constant verbal preoccupation, chooses a few words – or is chosen by them. As he [*sic*] combines them, he constructs his poem: a verbal object made of irreplaceable and immovable characters. The translator's starting point is not the language in movement that provides the poet's raw material, but the fixed language of the poem. A language congealed, yet living. His procedure is the inverse of the poet's: he is not constructing an unalterable text from mobile characters; instead he is dismantling the elements of the text, freeing the signs into circulation, then returning them to language.
>
> (Paz 159)

Paz goes on to maintain that the poet creates a poem – an unalterable text – by "fixing" language, while "a good translator moves in the opposite direction", making the "intended destination" a poem that is "analogous although not identical to the original poem" (158). That is, the translator first takes apart the fixed text and then reassembles its components in another language – composing a poem in the target language (TL). Mirroring the arguments put forward by Paz, the American expatriate poet Ezra Pound also attributes to the translator's role a dual responsibility:

> Through [Pound's] many notes and comments on translation, there is a consistent line of thought […]. The translator needs to read well, to be aware of what the source text is, to understand both its formal properties and its literary dynamic as well as its status in the source system, and then has to take into account the role that text may have in the target system.
>
> (Bassnett, "Transplanting the Seed" 64)

The two phases of translation suggested by Paz – dismantling and reassembling – are, he argues, an inverted parallel of poetic creation, resulting in "a reproduction of the original poem in another poem […] less a copy than a transmutation" (159-160).

My experience with translating Japanese poetry into English has required a close reading of the text as well as dismantling and reassembling. In this intricate reproduction process, which must also take into account the constraints of typological distance between the source language (SL) and the TL, I have found that much gets lost in poetic translation. And yet, I also have learned that it is precisely this difficulty that invigorates the process of translation, as Wilson points out:

> The losses and gains in the passage between the source and the target language and the ensuing lack of precision take the writer into the realm of the inexpressible, the space where new expressions are generated in pursuit of the inner voice.
>
> (Wilson, "The Writer's Double" 194)

In this study, in order to illustrate the "losses and gains" and the "pursuit of the inner voice" that I have experienced in poetic translation, I use examples from *Samurai and Cotton,* my autobiography, originally written in Japanese and self-translated into English.[1] The letters quoted in *Samurai and Cotton* include a number of poems that the correspondents, most notably my parents, wrote in the mid-1970s after I had left Japan to study in the US.[2] This presents a unique situation. First of all, the translator (myself) is the recipient of the poems. Secondly, the poems were written several decades ago. Thirdly, the correspondence between the poet and the recipient of the poems was transnational in nature – moving between Japan and the US. To make the situation even more distinctive, although the recipient and the translator of the poems is the same person (myself), their statuses are different – the former being a newcomer to the US and the latter a transnational who has lived in the adopted country for several decades. Thus a situational as well as temporal distance is presented, between the receipt and the translation of the poems, in addition to the physical distance originally present in the transnational correspondence. Also of note is that the target audience of the English translation was mainly American.[3] My poetic translation, therefore, interacted closely with my "self" as a Japanese-American transnational and my transnational experience bridging the two remote times as well as the two distant places.

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[1] *Samurai and Cotton* is an autobiography as well as a tribute to the author's father, family and ancestors. It is based on the true stories of seven generations of her family in Japan and centres around the lives of the author and her father. The book takes the reader on an historical journey through the world of the samurai, a transition to the merchant class, and finally to the aftermath of the author-protagonist's decision to leave Japan and pursue her dream to study in the United States. The story is narrated by the transnational and translingual writer and protagonist, and serves as a metanarrative providing clues about the author-translator's psyche and transformation as she transitions through geographical, cultural and linguistic changes. See Takahashi (*Lost and Found in Self-Translation*) for a detailed analysis of the translation process through which *Samurai and Cotton* was produced.

[2] Being the author of the present study as well as the author-translator of *Samurai and Cotton*, I refer to myself in the first person (e.g. "I") as both. I also refer to myself in third person (e.g. "the translator", "she") when describing the book and/or translation.

[3] Considering the readership and the notion of creativity side by side, I realize that the influence of the audience may possibly hinder one's creativity – for example, functioning as a "creative constraint" (Wilson and Gerber). If, for instance, the translator is forced to "conform" to the expectations and conventions of the target audience due to commercial purposes or political pressure, this external force will likely go against the translator's desire to be creative. In such a case, translation becomes a battle between external and internal forces. In my case, however, there was no commercial or political pressure. My relationship with the target audience was rather personal and free of any pressure, and this independence allowed me to interact freely with my desire to translate creatively and to turn my translation into "(a form of) creative writing and creative writing as being shaped by translation processes" (Wilson and Gerber ix).

Lost in translation

A waka (31-syllable Japanese poem) consists of five lines of 5-7-5-7-7 syllables in each line. The following waka is written by my mother, Sachiko, responding to my letter that enclosed a maple leaf from New Haven in Connecticut, where I was studying in the mid-1970s:

> *One leaf of maple*
> *Found in the airmail…*
> *To my daughter's heart*
> *I press my cheek.*[4]
>
> (Takahashi, *Samurai and Cotton* 154)

The sense of the rhythm of the original poem is captured in the following transcription, in the middle column (with a literal translation in the third column):

一葉の	*ichiyō-no*[5]	one leaf of
	1 2 34 5	
紅葉に託す	*momiji-ni takusu*	maple sent via
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
航空便	*eamēru*	airmail
	12 34 5	
吾が子の心に	*wagako-no kokoro-ni*	to my child's heart
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (8)[6]	
ほほすり寄せる	*hoho suri yoseru*	(I) press (my) cheek
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	

The rhythm is at the heart of Japanese poetry. The Japanese syllable, however, is very different from the English equivalent, for example:

> Japanese "syllables" are quite uniform, most of them consisting of a consonant and a vowel: *ka, ri, to,* and so forth. As a result, they are also very short. English syllables have much greater variety in structure and length.
>
> (Barnhill 5-6)

Due to such linguistic differences between the SL and the TL, I found it almost impossible to preserve the same syllabic rhythm in the TL. I thus translated the entire poem line by line, mostly focusing on trying to preserve the content rather than the form. For instance, I chose the message over the rhythm.

Let us look at another example:

> *When young and innocent,*
> *I picked dandelions in the fields.*
> *Their fragrance I still remember.*
> *The thirtieth wedding anniversary is near.*[7]
>
> (Takahashi, *Samurai and Cotton* 154-55)

The source text (ST) of this poem is transcribed and literally translated as follows:

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[4] 一葉の 紅葉（もみじ）に託す 航空便（エアメール）
吾が子の心に ほほすり寄せる

[5] A Japanese long vowel indicated with a macron (¯) is counted as two syllables.

[6] A line sometimes ends with an extra syllable, which is called 字余り (*jiamari* [lit. extra/leftover letter]).

[7] 幼きは 野辺にて摘みし タンポポの
香もなつかしく 象牙婚かな

幼きは	*osanaki-wa*	when young
	1 2 3 4 5	
野辺にて摘みし	*nobe-nite tsumishi*	in the field (I) picked
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
タンポポの	*tanpopo-no*	dandelions
	1 2 3 4 5	
香もなつかしく	*ka-mo natsukashiku*	fragrance (I) remember
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
象牙婚かな	*zōgekon kana*	ah… the ivory wedding[8]
	12 3 4 5 6 7	

The final target text (TT) of this poem is similar to the literal translation provided above. The only changes I made were to add "innocent" to "young" for the translation of 幼き (*osanaki*) and to increase the number of syllables in the line, as well as expressing the meaning of the ST accurately.[9] I slightly amplified the last line with the interpretation that the poet was thinking about her thirtieth wedding anniversary while reminiscing about her childhood. The last word かな (*kana*) is an expression that is equivalent to "oh" or "ah" in English, implying the poet's deep emotion. In this case, she was marvelling at the fact that time had flown since her childhood, as she welcomes her thirtieth wedding anniversary. While the SL expression かな (*kana*) was found to be impossible to translate into English, my choice was to explain the poet's feeling by clarifying the situation, as in "The thirtieth wedding anniversary is near". The choice of "near" was triggered by the last word of the previous line – "remember" – intended to have a rhyming effect. Similarly, the addition of "innocent", mentioned above, was intended for a rhythmic effect. Despite such attempts, however, the original rhythm and flavour were ultimately lost in translation.

Loss and gain

In the examples discussed above, images and experiences attached to the original poem were also lost due to the geographical, linguistic and cultural distance caused by the transnational and translingual situation. At the same time, however, it is precisely this distance, resulting in unique interlingual interactions, that enables fresh feelings, nuances and new narratives in the target culture.

In the ST of the first poem discussed above, the poet uses the Japanese word 紅葉 (*momiji* [lit. "crimson leaf"]) to refer to the maple leaf found in the letter. This SL term is, then, translated (back) into the TL as "maple", which accurately depicts the object described in the poem. It must be noted here that the visual images of 紅葉 (*momiji*) and "maple" leaves are quite different. Not only are their leaves very different, but the trees are dissimilar as well. Japanese *momiji* trees are usually shrubs and much smaller than fully-grown North American maple trees. In the ST, the reader is left with the inauthentic image of the maple plant due to the SL term 紅葉 (*momiji*), which is most likely associated with images that are "Japanese" and unlike the typical image held by Americans.

Likewise, one's experiences associated with 紅葉 (*momiji*) and "maple" may differ, bringing dissimilar nuances and feelings as well. When I hear the word 紅葉 (*momiji*) in Japanese, for example, I think about the colour 紅 (*beni* [crimson]), the song I learned in elementary school and trips to places such as Nikko and Hakone – mostly related to my childhood experiences in Japan. On the other hand, the English word "maple" triggers word

[8] In the past, the thirtieth anniversary was celebrated as the ivory wedding. Today it is the fourteenth.

[9] The Japanese adjective 幼き collocates with words such as "child", but not with "adult". The meaning of this adjective is thus more marked than the English adjective "young", which can modify "child" or "adult".

associations such as “orange color”, “New England”, “syrup”, “pancakes”, etc. Apparently, those two sets of images come from different experiences separated by geographical distance.[10]

My ST readers are given the following description prior to reading the poem, but this is most likely insufficient for them to attain the accurate image of the maple leaves:

> キャンパスは、自然に恵まれ、ニューイングランドの香り高く「異国情緒」満点でした。
> 紅葉の時季には、街の並木が**濃いオレンジに色づいたメープル (もみじ) の葉**に包まれ、青空によく映えていました。その燃えるようなメープル並木の美しさには、ため息を漏らすほどの感動を味わいました。
>
> (Takahashi, *サムライと綿* 243)

The TT of this passage is as follows:

> The campus was surrounded by a beautiful natural setting, full of the New England fragrance and exotic atmosphere. In the fall foliage season, the streets were aflame with autumn tints of **maple leaves**. The **reddish orange leaves** made a sharp contrast with the blue sky, which was simply breathtaking.
>
> (Takahashi, *Samurai and Cotton* 143)

As can be garnered from this TT content, the ST reader is given an image that American maple leaves are 濃いオレンジ (*koi-orenji* [lit. “dark orange”]), translated, “reddish orange” in the TL. The ST readers may wonder about メープル並木 (*mēpuru namiki* [lit. “maple-lined streets”]) since they would rarely see streets lined with *momiji* trees in Japan but instead would be accustomed to different types of taller and thicker trees lining streets, whereas *momiji* trees or shrubs are usually found in shady woodlands and gardens.

It should also be noted here that, in the ST quoted above, I used the SL *katakana* term (loanword form) メープル (*mēpuru* [“maple”]) amplified with もみじ (*momiji*) – as in メープル (もみじ). In the above bilingual-bicultural as well as bidirectional translation situation, the TL word and its images were rightly revived in the TT, as a result of the interlingual interactions. As a Japanese-American transnational, I have the privilege of having two sets of images, experiences and word associations that are related to my L1 and L2, which is typical of “coordinate bilingualism” (see footnote 10). Thanks to this special privilege, I found this type of poetic translation rewarding and fulfilling.

Yoko Tawada, a Japanese-German bilingual author, writes:

> I’ve been living in Hamburg for twenty years now. “Have you become a different person?” I am asked. “Are you a different person when you speak German?” I am asked. These questions are not easily answered. If a person were to acquire an additional personality when learning an additional language, someone who speaks five languages would possess five personalities. Should this person look like a country fair with five different booths? I don’t have a single booth. I’m similar to a web. The structure of a web pattern is formed. There are more and more knots, tight and loose spots, irregularities, uncompleted corners, edges, holes, or superimposed layers. This web, which can catch tiny planktons, I will call a multilingual web.
>
> (Tawada 148)

[10] Keeping two languages separate in such a manner is one of the characteristics of “coordinate bilingualism”, as opposed to “compound bilingualism” – the dichotomous distinction first introduced by Weinreich. Cook describes compound and coordinate bilinguals as those “who link the two languages in their minds, or keep them apart respectively” (152). The difference is normally due to the bilingual’s experience with the two languages – for example, whether the languages are learned/acquired in the same environment or separate locations. Transnational situations tend to lead to language acquisition/learning environments resulting in coordinate bilingualism, in which one’s first language (L1) and second language (L2) are kept separate.

Tawada's description of bilingualism/multilingualism describes well what constitutes, or contributes to, the basis for the linguistic creativity that transnational writers/translators possess – a "multilingual web" with "superimposed layers".

Quoting Alice Kaplan, Evangelista describes how, in bilingual writing, for each loss there are, equally, a number of possible gains:

> Kaplan […] writes about the "privilege of living in translation" [140], which might even suggest that the loss in translation belongs to writers who never have had the "privilege" of having to confront such different aspects of self.
>
> (Evangelista 181)

A loss can hence be turned into a gain with the creativity of a "multilingual web" but only in the hands of an adventurous bilingual writer.

Poetic translation as self expression

The brevity of a waka poem makes it difficult to convey the original flavour of the ST in the TL. Translating haiku, which is shorter than waka, is thus more challenging. It only consists of three lines of 5-7-5 syllables and emphasizes simplicity of expression, focusing on the beauty of each season and images from nature. Haiku poems by one of Japan's most famous poets, Matsuo Bashō (1644-1694), have been translated into many other languages including English. Take the following example:

古池や	*furuike-ya*	The ancient pond
	1 2 3 4 5	
蛙飛び込む	*kawazu tobikomu*	A frog jumps in
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
水の音	*mizu-no oto*	The sound of the water.
	1 2 3 4 5	

This is probably the best-known haiku in the world (Ueda). The translation rendered above is by Donald Keene [1955] and it is translated faithfully and straightforwardly.

This poem has also been translated by many other Anglophone translators – for example, Hiroaki Sato's *One Hundred Frogs* includes over a hundred translations plus a number of adaptations and parodies. These translations of the same poem suggest that there can be as many translations as the number of translators. Some translations are long and others extremely short. Some consist of complete sentences, others only of nouns. The following one, for instance, provides much more information than found in the original haiku (ST):

> There once was a curious frog
> Who sat by a pond on a log
> And, to see what resulted,
> In the pond catapulted
> With a water-noise heard round the bog.
>
> Translated by Alfred H. Marks [1974] (Sato 68)

This example contains so much more than the ST – for example, there is no reference to the frog being curious in the original poem. The translator also made the lines rhyme and turned the haiku into a limerick, which was probably his playful and creative way to express feelings and impressions. In contrast, the following only contains nouns:

> pond
> frog
> plop!
>
> Translated by James Kirkup [n.d.] (Sato 100)

This translation relies on simplicity and the reader's imagination. Thus the wide range of translations of this particular poem suggests that there is infinite potential hidden in poetic translation.

In *Samurai and Cotton,* several of the haiku poems that my father, Kiyoshi, wrote and included in his letters are introduced.

> *Excerpts from my father's letter*
> *dated September 21, 1975*[11]
>
> *I saw the harvest moon (August 15 on the lunar calendar) yesterday. It's rare to see it since it's always rainy or cloudy on this day every year.* […]
>
> […] *After finishing the delivery, I was relieved and looked up in the sky to find the full moon of the 15th night [in a lunar month] rising in the east. It was quite pleasing to admire the harvest moon from the 5th floor of the housing development. I wondered if you would be watching the same moon and composed a haiku poem:*
>
> *The harvest moon shines.*
> *Looking up in the sky,*
> *I think about my scion.*
> *—Kijirushi*[12]
>
> *I saw people carrying Japanese pampas grass [one of the decorative items used for a moon-viewing festival] at Kitaguchi Shopping Mall. They seemed to be enjoying the fall festival in a modest way. After getting home, I wrote down my haiku poem with a brush and ink and posted it under my New Year's calligraphy.*
>
> (Takahashi, *Samurai and Cotton* 155-156)

The ST haiku included in the above letter is transcribed and literally translated as follows:

中秋の	*chūshū-no*	mid-autumn [harvest]
	12 34 5	
月を仰ぎて	*tsuki-wo aogite*	moon (I) look up
	1 2 3 45 6 7	
吾子思い	*ago omoi*	(I) think about my child
	1 2 3 4 5	

We notice here that this poem in its final form in the TT was amplified beyond the direct translation presented above – there are expressions in the TT that did not appear in the ST. For example, the first line in the TT reads: "The harvest moon shines" but there is no word equivalent to "shine" in the ST. The second line contains the phrase "in the sky", but again, there is no equivalent expression found in the ST. If the poem were translated more literally, it would read:

> The harvest moon
> Looking up
> I think about my child.

---

[11] Translations of letters are italicized in *Samurai and Cotton.* Information in parentheses *( )* is original – provided by the letter writer. Information in square brackets *[ ]* is provided by the author-translator. The use of *[...]* in letter excerpts indicates that one or more sentences or paragraphs are omitted from the original letter by the ST author. Non-italicized […] indicates an omission from the TT made by the author of the present study.

[12] 中秋の 月を仰ぎて 吾子（あご）思い ― 喜印

Kiyoshi signed his haiku here as 喜印 (Kijirushi). He evidently came up with this name using one character from his first name – i.e., the 喜 [Ki] of 喜儀 [Kiyoshi]. And he playfully added jirushi/shirushi [印 "mark"] to make it to resemble kijirushi [a euphemism for "crazy"].

Some may think this translation is sufficient, but I reproduced it as follows:

> The harvest moon **s**hines.
> Looking up in the **s**ky,
> I think about my **s**cion.

Here, the brevity of the poem was compensated for with additional descriptions of the scene. It should also be noted that the last word in each line was inserted in order to alliterate (beginning with the letter *s*), as underlined above. The word "shines" was added in order to make the scenery more vivid. To go well with "shines", the word "child" was changed to "scion". Those were my efforts to make the short haiku poem more poetry-like in the TL.

The following excerpt includes another haiku by my father, together with background information given by the narrator (me):

> In the same month, I received another haiku from Dad.
> *On the world map*
> *Where my daughter lives*
> *I paste a Jizō talisman.*[13]
> Right before this poem arrived, I had received a letter from my father telling me: "We received a *Jizō* talisman from the Temple today. I have posted it on the map where New Haven is and prayed for your safety from far away. I especially hope that you will take care of your throat and won't catch a cold."
>
> (Takahashi, *Samurai and Cotton* 156)

The ST haiku in the above letter is transcribed and literally translated as follows:

吾が子住む	*wagako sumu*	(where) my child lives
	1 2 3 4 5	
地図のところへ	*chizu-no tokoro-e*	the map's point
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
地蔵札	*jizō-fuda*	Jizō talisman
	1 23 4 5	

If this haiku were translated literally, it would be:

> On the map
> Where my child lives
> A Jizō talisman

The following is the final translation:

> On the **world** map
> Where my daughter lives
> **I paste** a Jizō talisman.

This poem in the TL gained a couple of additions – for instance, "world" was added to "map" as well as the phrase "I paste". The term "world" was included in order to create a contrast between the old Japanese tradition and the transnational aspect of the situation – the poet is in Japan and his daughter in the US. The phrase "I paste" was added in order to clarify the meaning of the poem, based on the explanation provided in the letter.

---

[13] 吾が子住む 地図のところへ 地蔵札

As seen in this and other examples, my translations of the poems in *Samurai and Cotton* tend to consist of complete sentences rather than lining up nouns or noun phrases. This is my personal preference, reflecting my personality as well as my profession (a linguist and English educator), which has led me to believe that sentences must be complete. In other words, my poetic translation is a product of my self-expression.

Gain from a distance

A physical and temporal distance plays an intricate role in the creative process of translation (see Evangelista). In the poetic translation described above, I was brought back to the past to live the elapsed time and my old self while reading and translating the poems written by my parents in the 1970s. When the temporal distance was diminished in my mind, it unlocked the door of nostalgia I experienced as a Japanese-American transnational. In reality, however, no one can go back to the past. Moving through time, we become exiled from our past. The temporal distance can only be overcome with the power of imagination. If it is a physical distance, on the other hand, as Klimkiewicz notes, as long as you keep your passport, you can freely travel and safely go back home any time you want, but if you are in exile, you can "live in the memory alone and can only go back home with an effort of imagination" (196). In this sense, reminiscing about the past and yearning for home are the same in an exile's mind – for instance, "having another life elsewhere is felt as a different chapter of life, a completely distinct period of time that will be forever impossible to recover" (196). The power of imagination, however, can close both spatial and temporal gaps.

As Klimkiewicz points out, Vladimir Nabokov's imagination provokes a "compression of space":

> a wild and poetic contraction which manifests in his novel *The Gift* when Fyodor is looking outside through the window of his apartment in Berlin: "The night sky melts to peach beyond that gate. There water gleams, there Venice vaguely shows. Look at that street – it runs to China straight, and yonder star above the Volga glows!"
>
> (Klimkiewicz 196)

I can empathize with and appreciate this form of imaginative thinking, even though my situation was quite different. I was not in exile; it was my choice to leave home. While I was studying abroad, I had my passport, which allowed me to go home freely and safely at any time. In reality, however, my freedom and mobility were limited – it was as though I were in voluntary exile – because I was unable to go home freely for financial reasons:

> Airfares were unbelievably expensive; I remember an economy-class one-way ticket from Tokyo to New York was 200,000 yen in 1975. It was about $666 according to the exchange rate in the 1970s, but it would actually be over $2,600 today (2011) with inflation.
>
> Considering the cost of traveling, I was determined not to come home until I had graduated. (The situation back then was so different from that of today. Japanese students studying in the United States today often go home for a summer vacation, Christmas, and sometimes, even for spring break!)
>
> (Takahashi, *Samurai and Cotton* 122)

This situation widened the physical distance and triggered more imaginative thinking about home. While studying in New Haven, I often wondered how my family might be doing back in Japan. At the same time, my parents also contemplated how I might be doing thousands of miles away from home. They, too, compressed the physical distance "with an effort of imagination".

My father composed a haiku, looking at the harvest moon, wondering if I, too, might be viewing the same moon in the US. This is reminiscent of the "wild and poetic contraction" manifested in the words of Fyodor in Nabokov's novel – compressing space through the sky,

water, streets and stars. My father, too, went beyond the physical yonder with the sight of the moon. Likewise, he compressed the spatial distance with the power of imagination, by looking at the world map. This imaginative act, in turn, unlocked his artistic creativity, resulting in the composition of the haiku. Thirty-some years later, going beyond the temporal distance, I translated his haiku.

There is an expression in Japanese 思いを馳せる (*omoi-wo haseru*), meaning literally, "let one's thought run (e.g. to one's loved one who is far away)". This is what I did. So did my father. In the waka poem mentioned above, my mother, too, let her thought run thousands of miles and compressed space via the maple leaf with the power of imagination and creativity.

Translating these artistic expressions by my parents, I was able to appreciate their thoughts and feelings much more than when I read them in their original forms. It was only when I lived their lives in translation that I came to comprehend and truly appreciate their emotional expressions, artistic work, imagination and creativity. It was also the power of imagination that allowed me to live in translation and to gain much from the lost past.

My bilingualism is a matter of choice, as for the transnational author-translator Francesca Duranti, as described by Wilson, and it is closely associated with my choice to live in the US and "the sensation of being at ease with [my] new 'home'" (Wilson, "The Writer's Double" 188). It is thus my affection toward my new home country and its people and culture that motivated me to translate the story that deciphers my transnational and crosscultural experience. More importantly, I was driven by a strong desire to relive the process of self-discovery and to encounter the lost past. As a result, just like Duranti's, my journey took me "beyond language into the realms of nostalgia, loss of identity, rootlessness, and invisibility" (Wilson, "The Writer's Double" 191).

> If we consider the narrative that articulates the pre-migration self a source text, and the narrated self that emerges from the translating act carried out for their adoptive-language audience the target text, language migrants are translating from the mother tongue to the foreign language. They are translating the self into the other.
>
> (Wilson, "Parallel Creations" 49)

The poetic translation I experienced was, indeed, more than translating the poem from Japanese to English. I was translating the self – old and new.

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Humour in Translingual Writing

MORGANE VERNIER

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Abstract

The analysis in this article is based on a comic play that I wrote for PRONTO 2013 (a series of Performed Readings of New Theatrical Offerings, organized by Monash University Student Theatre), entitled *Welcome to Aussieland!*. The comedy is about a French student, Jennifer, who goes on exchange to Monash University in Melbourne, Australia. It is a "double" act of self-translation in that it is strongly inspired by my own experience in Australia, and also in that it was composed in my adopted language, English. This self-reflexive article aims to integrate theoretical and critical material into a discussion on the consequences of the translation of such a work of self-translation into another language. It examines concrete examples drawn from a personal work, analyzing linguistic and cultural difficulties. Since both the success of its comic elements and its cultural identity are anchored in its translingual nature, retaining one would entail sacrificing the other.

Three years in Australia – two of them as an international student – provided me with a plethora of anecdotes and inspiring writing material which I combined into a play, entitled *Welcome to Aussieland!*. It was selected as part of PRONTO 2013 – a series of Performed Readings of New Theatrical Offerings – organized by Monash University Student Theatre. Following the performed reading on 23 April 2013, I realized that the irony which ensures the play is a successful comedy depends on many variables, and that it would probably be, to some extent at least, lost in translation.

Aussieland! relays, in a succession of humorous anecdotes, the adventures of Jennifer, a French student who goes on exchange to Australia. It focuses on how she manages to keep in touch with her relatives and friends left in France – especially her mother – while meeting new people: other international students and locals, such as her housemates. The comic elements of *Aussieland!* are based on the differences between two cultures – French and Australian – and between expectations and actual experiences. The translation of such a text would be a particularly demanding task, not only in light of linguistic issues, but also because of cultural aspects. Indeed, the notion of "culture" as a "fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioral conventions that are shared by a group of people" (Spencer-Oatey 3), is embedded in the play and is central to its proper functioning. Other factors that contribute to the humorous dimension of *Aussieland!*, and which must be analyzed when considering its translation, are the paratext and the target audience. Awareness of paratextual elements (Genette), like epitextual biographical details about the author, plays its part in the success of some of the jokes. A different audience from the one present on 23 April 2013 would also most likely result in the loss of humorous elements – as will be examined using reception theory (Holub 1984). An author always produces a text with an audience in mind, which is all the more true in the context of performance art, since a play is written in order to be performed in front of spectators, on whom its successful reception entirely depends. *Aussieland!* was written for Australian university students with the aim of entertaining them by presenting the challenges faced by European students visiting their country. All of this then leads to the question of whether the translation of such a personal work as *Aussieland!*, the direct result of an act of self-translation, is possible at all, without undermining the successful reception of the comic elements present in it.

This article examines how the contexts of production and reception – especially in the case of theatre – contribute to the comic dimension of the play. It looks at how humour is generated in the process of self-translation – cultural differences and misunderstandings can provide fertile ground for comic situations – and how, consequently, translation of the text into another language would involve the loss of both the irony present in it, and the cultural identities of the protagonists of the play and its author. Finally, it comments on the implications involved in the translation of a text which already results from an act of self-translation, and whether its translation should be considered at all.

Translingual writing

Defined in 1976 by Popovič as "the translation of an original work into another language by the author himself" (19), self-translation can also be considered in a metaphorical sense, to describe, for instance, "transnational migrants living as 'translated beings' between multiple cultures, languages, and national identities" (Shread 52). Some writers view "the metaphor of self-translation as a renegotiation of the self" (Saidero 33), while others take the metaphor to the next level, so that "the narration of [a writer's] lived experience is increasingly viewed as an act of (self-)translation" (Wilson, "The Writer's Double" 186). In this sense, translingual writers double as self-translators. Indeed, because they write in their adopted language, not only do they translate themselves into linguistic constructions, but they also create "a space of mediation and renegotiation where transcultural exchange may occur, thereby allowing them to fuse and re-inscribe their multiple identities, selves, languages and cultures" (Saidero 32), which "underscores the link between translation and creative writing" (Wilson, "The Writer's Double" 187).

Translation of puns and wordplay

Aussieland! is only one of the possible translations of my experience as a French student in Australia. My choice to use the language of the Other, my adopted language (English), was justified by the location of the play (Australia) and by my target audience (English speakers), but also by the malleability of the English language (as opposed to French). From a linguistic point of view, English is very flexible, allowing for the inventive creation of wordplay and collocations of words. Examples of such collocations in my play include "sock-sisters" and "bedmate". The first of these comes up when the main character, Jennifer, makes fun of her friend Sophie who, just like her, was offered a pair of hand-knitted socks by her grandmother, and is not very enthusiastic about it:

> **JENNIFER** *(passing an arm around Sophie's shoulders)*: Aren't you glad that we're going to be sock-sisters?

The second occurs when Jennifer comes across a "share bed opportunity" while looking for accommodation, and expresses her reluctance to ever get a "bedmate". In both cases, the collocations were modelled on pre-existing words – "soul sister" and "roommate", both of which would be hard to translate into another language like French. This is especially true of "bedmate", as the concept of house-sharing is less common in France than in Australia, and French does not distinguish between "roommate" and "housemate" in the first place, making the creation of the French equivalent of "bedmate" more difficult.

It is worth mentioning two other instances of wordplay, which are all the more challenging to translate in that they are built on culturally-marked elements. One is "goon" (cheap cask wine) and the other is "huntsman". Culture-specific items such as these can create translation issues due to "the nonexistence of the referred item [in the target culture] or of its different intertextual status in the cultural system of the [target audience]" (Aixela 58). The first pun, involving the culturally-specific reference "goon", occurs as Jennifer, reluctant to explain to her mother that she has been drinking alcohol, leaves her sentence unfinished:

JENNIFER: No! I've had a very exhausting weekend, we barely slept, we surfed, we had far too much goo... *(trailing off)*
MOTHER: Too much... goo?
JENNIFER: Yeah... It's an Australian... specialty.
MOTHER: Oh really, that's a weird name. What is it made of?
JENNIFER: Just... grapes.

There are two dimensions to the workings of such jokes: "[they] are composed of linguistic and cultural elements" (Li and Chen 3). Indeed, from a linguistic perspective, the translation into any other language would entail the loss of the wordplay between "goo" and "goon" arising from the phonetic similarity between the two words. Culturally speaking, the situation is also amusing because the mother, a French woman, does not know what "goon" is. Like the mother, it is unlikely that the new target audience of the translated version of *Aussieland!* would possess the cultural knowledge to understand the concept. In translation, it would require an explanation and this would undermine the humorous dimension of the conversation between Jennifer and her mother. It is precisely because – in Newmark's words – "culture specific items can be recognized quickly, since they have a long distance from target language culture", and because they "cannot be translated easily" (32) that the joke functions in the English version. In translation, the passage would probably be suppressed, or the concept of "goon" replaced with a cultural equivalent in the target language using a domesticating strategy – domestication being "an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target language cultural values" (Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility* 20). In both cases, a cultural element that was integral to shaping the environment of the play would be lost.

The second example of wordplay focuses on Jennifer's misunderstanding of the word "huntsman":

MATT *(gesticulating)*: Oh, damn! There's a huntsman!
JENNIFER: What are you talking about? A hunter?
MATT *(looks at Jennifer, puzzled, momentarily forgetting about the spider)*: What? No, a huntsman! *(turning Jennifer around so that she is now facing the spider)* A huge... bloody... spider!

The phonetic similarity between "huntsman" and "hunter" allows the creation of wordplay, which would be impossible in another language, like French, into which the respective translations of these words are "sparassidae" and "chasseur". However, the passage could be retained despite the loss of the wordplay, since it is made evident from the props and from Matt's line that a "huntsman" is a spider.

These examples illustrate how self-translation into the adopted language requires the migrant writer to "remak[e] [him]self within the parameters of an alien language" (Besemeres 415). The "goon" joke in particular exemplifies this point, in that Jennifer is meant to speak French with her mother, a language in which this particular form of wordplay is not possible. I have therefore explored the possibilities offered by the English language in combination with the expected unfamiliarity of a French person with the concept of "goon", re-imagining my experience while using the linguistic tools available.

The "goon" and "huntsman" jokes are also based on "dramatic irony", a comedic device which characterizes a situation when "the [spectator] knows something the character does not" (Dornbusch 55). The comic element stems from the cultural distance between the French characters, and the Australian spectators, who know what "goon" and a "huntsman" are. Another eloquent example is Jennifer's discovery of Vegemite (yeast extract spread, a food item unique to Australia, and one that has achieved iconic status). It is only funny as long as the Australian characters, but especially the audience, know what Vegemite is, otherwise, the need for an explanation would undermine the immediacy and the comic dimension of the situation. It can be said that "[m]ultiple POVs [points of view] […] cultural differences […] are all common devices to showcase dramatic irony" (Dornbusch 55). Indeed, translingual writers

work in an in-between space which provides them with fertile ground for using humour, positioning them at a distance from both cultures, and enabling them to detect (and make fun of) cultural differences.

Irony, accent and code-switching in translingual writing

Immigrant or translingual writers are often characterized by their "ability to laugh at [their] own miseries" (D'Arcangelo 93) and their inclination to satirize their own culture. This mode of self-deprecation provides them with "a way of coping with adversity" (Vaid 153) and a means of overcoming cultural differences. Indeed, "studies suggest that speakers choose irony over literal language in order to be funny, to soften the edge of an insult, to show themselves to be in control of their emotions, and to avoid damaging their relationship with the addressee" (Dews et al. 308) – justifications for the use of humour which can all be found, to some extent, in literature written about the migrant experience.

Accent humour, that is humour stemming from the pronunciation of a language that differs from the most common one, is characteristic of translingual works. Indeed, non-native speakers of English often "joke about their own English accents and styles in order to make each party relaxed and free to negotiate their differences" (Canagarajah 138). In the case of *Aussieland!*, the actors performing the reading put on absurdly strong accents, in accordance with the nationality of their character, conferring a caricatured dimension to the play. By allowing the French accent to be portrayed in this way, I aimed to disarm the audience by showing them that I was capable of self-mockery, suggesting that they should do the same, in instances where they may have felt insulted by some comment from the play (Canagarajah 138). This resulted in a very colourful performance, which would be compromised in a French translation, especially regarding the Australian accent. An alternative solution would be for the Australian characters to put on a strong English accent, but that would only make Jennifer sound closer to home when the play is meant to be based on her experience on the other side of the world.

Code-switching is defined as "a widespread device for style shifting in bilingual communities" (Vaid 159). In literature about migration, "the alternate use of two languages or linguistic varieties within the same utterance or during the same conversation" (Hoffmann 110) produces a "creative estrangement effect" (D'Arcangelo 96). Maher remarks that it often indicates something ironic, by commenting on "the values that those particular words […] represent" (143). In *Aussieland!*, Jennifer uses code-switching mostly to talk to her boyfriends, always in an exaggerated, unnatural way:

> **JENNIFER** *(shushing Alice)*: No, he's not! *(looking at Guillaume tenderly)* He's just being adorable... *(to Guillaume)* It's going to be so difficult without you, mon chéri...
>
> **JENNIFER** *(overexcited)*: Hello mon amour!
>
> **MATT**: Bohjoor prahsehs!
> **JENNIFER**: Oh c'est très bien mon chéri. Je suis fière de toi. *(Matt starts panicking)*[1]

The particular role of the French language in *Aussieland!* is to be paralleled with the comment of an Australian character in the play – representative of the general opinion of the English-speaking world – that France is "SO romantic". The juxtaposition of the presupposed romantic language with Jennifer's failed relationships generates some irony regarding the stereotypical romantic nature of Europe. Indeed, as remarked by Wilson, transnational writers predominantly resort to "parody, pastiche, irony, mimicry and similar literary techniques" to disrupt "the truth value of the dominant 'national' discourse" ("Cultural Mediation" 238) – the Australian system of values and preconceived ideas, in the case of *Aussieland!*.

[1] "Bonjour princesse!" [Hello princess!] in a strong Australian accent.
"Oh it's very good darling. I'm proud of you."

Other instances of code-switching occur when English speakers try to speak in French to Jennifer. This ongoing joke – a sarcastic comment on the common belief of English speakers that a foreigner appreciates their attempts to speak his or her language – illustrates perfectly how it is possible to soften criticism with humour. While this joke would also function in a French translation, the intended effect on the audience – making them realize how they sometimes sound to foreigners – would be lost, since a French audience would most likely identify with Jennifer's experience rather than with the English-speaking characters of the play and they already know how English speakers sound to them.

The importance of paratextual elements in humour creation

It is vital that humour be employed cautiously in order to be efficient; because "joking involves a violation of norms, knowledge of linguistic and cultural norms is essential in order to know what would constitute a transgression" (Vaid 156). The contexts of the production and reception of a "joke" are determining factors in deciding its success. Knowledge of paratextual elements – whether they be epitextual or peritextual – can influence the reception of a text: "those who know [the paratext] do not read in the same way as those who do not" (Genette 266). Such considerations led me to delete one passage that was present in the original draft: immediately after Jennifer's arrival in Australia, she calls her mother, convinced that she is not in Melbourne since the weather is much colder than expected. The original joke hinged on the fact that Europeans are often very surprised to see so many Asian people when they first arrive in Australia:

> **MOTHER**: But you've not even left the airport yet, how can you have an opinion on Australia already?
> **JENNIFER**: But... *(wailing)* I'm in China! *(pause)*
> **MOTHER**: What are you talking about?
> **JENNIFER**: I'm telling you, no surfers here, just Asian people. *Every-where*. It's gotta be China!

This was of course meant to satirize the misinformed expectations of Europeans, but would be perceived as a racist joke by Asian Australians, who are part of the target audience. Further reflections on the reasons for the deletion of the "China" joke led me to the conclusion that paratextual elements – like the nationality of the author – are crucial in the acceptance or rejection of a joke. Indeed, joking about people of Asian descent living in Australia may be deemed acceptable if the objects of the joke happened to be the tellers too. An illustrative example would be the comedy *Phi & Me*, which I saw as part of the Melbourne Comedy Festival a few months before writing my own play. This play – about a second-generation Vietnamese Australian boy living in Melbourne with his mother – was a complete success: it was written, staged and played by a Vietnamese cast and crew. Here, a joke which could be considered hostile mockery was received as amusing, as it was uttered in a self-deprecating context. Walker comments on how "self-deprecation is ingratiating rather than aggressive; it acknowledges the opinion of the dominant culture – even appears to confirm it – and allows the speaker or writer to participate in the humorous process without alienating the members of the majority" (Walker 123). And thus, by showing to the majority that they can laugh at themselves, those uttering such jokes are able to satirize the majority without being perceived as aggressive. This is illustrated in *Aussieland!* by the "Sartre" joke, which occurs immediately after Veronica – a fictional member of Monash University staff – delivers the welcome speech for international students, concluding with a quote from French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre:

> **VERONICA**: […] I would like to conclude with this quote by Jean-Paul Sartre, which is very close to my heart: "The more sand that has escaped from the hourglass of our life, the clearer we should see through it." *(The students' faces crumple in confusion, Veronica smiles politely and leaves)*
> […]

> **LENNART**, *a Luxembourgish exchange student (to Jennifer)*: So... did you get that last thing about the hourglass?
> **JENNIFER**: Not really... They always like to end up with a quote that no one understands to add some deeper meaning to their speech.
> **LENNART** *(smiling at Jennifer's comment)*: I guess so, plus, Sartre is a Frenchman.
> **JENNIFER**: So?
> **LENNART**: You know, French people are always pretentious and speak weird shit.

In this passage, I am parodying the speeches exchange students are often given by host universities, which sometimes contain philosophical comments about the nature of the experience they are about to live. This could be interpreted as being ungrateful criticism; however, the quote is by Sartre, a French philosopher, and through Lennart's remark I allow the joke to backfire on my own culture. By demonstrating my ability to satirize my own culture, I make it possible to laugh also at Veronica – the Australian speaker representative of the majority – for being equally pretentious and speaking nonsense. When considering the translation of *Aussieland!* into French, I would be criticizing my own culture in front of a French audience, thus the self-deprecatory comment about the French being proud would probably be interpreted in a negative way, causing the loss of the joke about formal university speeches too.

It appears from the previous example that the audience is just as important in determining the success of a text – especially in the case of a play, which is performed. Reception theory, an audience-oriented approach which was introduced in the 1970s by Wolfgang Iser and Hans-Robert Jauss, tackles the decisive role of the reader – in our case the spectator. Holub defines this theory as "a general shift in concern from the author and the work to the text and the reader" (xii), where the text is considered "as a function of its readers" (148). This theory may be examined in parallel with Wolff's "intended reader", "one that the author has in mind for his/her work" (Holub 152), which is very close to Eco's Model Reader, a reader who is "strictly defined by the lexical and the syntactical organization of the text: the text is nothing else but the semantic-pragmatic production of its own Model Reader" (Venuti, "Translation, Intertextuality, Interpretation" 170). If a text is always written for a specific reader or spectator, it seems reasonable to think that its translation for a new target audience might undermine the reception of some elements, particularly of the humorous and cultural types. A different public means different rules regarding what can and cannot be done.

There is another passage which I decided to delete – a reference to World War II and Franco-German relations. After Lennart's comment on French people, Jennifer turns to the other person sitting next to her – Greta, a German girl:

> **JENNIFER**: You don't hate French people, do you?
> **GRETA** *(looking confused)*: The war's been over for over 50 years now...

It was objected to me that the joke could offend German spectators, because World War II was still too recent an event. However, it should be mentioned that the third party who made this remark was French, and belonged to an older generation than my target audience and me. Thinking about it again, I would consider including the joke in a future version of *Aussieland!*. While it might not function in a French translation of *Aussieland!* targeting a French general public, the joke could be acceptable for Australian university students, who have both psychological and spatial distance from the consequences of the war on Franco-German relations, the object of the joke, since their lasting effect was not as intense in Australia as it was in France.

The two passages I deleted show that paratextual information – the identity of the author, the situational context of composition – is just as essential to the success of a text as the context of reception – the Model Reader, the target audience. The significant roles of the paratext and the audience in the reception of a text can be exemplified by looking at how my friends and relatives – who possessed more paratextual knowledge of my life in Australia and

the context of composition of *Aussieland!* – experienced the play in a different way, and were able to detect more comic elements, than the rest of the audience. An eloquent example is the introductory narratorial comment stating, "For purposes of comprehension, conversational exchanges in French have been translated into English, but be assured that it was done very professionally"; those who did not know that I am doing translation studies probably did not see the humorous dimension of this comment.

Conclusion

In this article, I have examined how some aspects of humour are generated in translingual writing, basing my analysis on *Welcome to Aussieland!*, a comedy I wrote in English, as a native French person living in an Australian cultural environment. It was noted that the flexibility of the English language is not a feature common to all languages, and that this means linguistic puns might be lost in the translation process. However, the most problematic issues are undoubtedly the cultural elements, which are essential components of the play. Not only do they contribute significantly to its humorous dimension, but they also act as identity markers – of the play, of its protagonists, and of its author. While deleting them completely would not compromise the cultural identity of the play, its comic aspect would be severely damaged. It is likely that "translating" these cultural items – if possible at all – would mean following a domesticating strategy, replacing them with target-language cultural equivalents that would most likely lead to the distortion of the cultures represented, without actually guaranteeing that the humorous facet of the text was successfully reproduced.

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Laila Wadia's "Introducing Signor Rosso"

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Laila Wadia's 2007 novel *Amiche per la pelle* is set in a Trieste apartment building, home to four migrant families and one local man, Signor Rosso. The narrator, Shanti Kumar, is from India; Marinka and her family are from Bosnia; Lule and her husband are Albanian; and the Fongs – Rosebud, her husband, mother-in-law and children – are Chinese. Despite their different origins and experiences, the women form a deep and lasting friendship (captured in the novel's untranslatable title) as they strive to master the Italian language and to engage with the culture of the intriguing border city of Trieste. In this extract, which forms Chapter 5 of the novel, we learn about the rather uncomfortable co-existence of these families with the gruff, eccentric and bigoted Signor Rosso. The piece provided the team of translators with entertaining challenges as they had to devise strategies for transferring word play and dialect into English, and for conveying Signor Rosso's prejudice and Rosebud and Shanti's linguistic difficulties with the same mix of affection and irony present in the source text.

Tre anni fa Bocciolo di rosa e il signor Rosso hanno avuto una lite furibonda sulle scale a proposito della misteriosa fine di alcuni gatti che frequentavano il portone della nostra palazzina. Via Ungaretti, che finisce in un vicolo cieco e assopito, era diventato il lunapark dei gatti di quartiere per via degli abbondanti sacchi di immondizie su cui farsi le unghie e dei topi con cui giocare.

Il signor Rosso ha dato in escandescenze, mentre Bocciolo di rosa, in risposta alla sue domande, balbettava in continuazione: "Ma signol Lo So, ma signol Lo So".

"Sai che cosa, diamine!", ha urlato il signor Rosso. "Come hai potuto? Dimmi, come hai potuto fare una cosa del genere! È disumano! Ma che razza di donna sei?".

Three years ago, Rosebud and Signor Rosso had a heated argument on the stairs over the curious disappearance of the cats that used to hang around the courtyard of our building. Via Ungaretti, which ends in a drowsy cul de sac, had become a playground for the neighbourhood cats because of the piles of rubbish to claw at and the mice to play with.

Signor Rosso blew a gasket, while Rosebud stuttered: "But Signor Losso, I no eat! I no eat!"

"Know it? I know you know it!" shouted Signor Rosso. "How could you? How could you do something like that! It's inhuman! What kind of a woman are you?"

"But Signor Losso, I no eat! I no eat!"

"I could understand if it was old, crip-

"Ma signol Lo So, ma signol Lo So...".

"Capisco i gatti vecchi o sciancati, ma come hai potuto cucinare quel gattino bianco con le chiazze marroni sulle orecchie?".

"Ma signol Lo So, ma signol Lo So...".

"Sai dire qualcos'altro oltre 'lo so', negra?".

"Io non mangiale gatto! Tuo gatto molile, mistel Lo So. Gatto di stlada fale vita difficile e molti molile. Capito, signol Lo So?", Bocciolo di rosa parlava con voce tremante.

"Pensavo che solo i vicentini erano *mania gatti*, ora so che anche voi sporchi negri mangiate gatti per sfamare i milioni di musi neri che mettete al mondo come conigli!".

Io e Marinka che sbirciavamo la scena dal piano di sopra, eravamo piegate in due dalle risate. Il signor Rosso, unico triestino del nostro palazzo, è uno scapolo, all'epoca sulla settantina, invalido civile dall'età di vent'anni. Cosa abbia che non va nessuno lo ha mai saputo. Si mette a zoppicare un giorno al mese, quando si reca alla posta per ritirare la pensione. Per il resto cammina come una persona normale e vive da solo nel suo appartamento pieno di mobili e libri d'epoca. Il perché è rimasto signorino risulta chiaro due secondi dopo aver fatto la sua conoscenza. Oltre alla sua non magnifica presenza (sembra un piccione spennato), come se non bastasse ha un temperamento da pentola a pressione con la valvola difettosa. Il signor Rosso ce l'ha con il mondo intero. Passa il tempo a fumare una Diana dopo l'altra, a imprecare contro i politici locali, i friulani, gli istriani, quelli di Monfalcone, i preti e gli extracomunitari. Finché era in vita la sua mamma, ha vissuto succhiandosi il pollice e nascondendosi tra le pieghe della sua gonna. Da lei ha ereditato i mobili antichi stile impero che ora tiene stipati uno accanto all'altro nel suo piccolo appartamento, togliendosi così anche l'aria per respirare. Appena morta la mamma, il signor Rosso ha venduto il suo appartamento e ha investito i soldi in banca, poi è venuto a stare in affitto in Via Ungaretti. Non ha altri parenti al mondo, o almeno non ne abbiamo mai saputo niente.

Il signor Rosso ha un unico passatempo di tipo sociale: è un gattaro. Usa la sua cospicua eredità e la generosa pensione da invalido civile

pled cats, but how could you cook that little white kitten with the brown patches on its ears?"

"But Signor Losso, I no eat! I no eat!"

"Do you know how to say anything apart from 'I know it', woman?"

"I no eat cat! Your cat die, Signor Losso. Stleet cat do hard life and lot die, you know, Signor Losso?" Rosebud's voice trembled.

"I thought the cat-eaters were just from Vicenza. Bloody *mania gatti*! Now I know you greedy buggers eat cats to feed those millions of piccaninnies you breed like rabbits!"

Marinka and I, peeking from upstairs, were doubled over with laughter. Signor Rosso, the only *triestino* in our building, is a bachelor, in his seventies at the time and on a disability pension since he was twenty. Nobody has ever worked out what's wrong with him. He puts on a limp once a month, when he goes to the post office to collect his pension. The rest of the time he walks normally and lives alone, surrounded by period furniture and old books. Within two seconds of meeting him you realize why he has remained a bachelor. Apart from his less than impressive appearance – he looks like something the cat dragged in – he has the temper of a pressure cooker with a faulty valve. Signor Rosso has it in for the whole world. He spends his days chain-smoking Diana cigarettes, and cursing one and all: people from neighbouring Friuli, Istria and Monfalcone, local politicians, priests and foreigners. While *mamma* was alive, he would hide among the folds of her skirt, sucking his thumb. He inherited from her the old Empire-style furniture that is now crammed into his tiny flat leaving him no air to breathe. As soon as she died, Signor Rosso sold her apartment, put the money in the bank, and then came to rent here in Via Ungaretti. He has no other relatives in the world, at least none that we know of.

Signor Rosso only has one pastime of a social nature. He's a *gattaro*: he uses his substantial inheritance and generous disability pension to feed the neighbourhood stray cats with cans of Whiskas he buys from the local discount supermarket.

Signor Rosso doesn't look favourably on any of the residents at number 25

per sfamare i gatti randagi del quartiere con scatole di Whiskas che compra al discount vicino casa.

Il signor Rosso non vede di buon occhio nessuno degli inquilini di via Ungaretti 25. Detesta le sinistre e imputa a loro tutta la sua sfortuna di dover convivere con un branco di "negri". Il fatto che nessuno di noi sia davvero nero di pelle non conta affatto. Lui si rivolge anche al signor Fong dicendo "quel muso nero, *mania gatti*". Niente o nessuno può convincere il signor Rosso che i Fong non catturano un gatto al giorno per cucinarlo in salsa agrodolce.

"Ma signol Lo So, mio malito lavola listolante. Lui avele cibo quanto vuole".

Bocciolo di rosa cercava in tutti i modi di convincerlo che, nonostante la famiglia numerosa, non è responsabile della scomparsa dei gatti randagi.

"Appunto. Ve li portate al ristorante. Così li spacciate per pollo. Eh, siete furbi, voi negri. Ma a me non mi fregate, eh no, cara, non me la date proprio a bere. Io sento i miagolii chiari e forti che vengono dal tuo appartamento all'ora di pranzo".

"Ma signol Lo So, lei sentile bambini. Stanno con suocela e lolo fale caplicci, capisci?".

"Capisco un cazzo quando parli, donna! Ah, allora è tua suocera che cucina i gatti per sfamare quel branco di piccoli negri!".

Non c'è verso di convincerlo del contrario. Lui ce l'ha con i Fong per tanti motivi: il più grave è che Bocciolo di rosa deve essere per forza il serial killer dei suoi adorati gatti. Il secondo è la spartizione della bolletta dell'acqua.

Il nostro è uno stabile vecchio stile, di quelli costruiti in funzione della gente che vive in un luogo gelido ma non ha il riscaldamento, e perciò è restia a venire in contatto con l'acqua. I gabinetti sono in comune sul pianerottolo e c'è un unico contatore dell'acqua nell'atrio. Il padrone di casa ci addebita una quota uguale per famiglia, e al signor Rosso la cosa non va giù. Lui sostiene di non consumare nemmeno una goccia d'acqua: non cucina, non si lava né lava i suoi vestiti, al massimo tira lo sciacquone tre volte al giorno. Non è giusto che lui paghi la

Via Ungaretti. He hates left-wingers and attributes to them his great misfortune of having to live with a herd of "blacks". The fact that none of us is actually black is irrelevant. He even refers to Mr Fong as "that *mania gatti* golliwog". Nothing and nobody can convince Signor Rosso that the Fongs don't catch a cat a day to cook in sweet-and-sour sauce.

"But Signor Losso, my husband work lestaulant. He got plenty food."

Rosebud did everything she could to convince him that although she does have a large family, she was not responsible for the disappearance of the stray cats.

"Exactly. You take them to the restaurant. You pass them off as chicken. You're a clever lot, you golliwogs. But I see through you, sunshine… I'm not going to fall for that one. I can hear them miaowing loud and clear from your place at lunchtime."

"But Signor Losso, you listen childlen. They with mother-law, they have tantlums, understand?"

"Understand bugger-all when you talk, woman! So, it's your mother-in-law who cooks cats to feed that herd of piccaninnies!"

There is no way to convince him otherwise. He has it in for the Fongs for many reasons. The most serious is that Rosebud is surely the serial killer of his beloved cats. The second is the splitting of the water bill.

Ours is an old-style building, designed for people who live in a freezing place but have no heating, and so are reluctant to bathe. There are shared bathrooms on each floor and one water meter in the courtyard. The landlord charges each household the same amount and Signor Rosso finds this hard to swallow. He maintains that he doesn't use so much as a drop of water: he doesn't cook, he doesn't wash, he doesn't do laundry, and he flushes the toilet no more than three times a day. It isn't fair that he should have to pay the same amount as that family of nine *mania gatti* golliwogs crammed into an apartment of fifty square metres, who use rivers of water from dawn till dusk. In a way he's right – we ourselves have often thought of asking for the bills to be split differently, but as usual we've never taken it any further.

stessa quota dei musi neri *mania gatti* che sono stipati in nove in un appartamento di cinquanta metri quadri e fanno scorrere fiumi d'acqua dalla mattina alla sera. In parte ha ragione. Tante volte anche noi abbiamo pensato di chiedere di rivedere la ripartizione delle spese condominali, ma poi come al solito le nostre lamentele si sono risolte in un nulla di fatto.

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Io sono stata bersagliata dalla misantropia del signor Rosso il primo giorno che ho messo piede in via Ungaretti 25. Sentendo i rumori che accompagnano un trasloco, ha aperto la porta del suo appartamento con uno scatto e mi ha fissato con i suoi occhi grigi e acquosi. Aveva addosso un pigiama a quadratini azzurri e bianchi nonostante fossero quasi le undici del mattino. Il mozzicone della sua inseparabile Diana gli penzolava dalle labbra come un foruncolo ardente. Aveva il riporto grigio che gli penzolava dalla parte sbagliata come un topo morto. Ho fatto un sussulto e per un momento ho pensato che fosse pazzo.

"Cazzo, altri neri", ha borbottato.

Mi trovavo in Italia da pochi giorni e non capivo bene la lingua, per di più ero giovane ed ingenua.

"Io mi chia-mo Shan-ti Ku-mar", gli ho risposto, scandendo le parole e allungando la mano. "Mio marito è Ash-ok Kumar. Abit-teremo terzo piano. Piacere di co-noscer-la, signor Cazzo Altrineri".

Dopo quel primo incontro, il signor Rosso ha girato alla larga da me. Non che lui frequenti gli altri o ci scambi due chiacchiere. Bussa alla porta come un martello pneumatico se deve lamentarsi di qualcosa. Annuncia il suo disappunto: "Negri! Fate silenzio, sono le sette di sera e sto dormendo!", sbatte la porta appena concluso il suo discorso, senza concedere all'accusato la benché minima difesa, e se ne va picchiando forte le sue ciabatte di lana sulle scale di pietra.

Di tutti gli inquilini il signor Rosso degna di attenzione solo due persone: Lule e mia figlia Kamla, che chiama Camilla. Le rispetta perché sono le uniche a non avere timore di lui.

Lule è una donna forte e non ha paura di niente e di nessuno. Ha dovuto lasciare i suoi tre figli in Albania con la suocera per

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I was targeted by this Scrooge the very first day I set foot in number 25 Via Ungaretti. Hearing moving-in noises, he flung open the door of his apartment and fixed his watery grey eyes on me. He was wearing blue-and-white checked pyjamas, even though it was nearly eleven in the morning. The stub of his ever-present cigarette was attached to his lips like a large smouldering pimple. His grey comb-over dangled like a dead mouse from the side of his head. The sight of him startled me, and for a moment I thought he was mad.

"Bugger, more blacks", he muttered.

I'd only been in Italy for a few days and didn't understand much of the language, and on top of that I was young and naïve.

"My name is Shan-ti Ku-mar." I held out my hand, pronouncing each syllable slowly and distinctly. "My husband is Ash-ok Kumar. We shall abide on third floor. Very pleasure to meet you, Signor Buggermore Blacks."

Since that first meeting Signor Rosso has kept well away from me. Not that he socializes with the others or chats to them. If he has something to complain about he hammers on your door shouting, "Quiet, golliwogs! It's seven o'clock at night and I'm trying to get some sleep!"

Having voiced his displeasure he slams the door, leaving the accused no chance to defend themselves, and stomps off, his wool slippers smacking the stairs.

Of all the people in the building only two are deemed worthy of Signor Rosso's attention: Lule and my daughter Kamla, whom he calls Camilla. He respects them because they're the only ones who are not scared of him.

Lule Dardani is a strong woman who fears nothing and nobody. When she had to follow her husband to Italy she had no other

venire in Italia a seguito del marito. A Durazzo non c'è molto lavoro per un uomo onesto, sostiene. Nessuno sa che impiego abbia suo marito, l'ingegnere Besim Dardani. È sempre in giro per l'Italia con degli amici. Qualunque cosa faccia, gli deve rendere un sacco di soldi perché Lule è sempre vestita da gran signora, come se fosse pronta per andare alla prima di una rappresentazione teatrale. Lule ha un cuore d'oro, però. Dice sempre che le fa tanta pena il signor Rosso, tutto solo in casa a fumare le sue Diana e a leggere libri vecchi e polverosi. Mangia poco e male, e tabacca incessantemente.

option but to leave her three children with her mother-in-law in Albania. There's not much work for an honest man in Durrës, she claims. Nobody knows what her husband, the engineer, does. Besim Dardani is always travelling around Italy with friends. Whatever it is he does, it must pay really well, because Lule is always dressed up to the nines, as if she was off to opening night at the theatre. Lule has a heart of gold, though. She always says she feels so sorry for Signor Rosso, cooped up all alone, smoking his Dianas and reading dusty old books. He eats too little and smokes too much.

Works by Zhong Zhang and Kaku Aizawa

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The 2013 *Translation Transnation* symposium provided the opportunity to invite Zhong Zhang, a third generation *diasporic* Korean poet in Japan along with translator, essayist and poet Kaku Aizawa to Australia. As with most Korean intellectuals in Japan, Zhong Zhang conceives of himself as simply "Korean", and, in this nonpartisan stance, he has sacrificed a nationality to reaffirm the ongoing relevance of the reunification of the Korean peninsula. Having a stateless Korean poet as our guest provided us with countless insights into the experience and aspirations of Koreans in Japan. Mr. Aizawa's presence complemented Zhong Zhang's. A pacifist and ally of all who suffer, his compassionate acumen, manifest in his writings, was equally inspiring.

Translation is generally a solitary affair; however, on this occasion it was a collaborative effort. The working party was not only able to consult with each other, but, more importantly, we were able to consult with the writers themselves. The collaborative process was extremely gratifying as we placed a premium on consensus. Unsurprisingly, our interpretations of the poetry or prose in question differed giving rise to in-depth discussions – we often spent over thirty minutes discussing the suitability of one or another word – and, to our credit, we strategized together, at every turn, until we found consensus. Each contributor brought a different skill set: some had a greater command of Japanese while others had a greater command of English; some were macro-level thinkers, while others were micro-level thinkers. Getting to know the writers and being able to discuss their work with them intensified our commitment to precision and the longer we worked together the closer our connections became.

Needless to say, translating poetry is a particularly challenging mission given the aesthetic, symbolic and rhythmic qualities of the literary art. Zhong Zhang and Kaku Aizawa are both craftsmen of the highest order and we hope the final translations do them justice in summoning the emotive responses their works evoke in the original Japanese.

新しき「サラム」のこと **Redefining *Saram***

ZHONG ZHANG

この数年来、私は東大阪で生業の飲食店を営みながら、在日同胞の未来を考え、そしてそのどうしようもない絶望感にさいなまれながら、とつとつと詩をつむいできた。

―　この先も在日同胞が在日同胞として、　この列島の地で在りつづけるためには一体どうすればいいのか　―

猪飼野の東はずれの、まるで洞窟のような喫茶店の厨房で、このような思索にとりくむうちに、私はようやく一縷の光のような、ひとつの微かな結論を得ることができた。

―　われわれ在日同胞は、自らのよりどころとなり得る自立した「サラムらしさ」をこの列島の地に打ち立てねばらない　―

私は自分の存在をしばしば「在日サラム」と自称する。日本国の外国人登録法上、特別永住資格者であり、またその「国籍等」の欄に「朝鮮」を記されている私は一般的な呼び方にならえば「在日朝鮮人」であり「在日コリアン」であろう。しかしそれらの呼称により、私の自己存在の政治的立場や民族的立場を表し切れるのかと言えば、否である。かねてからどうもしっくりせず、しだいに物足りないという想いが強くなり、いっそ新しい呼称をと考え、そう自称するようになった。

「サラム」というのは「사람」の日本語表記であり、普通は「ひと」という意で用いられている言葉である。私は自己存在の容れ物として、自民族語の日本語表記であるこの「サラム」という語を選んだ。

私は政治的にどの国家にも属していない無国籍人である。

うら若げな二十歳の時分、一人の日本

For some time now I've been running a coffee shop in Higashi Osaka. Over the years I've been considering the future of my fellow *zainichi* Koreans[1] and agonizing over how bleak it looks, all the while painstakingly composing poetry.

What are we *zainichi* Koreans to do, as *zainichi* Koreans, in order to survive on this archipelago?

I grapple with these musings behind the counter of my coffee shop, on the outskirts of Eastern Ikaino, as if ensconced in a cave. At long last, like a ray of light, a possible solution emerged.

We *zainichi* Koreans have to create a discrete '*saram'* (person) identity here on this archipelago.

I often call myself *zainichi saram*. I have special permanent residency under the Alien Registration Law of Japan, and my nationality on legal documents is classified as *Chōsenjin* (a national of the previously unified Korea).[2] Generally speaking, the designated term *zainichi Chōsenjin* can mistakenly imply that one is "North" Korean, whereas, in fact, for many *zainichi* Koreans like me, it should designate that one is simply Korean, neither affiliated with the South or North. Therefore, this term does not accurately represent either my political affiliation or ethnic status.

The term *saram* is the Japanese transliteration of the indigenous Korean word, which generally translates as "person". I chose this word "*saram*" – the Japanese transliteration of my ethnic Korean language – as a repository for my own identity.

Politically, I do not belong to any nation; I am a stateless "person".

As a naïve twenty-year-old I fell in love with a Japanese girl. At that time I underwent a crisis of spirit and questioned everything including my stateless designation.

人との恋愛を機に精神の危機に見舞われた私がその後、無国籍人としての自覚に至ったのも、そしてまた、自分が持つ「朝鮮国籍」の「朝鮮」を、一九四八年相次いで成立した南北両政府にあの半島が分断される以前の、一つの「朝鮮」だとする政治的立場がるということを知り得たのも、ひとえに、あのうら若き精神の危機から脱け出そうとする過程において、私が貪るように読みあさった在日同胞文学のおかげであった。

北でも南でもなく、また同時に北でも南でもあると言えるその「朝鮮」籍は、朝鮮籍の父親と韓国籍の母親との間に生まれ、しかも民族的にはあまりにお粗末な生活を送っていたかゆえに南北どちらの政治組織からもまったく疎遠だった私が、あの精神の危機から脱け出し、新たにサラムとしてこの世界を生きてゆきにあたって、実に違和感なく自然に選び得た政治的立場であったのだ。

「在日」とはむろん、この列島における政治的立場を表す語である。たが私たち在日同胞は、しばしば民族的立場の意をも含めて「ザイニチ」と自称する。それはあたかも「在日」の先駆者としての特権的振る舞いであるかのようだが、実際の「在日」はと言えば在日華人もいれば、在日ブラジル人もいるであって、「在日」はすべての在日外国人のためにあるべき後であるはずなのだ。

しかしそれは「在日韓国．朝鮮人」という呼称に実によく表されている理由、つまり民族分断の歴史にほかならない。

あの半島の政治的分断が、この列島にまで波及し、私たち在日同胞の政治的立場も分断された。あの半島の分断の苦しみは、同時にこの列島の在日同胞の苦しみでもあり、その忌まわしき分断を引き起こした政治性に対する忌避や抗いの想いが、民族的立場だけでなく政治的立場の意を含んでしまっているその「韓国．朝鮮」の部分をおのずと省略させ、つまりは本来民族的意味を何ら表すはずのない「在日」という

It was *zainichi* Korean literature, which I devoured throughout this period, that enabled me to extricate myself from my crisis of identity. I realized that the *Chōsen* status which I was assigned, in fact, refers to the pre-1948 North-South unified Korean peninsula. Indeed *Chōsen* signified this single political entity, Korea, as distinct from "North Korea" as it is commonly misunderstood in Japan.

Chōsen which does not mean either North or South Korea but simultaneously means *both* North and South Korea, was a natural and fitting choice of political affiliation for me. Born to a father with *Chōsen* status and a mother with South Korean nationality, I was raised with little connection to my Korean ethnicity and was not affiliated with either pro-North or pro-South political organizations. Thus I was free from an emotional attachment to one or other 'side' of the divide. I lived in the world as a new *Saram*. This *Saram* identity was an inevitable and wholly natural self determined political mode of being for me.

The term *zainichi* (literally Japan-resident) undeniably refers to our political status on this archipelago.[3] However, we *zainichi* Koreans use the term "*ZAINICHI*" to refer to our ethnic status. It would seem that we have exclusively appropriated the term *zainichi* but, in actual fact, *zainichi* refers not only to Korean residents in Japan but also to *zainichi* Chinese, *zainichi* Brazilians and all foreign residents in Japan.

Nevertheless, there is a reason why we *zainichi* Koreans have had to refer to ourselves just as *ZAINICHI* because use of the official labels "*Zainichi Kankoku/Chōsenjin*"[4] embodies the historically imposed ethnic division.

The political division of the peninsula spread across to the archipelago, manifesting itself on *zainichi* Koreans. The pain that partition brought to the peninsula was shared by us on the archipelago. Our need to evade and fight the political designations generated by this abhorrent division, naturally led to the dropping, by some, of "*Kankoku/Chōsenjin*" from the term *zainichi* due to the explicit ethnic and political connotations inherent in the terms. In other words, we came to refer to ourselves as

部分に民族的立場の意と、さらには「統一」への願いまでをも強く含めて、「ザイニチ」と自称してきたのである。

ただ、その「ザイニチ」も、半世紀に亘る時代と世代を経過するうちに、あらゆる面において風化が進んでしまったことを否めない。特に半世紀以上にも亘る「日．韓．朝」の三つどもえの忌まわしき関係のはざまで、われわれ在日同胞が、善きにつけ悪しきにつけ、それら三方いずれかに否応なくも従属させられ、いかに振り回されているのかを、在日三世である私ですらも重い実感として厳しく思い知らされている昨今でもある。

例えば、二〇〇〇年、あの半島での南北首脳会談、そして二〇〇二年の韓日W杯により、われわれ在日同胞のいかに多くの者が諸手を上げて歓喜したことだったか。そしてまた、平壌での朝日首脳会談とその後の朝米の対話の中で明らかになった北共和国の拉致犯罪や核開発の事実により、われわれ在日同胞がいかに大きなダメージを請け負わされることになってしまっているか。

そのようにこの列島においてこれまで幾度となく繰り返され、今なお繰り広げられる「日．韓．朝」のこの虚しき茶番劇の劇場からわれわれ在日同胞が一刻も早く脱け出すためには、あの半島の分断政治やこの列島の政治と一線を画くした「ザイニチ」としての自立した立場を新たに確立する以外に方法は無いのでないだろうか。北共和国でも南韓国でも日本国でもない「ザイニチ」のその自立した立場こそが、われわれの「ザイニチとしての誇り」を保ちつつ、われわれが半島の統一に寄与し得る唯一の手段であり、またの列島「ザイニチの絶望」をわれわれが乗り越えてゆくその未来への、唯一の在り方ではないのだろうか。私は昨今、そのような想いにとりつかれてやまない。

ただ私は決して政治家でも、組織の者でもない。まがりなりにもひとりの詩人である。

ZAINICHI, taking the neutral Japanese term *zainichi*, devoid of ethnic implications, appropriating it to signify not only our ethnic status, but also our desire for unification.

Unfortunately, however, one cannot deny that our term *ZAINICHI* has become watered down in various ways over the last half century and through the passing of generations. Caught between the antagonistic relationship of Japan, the ROK and the DPRK for over half a century, for better or for worse, we *zainichi* have been forced to align ourselves with one of the three states. Even I, a third generation *zainichi*, am acutely and painfully aware of the way in which we have been manipulated.

For example, so many of us in the *zainichi* Korean community were overjoyed by the Inter-Korean Summit of 2000 and the Korea-Japan World Cup of 2002. Then news of North Korean nuclear development and crimes of abduction came to light in the North Korean-Japan Summit in Pyongyang and subsequent North Korean-US talks; the latter have had devestating consequences for the *zainichi* community.

This senseless farce has been repeated countless times and continues to be played out between Japan and the two Koreas. Surely, there is no other means for us to escape this farce here on this archipelago, than to re-establish an independent position as *ZAINICHI* divorced from the political divide of the peninsula and politicking on the archipelago. It is precisely this independent stance as *ZAINICHI*, which is not affiliated with the Japanese state, the DPRK or the ROK that enables us to contribute to the unification of the peninsula, while maintaining our pride as *ZAINICHI*. It is also the only expression of our identity that allows us to move forward and overcome the feelings of hopelessness amongst *ZAINICHI* on this archipelago. These are the thoughts that continually plague me.

However, I am not a political man, nor am I affiliated with any political organization. I am merely a solitary poet.

Now, when current political institutions have lost their role as anchors of the *ZAINICHI* community, one could argue that we writers have the duty to step up and do

既存の政治や組織が、ザイニチのよりどころとしての力を失ってしまっている今、それらに代わる「ザイニチのよりどころとしての文化」を何としてでも打ち立てねばならないという、そのような重き責務を、文化によって立つわれわれ文人は背負っているのだと言えるはずである。そしてこの政治家でもなく組織の者でもない私は、まるで砂粒のように限りなく小さな詩人として、またとつととつと、詩を書きつづけてゆくしかないのである。

つまり、この地上にまったく新しい「サラムらしさ」を築き上げるために。

whatever it takes to create cultural foundations for a *ZAINICHI* identity. And I, being neither a politician nor a member of any political organization, can only continue to write my poems, even though they are only tiny drops in the ocean.

In short, this is my purpose – to build an entirely new *saram* identity.

Notes:

1 The term *zainichi Koreans* refers to Koreans, whose presence in Japan is a result of Japan's colonisationof the Korean peninsula (1910-1945) as opposed to new-comer Koreans.

2 In effect, this does not constitute a nationality as the nation state *Chōsen* or Korea no longer exists. Thus, the status renders Zhong Zhang and other *zainichi* Koreans in Japan who have not adopted either Japanese or South Korean nationality stateless.

3 The author purposefully manipulates the rendering of the word "*zainichi*" in his text. He uses Japanese (Chinese) ideograms 「在日」 to designate its common meaning "Japan-resident" but uses a different phonetic script 「ザイニチ」 to suggest another meaning, which he elaborates on in the text. The translators decided to render the terms *zainichi* and *ZAINICHI* respectively.

4 *Zainichi Kankokujin* refers to those who have adopted South Korean nationality and *Zainichi Chōsenjin* refers to those who have either aligned themselves with North Korea and/or those who have refused to align themselves with either North or South Korea, for whom the word *Chōsen* signifies the formerly unified Korea. Most Japanese mistakenly assume it only refers to pro-North *zainichi* Koreans, who aspire to be nationals of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

在日サラムマル **Zainichi Saram Mal***

ZHONG ZHANG

*Saram meaning ‘person’ in Korean

在日サラムの言葉　それは
けっして帰りようのない　日本語と
どこまでも到達しえない　ウリマルで
つむぎだされる
新しい言葉

日本語でも日本語でなく
日本語からはみだしていて
日本語で捉えようとも
捉えきれない
サラムの日本語

ウリマルでもウリマルでない
サラムのウリマルは
ウリマルを高くに見上げ
はるか遠くに望んでいるぶん
低くと近い
足元の根深いところから
芽生え育ちゆく
新しい変異種
たとえ醜くとも拙なくて
根強いウリマル

日本語の
　　鬼子
　　のウリマル

それこそ

サラムマルだ

The words of the *zainichi Saram*

No return to　　Japanese

No advance to　　Korean

Out of these

A new language is crafted

Japanese yet not Japanese

Breaking away from Japanese

Unable to be captured

in Japanese

The Japanese of the *Saram*

Korean yet not Korean

The Korean of the *Saram*

Lowly yet familiar

Setting sights on the pinnacle, Korean

Aspirations from a distance

A new hybrid

evolved from a seedling

with roots from afar

However unattractive and clumsy

Our Korean is nevertheless ingrained

黙っててはいけない

黙っているうちにも

この日本語の列島や

あのウリマルの半島やらから

得体の知れぬ強大な力どもの手

サラムにすばやく伸びてきて

ぐしゃり

握りつぶされるか

彼らのふところまで

まんまと

引きずり込まれてしまう

サラムらしく生きるため

対峙し抗うことができる

サラムマルこそ

力だ

つむぎだせ

The bastard child

of Japanese

of Korean

This is *Saram* mal, our voice

Silence is not an option

For in silence,

the powerful, inscrutable hands of

the languages of Japan and Korea

would descend to crush our *Saram*

or sweep it away

smothering it in its entirety

To live as *Saram*

We can resist and confront

Our voice, *Saram* mal

is our power

Awaken

地震の国から南の島の子どもたちへ

To the Children of the South Pacific Islands from the Land of Earthquakes

AIZAWA KAKU

愛沢革

学校帰りに横道へ
迷路のような路地にも
牛や豚や鶏がいても平気で
わらわらとあふれ出たきみたち
半世紀前に日本の子どもだったぼくも
今のきみたちと同じように
解放された午後の日差しの下を
友だちとともに駆け抜けた気がする
そのころぼくは知らなかった
かつて日本軍の兵士となった
ぼくらの父や祖父たちが
きみたちの島に攻め入ったことを
「桃太郎の鬼退治」を地で行くように
逆らう悪鬼をなぎ倒すはずが
きみたちのおじいさんやおばあさんを

あちらでもこちらでもたくさん殺した
日本軍も日本国家も
その人びとの名はもちろんその数さえ
一度もたしかめないまま
あやまりもせず知らんぷりして
六十年も七十年も放ったらかしだ
耳に痛い忠告には
見ざる・聞かざる・言わざるを決め込み
最近も原発事故を防げなかった
ろくでなしのこの国には
ぼくらももはや引導を渡し
性根をたたき直してやるつもりだ
虐殺をくぐって幸いに生き残った

Children weaving through backstreets
on their way home from school
down maze-like lanes
unfazed by the cows, pigs and chickens.
You children, jostling and playing,
I was just like you
half a century ago, a child in Japan,
dashing through the streets with friends
under the liberating afternoon sunlight.
At the time I didn't know
that our fathers and grandfathers, then soldiers,
invaded your islands.
As in Momotaro's legendary tale
they were meant to defeat evil villains in distant lands,
but instead killed your grandfathers and grand mothers
throughout your homelands
Neither the Japanese state nor its army
has ever considered the number,
let alone the names, of the people they killed.
No apologies, no recognition.
For seventy years, just complacency.
Refusal to see, hear, or speak
the unsettling truth.
We must deliver this shameful nation
that failed to prevent the recent nuclear disaster
its last rites and redeem ourselves.

きみたちのおじいさんやおばあさんを
大事にしてくれ　ぼくらの子たちにも
海や山や里に生きる人びとを
牛や豚や鶏をもふくめ
大事にせよと教えなければ

Children, whose grandmothers and grandfathers
somehow escaped and survived the massacres,
take care of them. We too must teach our chil
dren that every living being –
by the ocean, in the mountains or the villages
including the cow, the pig and the chicken –
is to be cherished.

Four Poems by Shu Cai

Translated by Lin Hsiang-Chen, Qi Lintao and Zhao Zengtao

Led by Ouyang Yu

In early July 2012, Chinese poet Shu Cai came to Melbourne for the first time, to attend the second annual Monash University Literary Translation Winter School & Festival. Over the course of a week, three students – two from the Mainland China and one from Taiwan – selected and translated three poems by Shu Cai.

Our agreed approach was to first listen to an explanation of the poems by Shu Cai and to look at the finer linguistic points of the text before the participants embarked on their own translations. The second step was for participants to present their translations, sharing the results with each other, making comments or suggestions, and hearing comments or suggestions from Shu Cai and the workshop leader. Finally, after another round of revisions, more suggestions, comments and corrections were made. Following are some of the examples that show how the participants dealt with specific details in their translations.

One poem, selected for translation by Lin Hsiang-Chen, is titled《去来》, which, if literally translated, is "Go Come", and, in Shu Cai's style of twisted meaning and rearrangement of words to bring out new meanings, is intentional. Lin rendered it as "Come and Go" which we all thought worked in English. In the case of another Shu Cai poem, titled《这枯瘦肉身》, Qi Lintao rendered the title first as "This Vulgar Body of Mine" before he further revised it as "The Vulgar Body of Mine" after an exchange of ideas with others. As for the poem translated by Zhao Zengtao, one line, "心门可是锁着的", is translated as "But the door of Heart is locked". On closer examination, "Heart" could be further revised as "heart".

All in all, the Winter School provided an excellent opportunity for the participants to work among themselves with the assistance of a poet and a translator.

去来　Come and Go

Translated by HSIANG-CHEN LIN

去哪里过夜？ 去大觉寺	Where are you going to spend the night? To the Great Awakening Temple
来这里干吗？ 来大觉寺	Why do you come here? To the Great Awakening Temple
大觉寺无门 自然也无进出	There is no gate at Great Awakening Temple So come in and go out as you like
大觉寺有门 自然也有石榴	There is a gate at Great Awakening Temple So naturally guava trees are living there
还没有来 怎么就去了？	How can I come if you have already left there? How can you know if I haven't even said it?
还没有说 怎么就懂了？	When our talk goes deep The night gradually gone away
说话说到深处 夜渐渐就去了	When you get to the bottom of something The answer comes by itself for sure
问题问个究竟 答案真的来了	Argue what argue? Debate in what ways? Debate what debate? Argue about what?
去哪里去？ 来何处来？	Circle around the Stupa three times Come and go, come and go, come and go
争什么争？ 论如何论？	Left side goes left foot with 'Go-Buddha' Ruqu Right side goes right foot with 'Come-Buddha' Tathagata
绕舍利塔三匝 去来去来去来	Despite all the comings and goings The Great Awakening Temple, is not yet, awakened.
左脚比如去 右脚比如来	
任你去又来 大觉寺不觉	

这枯瘦肉身　The Vulgar Body of Mine

Translated by QI LINTAO

我该拿这枯瘦肉身
怎么办呢？

答案或决定权
似乎都不在我手中。

手心空寂，如这秋风
一吹，掌纹能不颤动？

太阳出来一晒，
落叶们都服服帖帖。

牵挂这尘世，只欠
一位母亲的温暖—

比火焰低调，比爱绵长，
挽留着这枯瘦肉身。

任你逃到哪里，房屋
仍把你囚于四墙。

只好看天，漫不经心，
天色可由不得你。

走着出家的路，
走着回家的路……

我该拿什么来比喻
我与这枯瘦肉身的关系呢？

一滴水？不。一片叶？
不。一朵云？也不！

也许只是一堆干柴，
落日未必能点燃它，

但一个温暖的眼神，
没准就能让它烧起来，

烧成灰，烧成尘，
沿着树梢，飞天上去……

What should I do with
this vulgar body of mine?

Neither the answer nor the decision
seems to be resting in my hands.

Empty and solitary is my hand-heart, like the wind in autumn,
once blown, can the palm-lines not tremble?

As soon as the sun emerges and shines,
the fallen leaves would be reduced to submission.

All the reason for my lingering in this dust-world, is
the dream for the warmth from a mother, which,

less flaunt than flame yet larger than love,
retains this vulgar body of mine.

Wherever you run, the room
still traps you in the jail of its walls.

I end up having to look at the sky, casually,
but the colours of the sky are not your choice.

Taking the road away from home,
taking the road back home…

What can I use to describe the relationship
between this vulgar body of mine and myself?

A drop of water? No. A leaf?
No. A cloud? No!

Possibly, only a bundle of dry wood,
which may not be lit by the setting sun,

but may be set alight by,
a warm looking.

Burn to ashes, burn to dusts,
and fly over the treetop, high into the sky …

酒杯空空如也 A Dry Liquor Cup

Translated by ZENGTAO ZHAO

酒啊酒在哪里拿酒来
杯中酒干了我们就各自回家
空空的大街会送你的
空空的天上你说除了星星还有什么
什么你说天上还有几位神仙
那准是一群摇摇晃晃的酒鬼
他们会醉倒在回家的路上
以为空空的大街就是家

Alas! wine and liquor,
where is the cup?
Fetch me more, I need more!
Dry the cup
and then go back home
individually,
Now the empty streets will see you off,
And in the empty skies any other things
besides the stars?
What?
fairies in the Heavenly Palace?
Must be a gang of swaying drunkards!
Falling down upon the streets on the
way back home,
And regarding the streets as their cosy
beds.

打开你的心　Open Your Heart

Translated by ZENGTAO ZHAO

打开你的心—
你想干什么？
心门可是锁着的，
你没有钥匙。
打开你的心—
凭什么打开它？
门本来就开着，
你想进来就进来呗。
打开你的心—
你是在念咒吗？
心是能打开的吗？
心急跳着问你。
首先它是心脏，
它是一个泵把血
输送给大脑和肢体。
什么你指的不是那颗心？
那你指的是哪一颗？
难道一个人有两颗心？
一颗红心两种准备？
打开你的心—
真打开你受得了吗？
万一里面关着东北虎呢？
万一里面什么都没有
只有一口呼吸怎么办？
打开你的心—
呵我明白了—
你是说竖起我的耳朵
你有心里话要跟我说？
我的心像一只碗，
我的心像一池水，
我的心像那月亮，
有时也像太白金星，
就在眼前就是看不见。
我的心我能听见，
我的心它在急跳，
我的心它像一只鸟，
我的心它像一阵风，
它早飞走了，
早飞进虚无之乡了。
打开你的心—
你别这么命令我好吗！
你命令你自己吧。
你打开你自己的心，
让我们瞧一瞧，
让我们听一听，

Open your heart——
What do you want?
But the door of Heart is locked,
And there are no keys for you.
Open your heart——
Why do you want to open it?
The door is always open.
Come in, if you want.
Open your heart——
Are you chanting a mantra?
Can the heart be opened?
Says my wildly beating heart.
First it is a heart,
A pump, propelling the blood
To brains and four limbs.
What! This is not the heart you refer to?
Then which one?
Does that mean one has two hearts?
Or “a red heart has to prepare for the worst
and the best”?
Open your heart——
But could you bear it if the heart were opened?
What if a northeast tiger were trapped in it?
What if nothing were in it at all,
But a puff of breath?
Open your heart——
Oh, I see——
You want me to have my ears pricked,
And tell me your innermost thoughts.
My heart is like a bowl,
My heart is like a pond of water,
My heart is like the Moon,
And my heart is like the So White Gold Star,

看它是红的还是黑的，
听它在跳动还是在瞌睡，
打开你的心—
心打开再缝上，
心就不完整了。

So close that I can't see it.
My heart, I can hear,
My heart, beating wildly,
My heart, is like a bird,
My heart, is like a blast of wind.
It has long flown away,
Flying into the Erewhon.
Open your heart——
Stop ordering me like that, OK?
Order yourself instead.

CONTRIBUTORS

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Jessica Trevitt is currently working on a PhD that explores how "translational" readings of literary fiction shift through the process of translation. She has a research background in French studies and musicology, and after studying on exchange in Montréal and living in a dual-language city she was inspired to pursue translation studies. She completed the Monash Masters of Translation in 2012 and alongside her research she now freelances as a French>English NAATI translator.

Morgane Vernier went on exchange to the University of Sydney for her Bachelor's Degree, and she spent a year in Melbourne as part of the Double Master Degree in Translation offered by Monash University and Jean Moulin University in Lyon, France. She is now back in France for the second year, writing her master thesis. She enjoys writing fiction in her free time and her experience abroad has provided her with ample inspiration.

Ouyang Yu, now based in Melbourne, came to Australia in early 1991. His has published the award-winning novels, *The Eastern Slope Chronicle* (2002) and *The English Class* (2010), and the collections of poetry, *Songs of the Last Chinese Poet* (1997) and *New and Selected Poems* (Salt Publishing, 2004). Among his translations into Chinese are *The Female Eunuch* (1991), *The Ancestor Game* (1996) and *The Man Who Loved Children* (1998). He is also the author of *Chinese in Australian Fiction: 1888-1988* (Cambria Press, 2008).