The AALITRA Review

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AALITRA

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Pleasures and Pitfalls of Englishing Greek Fiction

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Abstract
This paper focuses on three scholarly translations of Greek fiction into English, published over the last twelve years: *The Last Varlamis* by Thanasis Valtinos, a contemporary text of indeterminate genre, whose translation was published in Birmingham and launched with some fanfare in London in May 2016; the modern Cypriot novella *"The Gangsters"* by Lefkios Zafiriou, whose translation was self-published in Melbourne in 2005; and *Erotokritos* by Vitsentzos Kornaros, a 10,000-verse Cretan Renaissance romance that took a team of three translators five years to translate and annotate for publication by an Australian learned society in 2004. My reflections on the experience of Englishing these quite different texts raise issues specific to translating from Greek (a highly inflected language with a history of diglossia, transliteration problems, and local politico-cultural minefields to negotiate), but also some challenges or vexations of more general applicability (such as dialect, intertextuality, postcolonial translation, mission creep, publishing and reviewers). Their remembrance is tempered with recollections of how the translation process variously enhanced the pleasures of a literary text.

I first came to literary translation with an ulterior motive. I was hoping it might be an avenue to close collaboration with selected Greek authors and an opportunity to probe their sense of their own works. I was not disappointed: translation brought me some privileged insights and cemented some enduring friendships. However, I soon realized that the avenue is also strewn with pitfalls: for a start, authors are not always the best judge of how to render their words in another language.

My favourite illustration of this arose when I was translating the short story "Addiction to Nicotine" with the author Thanasis Valtinos (of whom much more presently). We reached a point in the story where a villager invokes blackbirds of evil omen: "*Kou-rou-nes!*" she intones rather melodramatically. Valtinos wanted something more dialectal than "crows" or "ravens", for the sake of local colour. Strictly speaking, "kourounes" is not dialectal, but the overall linguistic context was. So remembering the Scottish ballad of "The twa corbies", I put in "Cor-r-r-bies!", to the considerable delight of the author. But when I asked a non-Greek speaker for an opinion of my translation as a piece of English, he told me that he was greatly perplexed at the sudden appearance of a Scottish highlander in the middle of the Peloponnese. This was a bad case of anatopism, the spatial equivalent of anachronism. So I reverted to "Ra-a-avens" (Valtinos, "Addiction" 741) – to the considerable disappointment of the author. I have been on my guard against such incongruities ever since. Even the most illustrious translators are guilty of anatopism – the great E.V. Rieu was a serial offender: he places a boomerang and a ballroom in his translation of Homer's *Iliad* for Penguin Classics (Homer 435, 444).

My earliest translations were published in Australian literary journals, unadorned by analysis or commentary, and they did not count as research productivity by the Australian Research Council criteria of the day. Translation remained for me an unaccredited *parergon*, until on the cusp of the new millennium I was persuaded by a classicist colleague, the late Gavin Betts, to join him in producing a scholarly translation of the *Erotokritos,* a massive verse romance from Renaissance Crete. He argued that if we added annotations and a learned

commentary, the bean-counters could not refuse to regard it as academic research. Classicists were scoring the full five points for annotated translations of ancient Greek texts – so why not Modern Greek?

This time, the interpersonal pleasure of the translation process for me would not derive from working with an author – Vitsentzos Kornaros was a contemporary of Shakespeare and had been dead for almost 400 years. The allure this time was the prospect of collaborating with a scholar of the calibre of Gavin Betts, whose superlative knowledge of all Greek had already been applied to translation of ancient, medieval and Modern Greek texts. (This is to say nothing of his geniality and generosity.) "Team Erotokritos" soon expanded into a troika with the addition of an expert dialectologist, Dr Thanasis Spilias. Our *modus operandi* revolved around working-lunches: Gavin would distribute a preliminary draft of a slew of verses a week in advance, and we would then discuss, refine and annotate them over lunch. We lunched and laboured together weekly over five years – the *Erotokritos* is as long as Homer's *Odyssey*. We resolved any disagreements by majority vote; none of us always got his own way, but it was a very harmonious and convivial collaboration, punctuated with much raucous merriment. The final product was handsomely published by the Australian Association for Byzantine Studies as volume 14 in the series *Byzantina Australiensia,* having first been scrutinized by the two general editors of the series, and expertly refereed by two Cretan Renaissance specialists.

The issue of dialect arose again. The *Erotokritos* was written in Cretan dialect, long before standard Modern Greek became centred on the southern mainland dialects. The result of this historical accident is that, although it is still immensely popular all over the Greek-speaking world, the *Erotokritos* now seems rustic to speakers of standard metropolitan Greek. But that is not how it would have appeared to its target readership, the intelligentsia of Venetian Crete in the early 17th century. So the triumvirate of translators resolved to render the *Erotokritos* into the standard modern English of our target readership (Kornaros, *Erotokritos* ix f.).

We also decided to turn the verse into prose, not attempting to replicate the rhymed iambic couplets of the original. None of us was a poet. Besides, there was the cautionary example of a previous English translation of the *Erotokritos* into verse to deter us. This verse translation was produced by Dr Theodore Stephanides, a redoubtable polymath and all-round Renaissance man – poet, physician and natural scientist. (He is perhaps best known as the botanical mentor of Gerald Durrell and hero of the latter's memoir *My Family and Other Animals*.) Stephanides rendered the 5,000 rhyming couplets of the *Erotokritos* into as many heroic couplets of English, a truly Herculean feat for a single translator, but he often sacrificed meaning for form. In the worst instances, he traduced the whole ethos of the poem in his quest for rhyme and iambic pentameter: at the very beginning Stephanides arbitrarily introduces a "languorous kiss by night" into a poem so strait-laced that the lovers only hold hands through a barred window during their trysts (Kornaros, *Erotocritos* 33). He also violates the decorum of the linguistic register by using colloquialisms such as "fibs" (Kornaros, *Erotocritos* 63). His inspired but inaccurate translation was still in print, but we believed a reliable, scholarly alternative was called for.

The *Erotokritos* is a convoluted story of love thwarted by unequal social status, by incredibly sadistic parents, and by diabolical reversals of fortune which put the devotion of the lovers to the sternest tests. It features a jousting tournament, a brutal war, a fatal sword duel between champions, a miraculous recovery from near-death, a magic potion and antidote, and a protracted recognition scene. True love triumphs over all that – and more. The tone of the poem is as varied as its tortuous plot: among the diverse modes to tax the mettle of the translator are luxuriant lyricism, suspenseful or rapid-paced drama, moralistic disquisition, and technical descriptions of everything from anatomy to weaponry, from the accoutrements of chivalry to those of traditional trades like carpentry and seamanship.

Given the length of the *Erotokritos*, a major challenge for its translator is achieving consistency in rendering recurrent words, which might appear thousands of verses apart. The task of keeping track of key words was greatly facilitated by a four-volume scholarly concordance of the text (Philippides & Holton). The concordance was also of invaluable assistance to the production of our Introduction and Endnotes.[1]

Our publication received some favourable notices and plaudits from pundits such as the Professor of Byzantine and Modern Greek at Oxford, who praised both the accuracy of our translation and its "judiciously scholarly presentation, assisting readers without swamping them" (Jeffreys 18). She concludes: "The serious student of European literature of the late Renaissance now has no excuse for ignoring the rich world of the intellectuals of [Crete]. [...] The translators are to be heartily congratulated" (Jeffreys 18). The translation elicited a far less favourable response from a devoted admirer and staunch champion of the legacy of our "rival" translator Stephanides (Hirst). After pointing out some lapses in our purportedly "standard Modern English", the reviewer took us to task at great length for traducing the poem's poetic qualities, which his posthumously slighted hero Stephanides had privileged above accuracy. Furthermore, he sought to demonstrate our failure even in the attempt to debase poetry into prose; this demonstration involved subjecting our phraseology to prosodic scansion and resolving some of it into various metrical feet, thereby vindicating Stephanides's approach and proving that the irrepressible poetry of the original text survived even our perversity. The reviewer also found rhymes in our prose with which to berate us – not to mention "near-rhymes", such as "much" with "crushed". The reader must find such "accidental versification" disconcerting, the reviewer avers, and it should have been edited out for the sake of consistency of style. This critic is apparently in denial of the capacity of prose to be rhythmical and even lyrical. What we abjured in our mission statement was the metrical straitjacket that vitiated Stephanides's translation (Kornaros, *Erotokritos* ix). However, the reviewer concludes that our translation "tells us everything about the elephant except why [...] or how". Our copious explications of the "why" and "how" of the poetics of the *Erotokritos* in the Introduction and the Endnotes seem to have eluded the reviewer's attention.

My next translation confirmed my suspicion that justifying one's choices in detail in an introduction and notes is no insurance against the strictures of a programmatic or wilfully obtuse review. This time the text was a 'modern' novella, a short piece of autobiographical fiction written in Contemporary Greek and laced with elements of Cypriot dialect. The author, Lefkios Zafiriou, first published it in Nicosia in 1982 under the fraught title *"Oi Symmorites"*, which I translated as *"The Gangsters"*. The novella is a coming-of-age story set in the grinding poverty of the final years of British colonial rule in Cyprus and the brutality seeded by the terms of decolonization. It is also a good example of the literary fiction of postcolonial identity. I decided to translate it for use in my Cyprus courses as a literary introduction to the recent history of the island for students who were unable to read the Greek original.

The narrative begins with the EOKA[2] uprising against British rule (1955-59) and ends rather abruptly in 1964 amid the fighting between Greek and Turkish Cypriots that marred the birth of the Republic of Cyprus. The turmoil described in the story would later culminate in the catastrophe of 1974, when a Greek military coup triggered a Turkish invasion that split the island in two, killed thousands, and displaced hundreds of thousands – a disaster out of all proportion to the size of the island. Even though the narration ends in 1964, the novella is

[1] The Introduction critically reviews the current state of scholarship on the Cretan Renaissance, the author, the content and form of the poem, its literary antecedents, its political context (complete with map), and its transmission, reception and afterlife. The Endnotes form a commentary elucidating historical, geographical and cultural allusions, and identifying points of particular thematic and formal interest or scholarly disputation, as well as signalling problematic parts of the text and translation issues.

[2] National Organization of Cypriot Fighters

inevitably read through hindsight of the 1974 calamity and in the knowledge that Cyprus remains divided to this day, to the extent that two generations of Greek and Turkish Cypriots have never lived together – except as neighbours in North London or Melbourne.

The book I translated was acclaimed as "something new in Cypriot literature" because, exceptionally, Zafiriou refrains from shouting or ranting (Zafiriou, *"The Gangsters"* 8). The events of the 1950s and early '60s are chronicled through a child's innocent eyes around a truly horrendous family drama, and subsequent catastrophes are subtly foreshadowed. The narrator of the story seems to have matured into a somewhat conflicted persona, haunted by nightmarish scenes. Significantly for the translation, the narrator also seems linguistically conflicted: he wavers haphazardly between standard Greek and Cypriot dialect. The use of Cypriot dialect, albeit sporadic, was too important to surrender to untranslatability because it is crucial to the narrative technique: it creates an ironic distance between the child protagonist and the mature narrator – he may have been educated in standard Greek, but he has not renounced his sense of Cypriot identity. Moreover, his use of dialect distances him from that Greek nationalist ideology which seeks to minimize Cypriot divergence from metropolitan Greek culture and strives for complete assimilation into Mother Greece.

In rendering the dialect, one solution might have been to use a regional variety of English. It so happens that the Cypriots have been dubbed "the Irish of the Mediterranean", because both islands were convulsed by inter-communal "troubles", so something a bit "leprechaun-y" might have served to render the sporadic use of Cypriot dialect into English. My earlier experience with the "cor-r-r-bies" gave me pause. And my readings in postcolonial theory suggested it was inadvisable to domesticate distinctively local elements to Anglo-centric norms. The history and the contemporary dynamics of the relationship between Cypriot Greek and standard Greek do not match those between Irish English and Standard English — to say nothing of the political reductivism of implicitly equating the two lots of "troubles". Given that I was translating into the language of the former colonial masters of Cyprus, the potential for offence was all the greater. I therefore resorted to a typographical solution: I typeset the Cypriot dialect in ***bold italics*** in contrast to the plain text used for rendering standard Greek. The sporadic ***bold italics*** would give the reader a visual jolt when set amidst a page of plain text. I duly explained what the visual jolt was meant to convey, both in the Introduction and in a footnote closer to its first occurrence in the text (Zafiriou, *"The Gangsters"* 19, 26).

The novella's seemingly incongruous title, *"The Gangsters",* is also politically fraught. Translations of titles of books and film titles can be a bone of contention, and my translation of the title duly attracted criticism from commentators (Zafiriou, *Oi Symmorites*, 83), who simply ignored the detailed justification offered in both my Introduction and Notes (Zafiriou, *"The Gangsters"* 13, 63). The title is enclosed in quotation marks, which function like a pair of tweezers holding the phrase at arm's length for further inspection. The Greek word for "gangster", *symmoritis*, has been loaded with political significance since the Greek civil war of the 1940s. In Greece, the victorious Royalists commonly referred to the Communist revolutionaries as "gangsters", even long after their defeat. Paradoxically, the British colonialists of Cyprus subsequently chose to refer to the Greek-Cypriot EOKA guerrillas as "gangsters", both in the House of Commons and at the United Nations. This is quite an irony because the leader of EOKA, George Grivas, had led a Royalist militia against the "Communist-gangsters" in Greece. To confuse the issue further, the group of children to which the narrator belonged might also be described as a "gang" of sorts, albeit a gang of innocents. So the signifier "gangster" floats about, and the intended identity of the gangsters becomes quite a conundrum. However, a strong clue to the author's intentions is supplied by the front cover of the first Greek edition (Zafiriou, *"Oi Symmorites"*). The cover features the woodcut of a tearful child behind barbed wire titled "Cyprus '74", produced by the Greek artist Tassos, which was subsequently sent around the world on a Cypriot postage stamp sold in aid of

refugees from the Turkish invasion. This emblematic image serves as a reminder of the outcome of the events that Zafiriou describes in the novella, and implicitly points a finger of blame at the "gangsters" who overthrew the democratically elected government in 1974 and triggered the invasion. (These gangsters were the thugs of EOKA-B, recruited and trained by General Grivas.) The title and front cover thus combine to keep the ensuing events ever present as an ironic undertone to Zafiriou's narrative.

In the event, the author supplied me with a different image for use on the cover of my translation. It presents yet another paradox for the reader to ponder: the photograph is of a scene in the novella where the British Governor of Cyprus takes lunch at the Larnaca orphanage, surrounded by members of the narrator's "gang". It raises the question of whether His Excellency Sir Hugh Foot might be himself regarded as a "gangster". It could be argued that, since Sir Hugh's predecessors hanged and tortured young men fighting against British colonial rule, and since Sir Hugh himself played a role in tying the "Gordian knot" of Cypriot "independence" which led to much subsequent grief, he could thus be seen to qualify as an *ex officio* "gangster", albeit an exceptionally urbane one.

My rendering of the title as "The Gangsters" was mostly criticized by non-native speakers of English. They were influenced, I believe, by the fact that the word "gangster" has entered Modern Greek as an unassimilated loan-word and in Greek it tends to denote mobsters of the Al Capone variety, as portrayed by Hollywood. The word "gang" has not accompanied "gangsters" into Greek usage, so the nexus with the latter's etymon, obvious in English, is lost in Greek. In English, gangsters come in more flavours than just those sleek Chicago mobsters who produce machine-guns out of violin-cases—they are also unprepossessing specimens like the Kray twins, and the sort of Cockney thugs that Arthur Daly and his "minder" rub up against. As mentioned in both my Introduction and Notes, what clinched the choice of "gangsters" for my translation was the fact that British officialdom was using this term to denote the EOKA guerrillas of Cyprus. I suppose I could have avoided criticism by translating the title blandly as "The Gang", but in doing so I would have surrendered the title's historical and political connotations.

On a more positive note, my enjoyment of the text was enhanced by discussions with the author when he visited Australia as a conference guest, and again later when I visited Cyprus and had the pleasure of acquainting myself with the old town of Larnaca, retracing the steps of the novella's characters. Another pleasure of the translation process, and the intensely close reading of the text that translation demands, was the discovery of many intertextual resonances with other works of Modern Greek literature, including Valtinos's "Addiction to Nicotine", which I had also translated. I resolved to signal such textual nuances in my Translator's Notes and to make a scholarly edition of my translation.

Less encouraging was the discovery that the novella had been singled out for savage criticism by the Greek nationalist sector of Cypriot politics. Even after the fiasco of 1974, unrepentant nationalists deplored Zafiriou's depiction of ordinary Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots living together harmoniously and even denounced his use of Cypriot dialect as treason against Mother Greece. They were aghast when the novella was awarded a State Literary Prize (Zafiriou, *"The Gangsters"* 13). Not wishing to enter the minefield of local politics, I resolved to produce not just a carefully considered translation but also an even-handed, scholarly introduction and notes. In translating the text I clearly had to convey accurately the author's apportionment of blame, but the Introduction and Notes were another matter – they should give readers the means to arrive at their own conclusions. It was no small challenge to write non-partisan pen-pictures of controversial figures like Archbishop Makarios and General Grivas. Clearly, a full and balanced bibliography was also needed to document the notes and suggest further reading.

Mission creep had by now become a full-blown stampede, so for good measure I also included a map and a timeline of events relevant to the story. The initially slender text duly bulked up into a format suitable for publication as a small, free-standing volume.

This segues into the next pitfall – one which left me with a cupboardful of copies printed at my own expense. My quest for a publisher had three false starts over several years. By 2005 I despaired of ever keeping faith with the endlessly patient author and, throwing caution to the winds, I decided to publish the translation myself. I duly set up a "two-dollar" company for the purpose, under a suitably Welsh-Greek trademark: "Delphi Coracle Press". The end product was rather spartan, but functional and pleasingly uncompromised—it contained all the accretions to the translated text that I deemed important. Distribution proved a worse pitfall: ten years later, I still have a shelf full of copies. Nowadays I would have explored options for online publishing.

Nevertheless, a happy ending of sorts ensued, as an unlikely spin-off from the 2004 enlargement of the European Union to include not just Cyprus, but also Slovenia. When in 2008 Slovenia assumed the rotating presidency of the EU, the publisher Modrijan of Ljubljana celebrated the occasion by issuing the "Euroman" series of Slovenian translations of representative prose works from the other EU member-states. *"The Gangsters"* was chosen to represent Cyprus, and apparently my English translation facilitated its selection and translation into Slovenian. The result was a very handsome hardback edition of the work in Slovenian, complete with introduction and notes based on my spartan volume (Zafiriou, *Gangsterji*). The author was duly feted as a European literary celebrity in Slovenia.

This momentum was maintained in the following year (2009) with a second Greek edition of the novella, published in Athens (Zafiriou, *Oi Symmorites*). It featured a revised text and the Greek editor's notes, again partly based on my own. A caveat arises here, inasmuch as the author emended the Greek text, causing it to diverge in places markedly from the original text that I translated. This serves as a salutary reminder that the shelf life of translations can be finite for a variety of reasons. Translators of living authors can expect their translations to be marginalized by revisions of the source text, even after many years of dormancy between editions. The changes made by Zafiriou may seem minor overall, but some of them divorce the current Greek text quite significantly from my translation and annotations – it would be ironic indeed if my translation and notes inspired the author's second thoughts that have now cut the translation adrift. Not so much a pitfall as an own-goal!

And so to my latest round of pleasures and pitfalls, my translation of *The Last Varlamis* by my old friend Thanasis Valtinos, to whom I returned after a hiatus of two decades. This time we collaborated not face-to-face, but by e-mail – a sign of the times. Valtinos in the meantime had become quite a notorious celebrity in Greece. His fictional representations of the Greek civil war caused a major furore in the 1990s, but he had nonetheless won several prestigious prizes, and had recently been elected to the Athens Academy.

What attracted me irresistibly to Valtinos was not his celebrity, but the fact that his text, *The Last Varlamis*, is a masterclass in literary larrikinism – this resonated powerfully with me. *The Last Varlamis* is a monument to textual mischief, replete with snares for the complacent reader as well as pitfalls for the unwary translator. It is vintage Valtinos, featuring much of his thematic stock-in-trade: squalid politics, factional thuggery, intimate domestic intensities, artistic issues – all packaged in a text of indeterminate genre. Is it a historical essay? A fictional novella? Or is it just a formal academic address? It was, after all, read aloud to the Athens Academy by Valtinos in the guise of an inaugural address at his investiture in the Chair of Prose-writing in 2010. I give full details of the background to the text in the Introduction to my translation (Valtinos, *Varlamis* ix). Suffice it to say that in reading *The Last Varlamis* at his investiture, Valtinos regaled his captive audience for upwards of an hour with a caricature of the scholarship of which they are the accredited custodians. It was a parody, moreover, the

extent of which they would realize only some months later when they were able to check the hardcopy and discover the spurious references and apocryphal citations with which he had larded the text. Not for the first time, Valtinos was outrageously riding the boundaries of fact and fiction, authenticity and forgery, and challenging the gatekeepers of national truths to tell them apart. This was larrikinism of a high order, scripted and stage-managed to perfection. His fellow Academicians responded by nominating him for the Nobel Prize for Literature and then electing him President of Athens Academy for 2016.

The range of challenges that *Varlamis* holds for the translator is best illustrated with a few excerpts. The story starts with some historic verse, the tantalisingly brief folk-ballad of Varlamis, which is supposed to date from the Ottoman period:

> Three plane trees all in a row / and what thick shade one casts.
> From its branches swords are hung / and at its foot, muskets propped
> and 'neath it lies Varlamis.
>
> (Valtinos, *Varlamis* 1)

The narrator then surveys various unsatisfactory scholarly attempts to explicate the enigma of the curiously recumbent Varlamis. Then he conjures up an alternative response to the song in the form of a high-modernist pastiche, a "quasi-folksong" by a fictitious literary poet, using a very different linguistic register – thereby also keeping the translator on his mettle!

> Three plane trees all in a row / while Varlamis,
> lying supine / on the raft / of his five exquisite verses
> ascends the River Acheron.
> Was he tall or short / swarthy or fair?
> Was he a ladies' man / like his contemporary Zacharias
> —from Barbitsa in the Parnon ranges, that one—
> or were this one's proclivities more dorian?
> Futile questionings!
> Enveloped in the mists of history / they shall forever remain unanswered.
> And his ascent shall continue.
>
> (Valtinos, *Varlamis* 3)

Amid all that nebulous historicity, bristling with artistic possibilities, Varlamis's ascent (or, perhaps more accurately, his descent) does indeed continue, because Valtinos supplies him with a quasi-documented dynasty. In the process Valtinos spoofs every kind of textual documentation and flagrantly misquotes or "verbals" both the quick and the dead. He turns out a veritable *Who's Who* of the Greek intelligentsia to bear false witness, from the scholar Apostolakis to the journal-editor Zouboulakis (via the classics Professor Kakridis, the astrophysicist Nanopoulos, and the Nobel Laureate George Seferis, and many more real or fictitious witnesses) all by way of lending a veneer of plausibility to a fabricated genealogy. Cavafy's apocryphal inscriptions and wilful misquotations pale by comparison. Even Stendhal's notorious fabrication of 58 of the 73 epigraphs in *Le Rouge et le Noir* seems tame – Valtinos crams as much falsification into a work a fraction of the length. Behind this seemingly impish *jeu d'esprit* lies serious intent: it is an *exposé* in caricature of the very mechanisms by which dominant national narratives can be forged by blithely joining up the dots of dubious evidence.

For the hapless translator though, quasi-documentation posed an additional problem: mission creep, again. Unlike the doyen of Modern Greek literary translation, Peter Bien of Dartmouth College, who had the good sense to direct the English reader to "Google" anything

culturally unfamiliar in his re-translation of Kazantzakis's *Zorba the Greek* (3), I felt duty-bound to assist the non-specialist reader of *The Last Varlamis* to savour the all-important sub-text. At the risk of coming across as a "nanny translator", I effectively undertook to map the fictional element of the text, taking my lead from the fact that the author himself had provided endnotes signalling some of the intertextual references embedded in his text. I decided to build on the author's example and to append Translator's Notes in the form of a minimalist glossary of references. I aimed both to spare general readers the frustration of the wild-goose chase and to facilitate their understanding of the way the text is meant to work for a Greek-reader.

One final pitfall of Valtinos' fiction, capable of driving a translator to distraction, was his compulsive name-dropping. In *The Last Varlamis* he binges on personal names, corporate brand names, placenames – all kinds of proper names. Many of them are fabrications, either his own or those of other fiction writers, in the spirit of his trademark "faction" (a hybrid of fact and fiction). The trouble for the translator is that these proper names tend to be polysyllabic and particularly unamiable to the English eye in phonetic transliteration. Thirty-three years of teaching Greek to English-speakers has taught me that a surfeit of Big Fat Greek names invariably causes terminal confusion and glaze-over. So my translation tries to mitigate the author's profligacy by using forms more familiar to English-speakers wherever possible; thus "Hadrian St" instead of "Adhrianou St". I hope to have avoided making Athens sound like London or Melbourne in the process, but I expect the censure of devotees of rigorous consistency in transliteration, in due course.

In the interim, a couple more brief excerpts from my translation will serve to illustrate some of the features of the text mentioned above. In the first excerpt we see the inglorious demise of the eponymous "last Varlamis" of the title – he was named "Michel" by his French mother, Michelle. Like the recumbent first Varlamis of folksong fame, he ends up lying under a fateful plane-tree:

> 1944, September 14, the Feast of the Holy Cross. Evening. Michel has forgotten to bolt the back door at Hadrian St., the one opening on to the courtyard. Curfew starts at ten. He's just got time. He goes out and walks briskly in that direction. He enters Hephaestos St. At the far end of the street two men are lurking in a doorway. They stand motionless. He walks past them, his heart racing. He turns left. There's a couple under the plane tree. The man with his back against the tree trunk, the woman astride his knees. Disconcerted, Michel detours to avoid them. The woman leaps up. It's Philitsa. The man tries to pull his trousers up. Michel recognises Sarandis. Two gunshots from right behind him and immediately thereafter two more shatter the night. Then footsteps running away. Philitsa screams out, pointing at a bewildered Michel: 'He knows me.' The footsteps return.
>
> Michel didn't hear the two gunshots, nor the other two. Philitsa was still screaming hysterically: 'He knows me.'
>
> Clutching his gaping abdomen with both hands, Michel managed to drag himself, practically clambering over Sarandis's corpse, and reached the plane tree. He leaned against the foot of the rough trunk, and just before his head fell lifeless beside it, Virginia Varlami came and kissed him on the forehead.
>
> (Valtinos, *Varlamis*, 22)

So the final scion of the putative family tree is severed. But this is not the end of the story; there are more scores to settle, and in this final excerpt Valtinos takes pre-emptive aim at his academic critics through his fictional alter ego, the feisty Rhoxane-Rhea (better known by her Greek initials, "Rho-Rho") and the dissertation she submitted to the Sorbonne, not coincidentally entitled "The Last Varlamis".

> Rho-Rho completed and submitted her dissertation in July of 1956. The examiners' reports arrived in Paris in September. [...] One enthusiastic, two stilted and bland. The fourth was a thunderbolt. There was one more to come, but it was already a dead letter. In an exceptionally aggressive manner, Christophe Langlois of Montpellier excoriated the unscholarly tenor of the work and above all the egregious —tacit— treatment of the ending of a recent Greek novel — in its entirety— as historical fact. He threatened to hold it up for vilification before the whole university community. Jean-François Arnaud lived in dread of academic impropriety and feared for the fate of his student. He could discern personal grievances behind Langlois's stern polemics. The hostility was exclusively aimed at him. He discussed with her the scope for withdrawing the dissertation and rewriting the end in particular, inserting bibliographical references.
>
> Rho-Rho refused categorically. She took her leave of her professor and sent Langlois the following note over her own conspicuous signature:
>
> Life is per se a narrative. History is the derivative narrative of the former. When events lose their pulsating vitality and wilt irretrievably, we of necessity place our trust in literature.
>
> (Valtinos, *Varlamis*, 24)

Rho-Rho gets the last laugh in the story, and her riposte to her inquisitor is the punch line to the whole work. Literature touches parts that historiography can't reach.

I would add that the translation process takes the translator to parts of the literary text that mere close reading cannot reach. My experience of having to consider the nuances of every word of the three diverse Greek texts against its supposed equivalent in English, to compare the register, semantic range and cultural/historical connotations of each, and to assess the responses that each can trigger in readers of both source and target language, has markedly heightened my understanding (and, with it, my enjoyment) of how these works function as literature. I have further found sharing these privileged insights in translator's introductions and notes to be worthwhile, both by way of disciplined rationalization of my choices and as a form of pre-emptive justification (albeit not fool proof). The major or minor pitfalls posed by well-meaning authors, unpredictable publishers and dyspeptic reviewers pale into insignificance before these supreme pleasures of Englishing Greek fiction.

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"Am I Still There?": On the Author's Sense of Becoming in a New Language

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Abstract
What is the author's experience of a constructed "self" in translation? This question offers us a brief incursion into the problem and the opportunity of *being translated*, which I plot on a cline from anxiety, uncertainty and loss of self, to renewal. Two arcs on the metaphoric axes are ethereal and carnal, respectively: soul, manifested in such comparisons as translation as metempsychosis, and body, which appears in translation tropes such as war, on the aggressive end, and erotics, on the cooperative. We also see variations such as enslavement and reproduction. These figures form ways of coming to terms with the double authorship of all translation – even self-translation – and of the author's sense of survival as "self" or "other" in the process of inscription in a new language, as well as the author's perception of the translator with respect to his or her identity formation. The primary dichotomy of the translator as collaborator or competitor – that is, the dynamics of coexistence or the tensions of domination – underlies these conceptualizations.
Keywords: identity, body, estrangement, metaphors of translation

> Then, seek a poet who your way does bend,
> And choose an author as you choose a friend.
> United by this sympathetic bond,
> You grow familiar, intimate, and fond
> (Lord Roscommon, "An Essay on Translated Verse", 262)

> …and we judge and are sensible of [the great writers'] perfections, if by no other way, than by not being able to imitate them
> (Quintilian, *Institutes of the Orator*, X, v, 241)

> …Thou art translated
> (Peter Quince, in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, III, i. 112-13)

While the phenomenologies of translators' experiences of translating – their perceptions, responses and embodied readerly encounters with texts – have all been explored in recent years (e.g. Scott 2012), authors' varied understandings of being translated, particularly as they relate to writerly identity, have not yet received their due attention. In this paper, I wish to broadly map the ways in which writers tend to understand the experience of undergoing translation; conceptions ranging from survival to transformation, from expansiveness to disintegration. The attendant perception of translators, then, can be shown to occupy the same range, from antagonistic to erotic to salvational. How do writers reconcile the sense of both alienation and recognition inherent in seeing themselves in a new language? What sense of "self" is involved? I will specifically consider the metaphorics of their own self-reception, rather than either the abstract theories of translation they propose or their critiques of specific translations of their work (à la Vladimir Nabokov or Milan Kundera). In this sense, I take up the author as "translated subject", a role less extensively traced than that of the author as translation critic.

A working hypothesis guiding these explorations is that writers are never so conscious of their own selves – to the point of reifying them – as they are when translated.

Rita Wilson usefully reminds us of the "self that is not pre-existent but is constituted in the act of translation" (196). The "double articulation: knowing and not knowing the other" that she defines can apply equally to the author and the translator. When she writes that "to translate is to install oneself in the space of divergence and to accept the divergence of the two subjects" (Wilson 196), Wilson is also characterising what happens, ideally, when the author embraces liminality. *To be translated* is to accept divergence. The reality of authorial reception, however, is more nuanced, as I will now examine; translation is not a psychologically simple process. I will focus on the following, broadly sketched phenomena: the author and the writing process; the author and self-translation; the author in relation to his or her work in translation; and the translator in relation to the author. I will articulate links wherever possible, although the emphasis will be on showing "horizontal" variations in authorial reception, rather than distinguishing the features of each case. My review of the many disparate cases is organized around metaphors as expressions of translated subjectivity or subjectivity in translation.[1]

Translation as uncertainty

The nature of the diverging subjectivities between authorial selves in the original and in translation, and between authorial and translatorial voices, presents a problem. Meintjes identifies how deconstruction "has pointed to [the] fundamental *crisis of identity* in the act of translation – translation's fatal flaw is to be, at one and the same time, *Other* and *not Other*" (67).[2] Basalamah describes the legal characterization of a text as one debated in opposing terms: paternity and filiation on the one hand, and "dialogue and interaction" on the other (123). He notes Derrida's (1996) positing of "the specter of the father (the author)" as "always there, although *undecidedly present or absent*" (122, emphasis mine). Identity in translation may involve the doubling of texts, authors, voices, and even readers (both real and implied) (Penas Ibañez 51).

For at least one author, being translated produces what might be termed the *anxiety of uniqueness*. Writers and translators alike have troped writing as embodiment, yoking textual presence to bodily incarnation. The cognitive semantics in which textual-bodily form and meaning align make the writer's self-knowledge in translation a matter of self-recognition: will the new text be sufficiently "me", despite a newly embodied form? Will I viscerally, corporeally, recognise the marked traits, characteristic textures and imperfections? And, will that "me" suffer an excess, a misshapenness, an alienation? Consider the following quotation from Ellie Epp:

[1] I am borrowing an anonymous reviewer's phrasing here in an attempt to bridge the text's many references to incommensurate contexts and practices.

[2] Cf. Eugene Chen Eoyang, who writes of the *myth of identity* as demonstrated by the naïveté of one writer (Andy Rooney) who, in a critique of a friend's translation of his work into Japanese, "assumes it is possible to convey his individual American style" in the language, little realizing that the "challenge is to sound American to Japanese the way Americans sound to Americans" (13). The writer, Rooney, strays into an ontological error, believing "there is an Andy Rooney in Japanese and that all it takes is diligent translation to discover it" (15).

> Translation interposes a third body. A lot depends on whether the intervening body – the translator – is structurally fluid and precise: can it (in some way) re-form the body of the author within itself so that its utterance will structure a reader in similar ways. When I'm being translated – or edited, too – what I look for is whether I can feel myself in the new text. Am I at home in its cognitive dynamics – its flights and perchings? Am I awkward in its rhythms? Has my idiosyncrasy been smoothed out? Am I still there?
>
> (Borrero and Epp 65-6)

The metaphor of feeling oneself in the new text resonates with Douglas Robinson's use of the concept of *proprioreception* to stand for the translation perceived as both strange and familiar (116) – the "ownness", as he calls it, or one's sense of physical self, one's bodily sensation. MacKendrick notes that bodily translation harks back to practices in which wholeness was even attributed to fragments, showing that fragmentariness was no obstacle to the integrity of spiritual power:

> We don't so often think of bodies being translated, but [notice that the] translation of relics (that is, of pieces or close possessions of saints) is their movement from one location – specifically, from one church congregation – to another.
>
> […T]hroughout the Middle Ages the relics were sometimes said to have translated themselves, moved of their own volition. This was held to demonstrate the desire of the relevant saints for the newly privileged location […] In the translation of relics, an original – a whole, unified original in the form of an intact body – is the very source of meaning. The relic matters because it belonged to the body of a saint, and each fragment is held to contain, somehow, the wholeness of saintly power and sanctity […] But as a rule, that original is impossible to find; the meaningful pieces are only ever fragments. (In fact, studies of older relics often show that they are not even fragments of humans.)
>
> (MacKendrick 37)

Submerged or problematic pieces of a self may become available to the perceiving self who is translated. For Brossard, translation exposes what one wants hidden *from* oneself *of* oneself; not only thoughts, but also whom it is who thinks, and how, and how that new thinking relates back to the familiar body:

> Exhausting work it is to read a text of one's own in translation. Tiring, because to the mental operations one performs in writing the text is added the process I shall call unveiling. Because what one chooses to hide in a text must now be exposed. Where criticism, for example, can only presume, dream or imagine a meaning, translation seeks to ascertain. In this process of corroboration, I must confront what I have consciously and scrupulously hidden from myself. To be translated is to be interrogated not only in what one believes oneself to be but in one's way of thinking in a language, and of being thought by the same language. It means I have to question myself about the other I might be if I thought in English, Italian, or some other language. What law, what ethics, what landscape, what picture would then come to mind? And who would I be in each of these languages? What would femininity have reserved for me in Italian? What relation would I have had to my body if I had had to think it in English?
>
> (Brossard 37-8)

Maier has written about how the translator, too, is imprinted with emotions that "pass to and become the translator who rewrites them" (147), a transformation that repositions the body as a "site of translation or translator in its own right" (138).[3] Translators and commentators have used metaphors of transcorporeality to illustrate the effect of translation since they first practiced the art. In the preface to *Kekavali*, the masterwork of the Marathi poet Moropanta (1729-1794), to take an almost random example, we are told that the translator must enter "the heart and mind of the author" (Ranade vii). The Earl of Roscommon's well-known lines (see the epigraph above) are followed by these, in which harmonization between two implies a replacement of the first by the second: "Your thoughts, your words, your styles, your souls agree, / No longer his interpreter, but he" (262). This is the total identity invoked by some theorists with respect to the empathetic leap of the translator. Jean Starr Untermeyer expresses this pithily as: "[T]he translator should himself be translated" (Hipkins 74). Many cases have been documented about translators who, as a result of their translations, have also been profoundly affected in their role identities as writers (see for example Bassnett and Pizarnik 2002, or Nouss 2007, both of whom recount episodes of translation *exchanges*).

Epp's translator figures the translator in a metonymy of bodies, or their trace, as a territory whose exploration is a recovery of language's incarnate – bodied – origins:

> Yo, su traductora, fui su lazarillo en la oscuridad de una lengua nueva. Ella, la vidente inspirada. El poema, un espacio de activación de la memoria de un cuerpo, que a su vez toca otro cuerpo, y otro. Traducir es tantear… en el territorio (des)conocido de un cuerpo. Re-conocer (recordar) – a través del cuerpo – el origen encarnado del lenguaje.
>
> [I, her translator, was her guide for the blind in the darkness of a new language. She, the inspired seer. The poem, a space where the memory of a body is activated, a body that in turn touches another body, and another. Translating is feeling one's way... in the (un)known territory of a body. Re-cognizing (recalling) – through the body – the incarnate origins of language.]
>
> (Borrero 67-9, my translation)

It is the author's subjective presence that the author may fear is imperilled by the act of translation. In a psychoanalytic approach to the translated author, Maria Carneiro and Arthur Brakel speculate that being translated might trigger a sense of being persecuted, lost, taken over, or eliminated (774). Languages themselves require different bodies or a different physicality than the same body, which presents another kind of destabilising transformation of form:

> Linguists, by using electrodes on the vocal cords, have been able to demonstrate that English has tenser vowels than, for example, Spanish. The body itself speaks a language differently, so that moving from one language to another is more than translating words. It's getting the body ready as well. It's getting the heart ready along with the mind.
>
> (Rios 104)

[3] See also Scott (2012), particularly 20-21, in footnote 1.

Different embodiments – that of translator, author, and reader – may even be gendered.[4] A "feminizing" translation of a female writer's work produces a thought-provoking case in this connection: Lise Gauvin's *Lettres d'une autre* (1987) was translated by Susanne de Lotbiniére-Harwood without the original author's generic masculine pronouns. Instead, these were replaced by more visibly feminine ones. In "Gender in Translation" Sherry Simon writes that the translator's signature is accorded equal authority to that of the writer, denoting a translatorial self that threatens to rival the authorial "I" (32). More remarkable than the political stance taken by the translator is the author's invisibility with respect to the translator's position, even though "we know, in this particular case, that *the author seems to have been willing to abdicate textual authority* in favour of the translator's more radical stance toward language" (Simon 32, emphasis mine). We rarely see authors' formal assessments of their translators' work; we take it on faith that they understand and approve them in those cases where they are aware of having been translated and can access the target texts. In other cases, where translation eludes or excludes authors due to language, textual piracy, geography, death, or even authors' own indifference to their work's fate in translation, the translated text can assume a 'life' of its own, autonomous and uncontested. Thus both the abdication of authority and the incapacity or unwillingness to claim authority may supplant or threaten to supplant the writer; to use a metaphor suggesting boundary conflict, they threaten to *occupy* the writer.

Translation, then, is often conceived as a contentious encounter out of which one voice prevails, with languages standing implicitly as proxies for human combatants:

> Two languages contend for dominance in translation. It is a struggle that occurs all along the disputed text, and each language must yield points to the more forceful configurations of the other…. [...] a field of warring identities and the erotics of power […].
>
> (Raffel 36-37)

Cases exist in which author-translator partnerships are strained, not because of language, but because of incompatible translation philosophies or literary sensibilities. Alice Kaplan's true fable (2003) of the "wrong" translator being assigned to her text *French Lessons* reminds us that alienation may be fated before a single word is translated. Her "Mr. X", whom she describes as an "ethically bad translator" because he denied her strangeness in the new tongue, teaches us that power struggles in the author-translator relationship can simply be the result of a poor fit, a mismatch of two individuals' aesthetic goals that no amount of editorial therapy could remedy. Kaplan's misadventure becomes even more complicated during the working process as she realizes (being a translator herself) that the translator's impulse to become the writer can indeed take hold, particularly when flaws are found in the source text. She describes Mr. X's renderings as boundary violations, a "creepy" kind of invasive claim-jumping of her space. Arguments about the differing fundamentals of style between translator and writer often seem to signal an *irreconcilable difference*; the bedrock social contract between them rests on harmonic goals. In cases such as Kaplan's, the shared meaning of the dialogic process of collaboration can give way to hermeneutic departures and appropriative translation choices, made in defiance of the author and the text; that is, to a rivalry that exists outside the text as well as within it.

The motif of translator as rival can be traced back to the period of antiquity. In Epistle VII.ix, in Pliny the Younger, the translator is portrayed as an upstart attempting to emulate the author:

[4] See Hipkins 72-4 for a discussion of the "close but stifling relationship" of translator Paola Capriolo and Thomas Mann and the "female 'anxiety of authorship'" that emerged from the translation process.

> [T]hings which you might have overlooked in reading cannot escape you in translating: and this method will open your understanding and improve your judgement. It may not be amiss when you have read only so much of an author at once, as to carry in your head his subject and argument, to turn, as it were, his rival, and write something on the same topic; then compare your performance and his, and minutely examine in what points either you or he most happily succeeded.
>
> (Pliny the Younger 23)

The rival may even name the threat – translation – in terms that posit translation not as creation but as *un*creation, an un-writing or defacing of body and even reputation. We can see this theme in Bengali poet Jagannath Chakravorty's "Translate Me", which addresses the would-be translator defiantly in terms suggesting the translator would efface the name and very body of the writer: "Rub out, if you can, my name, [...] / As though I were someone else, something else" (Chakravorty, Tr. Chaudhuri 126).[5]

The language of conflict used within the discipline of psychology has been used to describe translational authorities, drives, prohibitions, and challenges. Barnstone, for instance, suggests that cooperation between translator and author is intended, but argues that the relationship devolves into a parent-child power struggle due to the author's precedence (8). Cynan Jones, a Welsh author, jokes that literary translators act "in loco parentis" (Vezzaro), while Carneiro and Brakel theorise that collaboration requires an abandoning of the writer's narcissistic impulse and a surrendering to the mutual respect necessary in any joint undertaking (774). Carneiro and Brakel stake out the territory of the text as being akin to the realm of the psychoanalyst, who interprets in light of what patients present, similar to the way in which the translator extends the reach of alien ideas (Carneiro and Brakel 774). It is telling that, via this connection, and although Oedipal theories of translation have been in circulation for some time, Lawrence Venuti frames his translation norms in Lacanian terms, suggesting finally that to assume status and authority "the translating process may […] reveal the translator's repressed desire to challenge the source author by releasing an unconscious remainder" (50-1). Kevin West, echoing Raffel's "erotics of power", imagines the "plenitude of an other's words as a surrogate of the elusive other" (2). The desire for knowledge of an other, not of texts in West's conception but of engagement with a mind, leads to the effort "*to dissolve the customary separation of minds* and attain oneness of understanding" (Raffel 3), a physical union he calls an "erotics of translation". This image attenuates what he sees in Steiner's *After Babel* as bodied but ultimately "phallocentric" aggression (Raffel 15).

The erotic partakes vaguely of the figurations with which translation has long been associated, "many of which," according to Bistué, "portray [the author-translator] relation as a paradoxical form of union or condensation," often in terms of "engendering and reproduction, of ingestion and assimilation, and of conquest, abduction, and enslavement" (30). In the seventeenth century, Marie de Gourney used stark cannibalistic imagery to declare that the translator must "engender a work anew […] because [the ancient writers] have to be decomposed by profound and penetrating reflection, in order to be reconstituted by a similar process; just as meat must be decomposed in our stomachs in order to form our bodies" (Zuber 292). Bistué describes the problem of translational authorship as that of two selves vying for space, as there is room for only one in the translation itself (30).

One writer who has combined closeness and antagonism into a claustrophobic paradox of "intimate enemies" to describe the author-translator relationship is Maryse Condé, a

[5] It may undermine the poet's rhetoric somewhat to realize that, akin to reading in a book Socrates' arguments against books, we are reading his excoriation of translation *in translation*.

Guadeloupean writer. She confesses that to be translated is to be dispossessed (25). The process of writing, for Condé, consists of harmonising painstakingly chosen words, written neither in French nor Creole but in, as she calls it, "Maryse Condé" (32). But then:

> […] the translator turns the musicality of the text upside down and in the end destroys the lovingly elaborated score. In the course of this annihilation, the author's voice disappears and he is excluded from the text he so patiently produced. What voice then prevails and replaces the author's? It can only be that of the translator! […] Appropriation. Treason. Exclusion.[6]
>
> (Condé 26)

For Condé, understanding the language of the translation means "assess[ing] the extent of the transformation compared to the original text" (27). She does not use the concept of "transformation" in the way it is commonly used in translation studies – as an inevitability – but instead employs it as a criticism: the voice is not hers. She concedes that the importance of translation and her paradoxical position of being read in English is a "necessary evil", admitting that "[m]y reservations toward it are merely a product of my narcissism and the jealousy of an author who dreads being dispossessed and who thus sees enemies everywhere" (Condé 29). The translator is an "intimate" and "indispensable" enemy, she concludes. Jean Anderson, in a recent interview ("Art or Echo" 2011), makes the point that writers reading themselves in translation may experience conflict due to their tendency to want total control over the page. For some authors, perhaps, performing their own translated work out loud to a listening public constitutes even more of a personal displacement than reading a translation on the printed page; it is a more literal kind of 'score', to use Condé's image, since they are giving voice to their own re-voicing, a re-embodiment of disembodiment.

Clearly, many of the writers cited here work or worked in contexts that cannot be fairly compared, and this tour through them is admittedly brisk. Yet it is still possible to find common thematic threads: for example, the author's search for a sense of what is rightful or one's own in an aggressively intimate situation. Similarly, an 'erotics' of power unites the cited cases in their attempt to restore or defend against an effacement or overpowering. Being translated is seen in such cases as the showdown of distinct selfhoods in which re-creation renders uncertain, and even threatens to *destroy*, its object.

Translation as loss of self or estrangement

> I wish I could give up trying to see the words, my own sentences, English, shine through. It's melancholy as well as enthralling work. [...] I am translated – in the modern sense and in the obsolete sense deployed by Wycliffe [described elsewhere (339) as "to be rescued, from death or extinction"]. In supervising my translations, I am supervising the death as well as the transposition of my words.
>
> (Sontag 347)

Susan Sontag's words, cited above, describe a paradoxical valediction and resurrection of one's words as one's words; that is, the release into both death and life of the ego's personal production. Meintjes prompts us to reflect on the different kinds of authorial responses as aesthetic, psychological, and inescapably *relational*: perhaps the greater paradox is that the translation cannot present the author as being free of the translator. She writes:

[6] The reader may be interested to learn that these words in "Intimate Enemies" (and, indeed, most of Condé's work in English) were translated by the poet's husband.

> Writing (experienced) as an expression of self has the potential to engender competitiveness around originality and ownership, and protectiveness and resistance from the writer, at least in an initial moment, because translating opens up the space for tensions around the inevitable difference and loss in conveying the foreign, which is also the self of an other.
>
> (Sontag 68)

The phrase "writing (experienced) as an expression of self" suggests that writing may be experienced in other ways, namely, impersonally or, at least, not as an accurate record of a single consciousness. The phrase, "at least in an initial moment", furthermore, suggests the malleability of an author's growth toward acknowledging oneself as an image, as the author of an "Ur-text" and the potential images that can be made from it. The so-called "death of the author", perhaps, is not only the reader's to negotiate, but also that of the author who "dies" to overcome the writerly identity they constrain to a single language and a personal inscription of that language. The estrangement of a writer's words can be compounded through relay or indirect translation, such as *Frøken Smillas fornemmelse for sne* (*Smilla's Sense of Snow*), the English version of which became a new original for onward translation, though the work is attributed to Danish writer Peter Høeg (Park 113).

Self-translation: reflexive being

Self-translators, while having an apparent interpretive advantage, are not immune to the uncertainties and anxieties noted by other authors. Wilson plots self-translation within Anthony Pym's concept of the translator as a "minimal interculture", where not only the third space or "gap" is operative, but also a space of imbrications and cross-currents, revealing the potentialities of the text and perhaps even of the self-translator as the "archetypal embodiment of such linguistic and cultural overlap, both in person and in his/her writing/textual production" (196; Pym 181). Moreover, self-translation is perhaps most dramatically evidenced by Wilson's contention that "translation and writing are allied phenomena of re-inscription of the self" (189). Benigno Trigo (77) notes how, in Rosario Ferré's work, the "second skin" of the text that constitutes the self-translation in the Puerto Rican writer's case sometimes contains "ironic reversals" and even liberates the source from its "self-censuring impulse" (Trigo 77; cf. Brossard above). This suggestion hints at an authorial identity not fully established in the source, but which is fragmentary and only completed or revealed in (self-)translation. Ferré herself describes self-translation as "complex", "disturbing", "diabolic", "obsessive", "anguishing", an act of "self-exile" requiring "a constant recreation of divergent worlds" (39). To the author, self-translation perhaps presents more of a sense of a self-overcoming than of self-preservation, "a second chance at redressing one's fatal mistakes", and of "submerging oneself in sin, without having to pay the consequences" of the betrayal (Ferré 39). Steiner himself, it is worth noting, "describes the rewriting of one's own original as a narcissistic trial or authentication' that has to do with 'retracing the self', looking to enhance or clarify aspects of an author's own inspiration through reproduction" (Steiner 336). Perez Firmat writes categorically of the doomed prospects for this enterprise, perhaps not without some reason. He maintains that a self-translator "cannot translate into one language his relation with the other", the "associations, burdens, predispositions" of the other tongue (14). Finally, Elin-Maria Evangelista, echoing many commentators, notes the freedoms that an adopted tongue affords on the one hand, yet offers evidence, on the other, that self-translation, a translation of language and selfhood both, is more complex and more problematic than mere addition (178; see also Besemeres 2002).

Translation as renewal

J.W. Goethe places the experience of translation in the words of a poetic self, who likens the pleasure of being translated to plucking a wild flower and keeping it alive, as in K.A. Browning's translation below:

> A Parable
>
> I pick'ed a rustic nosegay lately,
> And bore it homewards, musing greatly;
> When, heated by my hand, I found
> The heads all drooping tow'rd the ground
> I plac'd them in a well-cool'd glass,
> And what a wonder came to pass!
> The heads soon rais'd themselves once more,
> The stalks were blooming as before,
> And all were in as good a case
> As when they left their native place.
> * * * *
> So felt I, when I wond'ring heard
> My song to foreign tongues transferr'd.
>
> (*The Poems of Goethe*, Tr. Browning 234)

Significantly, the flower-poem is imperilled by physical conveyance from its origins, but is saved. The narrator's own hand does not suffice in order to revive the flower; it must be given simulated natural conditions that support life. The conditions of the artificial environment for the transplant (lines 9-10) are deemed to be as good as those of nature[7]; that is, in the algebra of the poem, translations stand for 'the genuine'. Goethe's letters relate the pleasure he took in reading and admiring his work in Gérard de Nerval's French translation of Faust when he tired of reading it in German (*Goethe's Letters* 317n). Sabine Prokhoris offers the insight that Goethe confronted "the most radical form of dispossession that provides access to the poetic essence of language; that shows it to be an endless effort at translation, with, for its starting point, the violent encounter with the untranslatable" (168). Through this struggle, according to Goethe's conception, emerges "the most beautiful metempsychosis: that in which we see ourselves reappear in another" (Prokhoris 168). More than the substance of the other itself, Goethe prized "the encounter" – to borrow Antoine Berman's words – with "that which is opposed to us, as the cultivation of what is antagonistic to our own nature" (Berman 62).

[7] This natural/unnatural contrast is seen more clearly in another translation, found in Goethe's letters to Carl Friedrich Zelter: "And all as healthy, sweet and good, / As though on Mother Earth they stood" (317). The unnumbered footnote indicates that the inspiration for the poem was the 1825 translation into French of *Poésies de Goethe* by Madame Panckoucke. Another translation resonates with Freudian undertones: "All as healthy as if they'd been / On maternal ground" (Prokhoris 169). M. Gray's version of the parabolic poem is emphatically titled "The Song Translated", and ends: "They seemed as fair and full of mirth / As where they grew in mother earth. / I thought of this when I heard sung / My old song new in a foreign tongue" (Gray and Goethe 16). The rendition heightens the dying/reviving motif by counterpoising 'old' and 'new'.

Berman describes Goethe's sense of the effect of translation on a work in terms that highlight the act's organic and symbolic force: "something that refers to the mysteries of the lives of languages", "regeneration", "metamorphosis", "return to the origin", "rejuvenated in the mirror of a foreign language in order to be able to offer its face of wonder to the readers of its mother tongue" (Berman 67). What is striking about Berman's consideration of Goethe is the way in which translation is framed to include the author in its audience. While theorists have considered translation to be a reader's way of making "mental turns that are [foreign]", while also being "amused at being another" (Ortega y Gasset 112), a translation is rarely conceived of as a way for *the author* to renew his or her perspective of the original work from a position that lies (somewhat) outside it. Referencing translations of her own work, Véronique Tadjo argues that translation gives

> […] another chance to the original by allowing it to spread its wings […]. Sometimes it makes me discover the original in a different way […]. I can surprise myself because the translated text reveals any artifice and brings out the hidden narrative. In a sense the process of translation is a deconstruction of the original […] [A] time always comes when I have to withdraw in order to let the text find its coherence and the translator his or her own empathy.
>
> (Tadjo and Batchelor 105-6)

Berman (54) characterises Goethe's perception of himself as a translated author in terms of "an *experience* and never, it would seem, as the narcissistic satisfaction of a writer", and although Goethe presented no comprehensive theory of translation, he had a "view of natural, human, social, and cultural reality [...] based on an interpretation of *Nature* as a process of interaction, participation, reflection, exchange, and metamorphosis" (Berman 54).

Conclusion

Identity in translation undergoes "new emphases, shifts in the textual dominance of textual components of every kind, formal, semantic, generic, intertextual, and/or pragmatic" (Penas Ibañez 51). Yet authors often seek to find themselves in translation, perhaps by employing the same reading approach that naive readers use, namely, expecting to find an essence independent of the quiddities of a given language. The fear that the translation will replace or usurp the identity of the original, or expand and propagate it, derives from a philosophy of translation that posits translation as both outside (a threat or a difference) and inside (a thing bearing one's name and characteristics), a "not-I" that is also an "I", a shared self. Paul Ricoeur complicates this binary in *On Translation*, arguing that we are constituted not by a unitary self but by appropriated otherness. Furthermore, serving as a kind of truce to the tensions of competing selfhoods, he theorises a "linguistic hospitality" that does not exercise any violence upon the "guest"-writer. Ricoeur thereby models an ethics of translation that acknowledges imperfect interaction rather than perfect access and communication.

Much has been written about literature and estrangement with respect to a given work's effect on readers, but far less has been said about the writer's own sense of estrangement – or fulfilment – vis-à-vis the self in the act of rewriting that all translation involves. The writer may view translation as a threat to the original and to his or her identity, or, on the opposite pole, as a transformative, life-extending experience. Here, I have considered some of the forms *being translated* may take, focusing on the psychology of the author as the reader of his or her translated self. Many of the metaphorical vehicles presented here have centred on the individual body and soul, and the aggressions they are subjected to or the alliances to which they are a party. Survival may be the main tenor underlying these metaphors, with flesh and reputation

standing as fragile, malleable correlates of the authorial problem of being in time and space and, through cooperation and competition, being *throughout* it. The importance of translation in the development of the writer points to translation's growing prominence in the writerly consciousness, as authors become increasingly aware of themselves as writing and existing in a globalized world. Indeed, increased critical recognition of the 'translator as writer' construct suggests that translation's secondary status may become more tenuous as time goes by. The writer's voice in the contested or expanded space of literary selfhood attests to translation's ubiquity, complexity, and power.

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Lost Body: The Case of the Missing Christ Child in Nishimoto's Adaptation of *The Selfish Giant*

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Abstract
In 1989, Tokyo-based publisher *Chairudo Honsha* issued *The Selfish Giant* [Wagamamana Kyojin], by Oscar Wilde as the twelfth installment of their illustrated *Children's World Masterpieces* series. It was translated into the Japanese by Nishimoto Keisuke, a well-known translator and children's author in his own right, who retold the Christian-themed fairy tale in a novel way: without the figure of Christ. The central conceit of Wilde's original story involves the revelation of the Christ Child through the appearance of the Stigmata on a young child's hands. However, in Nishimoto's translation *Wagamamana Kyojin*, this symbolism is absent, with the figure of Christ supplanted by that of an 'angelic boy'. The aim of this paper is to examine Nishimoto's use of omission within the context of other illustrated Japanese translations of the story, and to discuss the varied cultural, functional and ethical specificities that may have informed this choice of translation strategy.

Introduction
In 1888, Oscar Wilde, having established himself as a journalist and editor for the women's magazine *The Woman's World,* emerged as a writer of fairy tales and parables with the publication of his collection *The Happy Prince and Other Stories.* The stories found within this collection reflect a clear Christian sentiment and sensibility (Umetsu 2), with one in particular – *The Selfish Giant* – exploiting the potent Christian symbolism of the Stigmata at the very crux of its narrative framework. This story and its translation into Japanese by Nishimoto Keisuke (Japanese name order preserved) will be the focus of this essay, with the arguments put forth here stemming from two relative but fundamental assumptions made in connection with the source text, namely: (1) The revelation of the Christ Child by the Stigmata is the central conceit of the story, and as such is of significant importance, and (2) The displacement of the figure of Christ by a proxy agent represents a 'watering down' of the Christian element.

Nishimoto's translation of Wilde's tale, entitled *Wagamamana Kyojin,* first appeared in 1989 for the *Children's World Masterpieces* (my translation) imprint of Chairudo Honsha Ltd. (currently Chairudo Bukku Ltd), and is noteworthy precisely because the figure of Christ is displaced – in this case, by the more generic and easily recognizable symbolism of an angel:

> ST: And when he came quite close his face grew red with anger, and he said, 'Who hath dared to wound thee?' For on the palms of the child's hands were the prints of two nails, and the prints of two nails were on the little feet. 'Who hath dared to wound thee?' cried the Giant; 'tell me, that I may take my big sword and slay him.' 'Nay!' answered the child; 'but these are the wounds of Love' (Wilde, "Complete Short Fiction" 22).
> TT: きょじんは　おとこのこを　だきしめようと　して、おもわず　てを　とめました。おとこのこは　まるで　てんしのような　きよらかな　すがたを　していたのです (Nishimoto 34). [The giant went to embrace the child, but suddenly his hands stopped still. The boy had completely taken on the appearance of an angel; pure and chaste] (my translation).

Just as Wilde's source text was first published with a frontispiece by Walter Crane, so too is the source text illustrated, but with numerous pictures by Fukuhara Yukio. While the two styles differ considerably, they both appear 'gentle' and aimed at an audience of children.

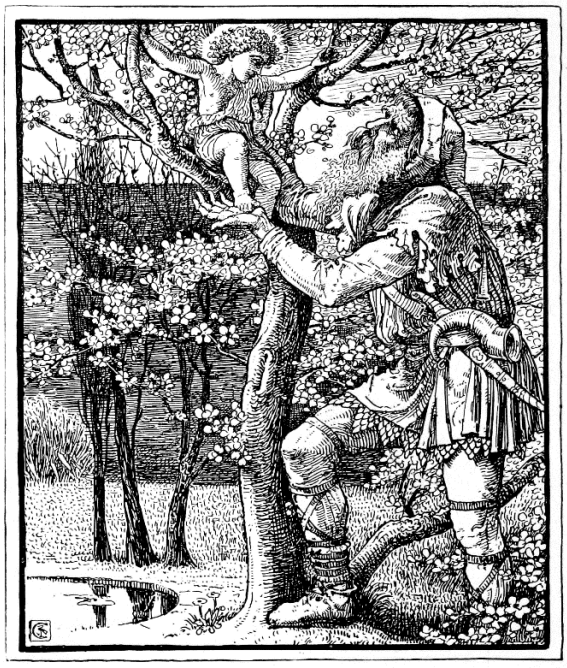

Fig. 1 (Left). Walter Crane. *The Selfish Giant.* 1888. In *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*. By Oscar Wilde. London: David Nutt. 1st ed. Plate 2.

Fig. 2 (Right). Fukuhara Yukio. *Untitled illustration.* 1989. In *Wagamamana kyojin* [*The Selfish Giant*]. By Oscar Wilde (Trans. Keisuke Nishimoto). Tokyo: Chairudo Honsha. 1989. P. 37

The publisher, in response to my inquiry (see Appendix), states that the target demographic of the target text is 4 to 5 year-old children, and as such, certain concessions have been made. Although it is evidently a retelling and a retranslation, the syntax, expression and overall length are comparable to the original. There are, however, a number of minor omissions; for instance, there is no mention of the Cornish ogre in Nishimoto's rendition, nor has Nishimoto rendered many of Wilde's anthropomorphisms. These considerations aside**,** the purpose of this paper is to examine Nishimoto's omission of Christ, as a departure from other illustrated Japanese translations of the story,[1] and to discuss the varied cultural, functional and ethical factors that may have informed this choice of translation strategy.

[1] Wilde, Oscar. *Koufuku no ouji* [The Happy Prince and other Tales] (Trans. Kouji Nishimura). Tokyo: Shinchosha, 1968.
Wilde, Oscar. *Wagamamana ootoko* [The Selfish Giant]. (Trans. Tarou Kitamura). Tokyo: Fuzanbou, 1987.
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Wilde, Oscar. *Wagamamana kyojin* [The Selfish Giant]. (Trans. Hiroshi Yuki). 2000. http://www.hyuki.com/trans/selfish.html.

History

Oscar Wilde had a long and difficult personal relationship with Christianity, which eventually saw him convert to Catholicism on his deathbed (Quintus). The importance of this relationship should not be understated, especially with regard to the way in which Christian themes inform the stories in The Happy Prince and Other Stories (Umetsu 2). While his relationship was never strictly orthodox – Quintus (1) suggests that "instead of rejecting Christianity, Wilde modified it to suit his own needs" – a number of researchers have made a point of mentioning his life-long fascination with the religion, and particularly the figure of Christ (Umetsu 7).

This certainly seems apparent in *The Selfish Giant*, but it also appears odd that Wilde should depict the complex and violent religious symbolism of the Stigmata in a children's story, unless, of course, the story was not aimed at children in the first place. While fairy tales from the nineteenth century were commonly violent (in contrast to the children's stories written today), Wilde's inclusion of the Stigmata was likely a unique case in Victorian children's literature. Upon the release of *The Happy Prince and Other Stories*, Alexander Ross (brother of Wilde's literary executor, Robert Ross) observed in the *Saturday Review* (Beckson 57) that "Mr Oscar Wilde, no doubt for excellent reasons, has chosen to present his fables in the form of fairy tales to a public which, though it should count among its numbers most persons who can appreciate delicate humour and an artistic literary manner, will assuredly not be composed of children." In fact, in response to a review of the later *The House of Pomegranates*, Wilde stated indirectly that he was scant interested in pleasing the British child (Kaylor 360). In 1989, Tokyo-based publisher *Chairudo Honsha* issued the twelfth installment of its illustrated *Children's World Masterpieces* series, *The Selfish Giant/Wagamamana Kyojin* by Oscar Wilde. With regard to the source text, we can safely assume from the above comments that Wilde's intended audience was composed of adults. But this was not uncommon at the time Wilde was writing, as Wall explains in *The Narrator's Voice: The Dilemma of Children's Fiction.* Wall states that this phenomenon, whereby the author writes mainly for the adult 'listening in', was the "prevailing mode used by writers (of children's literature) in the Victorian era" (9). As for the target text, *Chairudo Bukku Ltd* clearly states that the book was aimed at 4 to 5-year-old children, but upon inquiry as to whether they believed the Stigmata was too violent an image for children, they replied:

> *Depending on the manner in which it is drawn, we don't necessarily feel that it's violent, but for children with no knowledge of Christianity, we don't think they'll understand what it is (for this book's target age group of 4-5-year-old children we felt that this would be the case.) This book being a picture book, we intended it from the beginning to be an abridged translation, leaving out anything we thought young children would have difficulty understanding* (see Appendix).

Bearing this in mind, Nishimoto's omission of Christ and the Stigmata can perhaps be better understood by discussing the functional characteristics that govern the target text (i.e. what were Nishimoto and the publisher trying to achieve with their translation?). This line of reasoning will be further expanded upon under the section titled 'Skopos'.

A Cultural Perspective

Nishimoto may have had good reason to do away with Christ on cultural grounds. According to recent government statistics (Japanese Ministry of Culture 35), people living in Japan who identify as Christian make up only 1.6 percent of the population. While this statistic alone only tells part of the story, it does serve as a general indicator of the level of Christian knowledge an 'average' Japanese may possess. In contrast, certain Christian holidays such as Christmas are highly visible events (though not officially recognized) on the Japanese cultural calendar.

However, as Kimura and Belk (1) point out, Christmas in Japan is often secular, lacking in any Christian meaning, and readily aided by foreign multi-nationals such as KFC, Disney, Visa, etc. While Christ remains a very well-known figure in Japan – appearing alongside Buddha in the popular manga series and film *Seinto Oniisan* [Saint Young Men] (Trans: Nakamura Hikaru), for instance – it does not necessarily follow that the historical or Biblical Jesus is known to the same extent. The crucifixion may be well recognized, but in all likelihood the Stigmata are not, outside of Christian private schools and church groups.

This clearly presents a problem for any Japanese translator of Wilde's story. From this perspective, substituting the Christ Child for an 'angelic boy' could surely be expedient, if simply to avoid the problematic Stigmata. Nevertheless, it still seems unlikely that Nishimoto replaced Christ *solely* because he felt the Stigmata placed unreasonable demands on the child reader. A quick look at some other translations (two illustrated and aimed at an audience of children) show that Nishimoto's approach was unusual, with Wilde's central metaphor repeatedly reproduced at a word-for-word level elsewhere:

> ST: "'Nay!' answered the child; 'but these are the wounds of Love.'" (Wilde, "Complete Short Fiction" 22)
> TTa: 「いけないよ！」その子供は答えました。「だってこれは愛の傷なんだもの」(Nishimura 49) ["You mustn't!", answered the child. "For these are the wounds of love."] (my translation) *Target audience: not stated.*
> TTb: 「いや、そうではないのだよ。」それは、子どもの声ではない、すきとおった、しずかな声でした。「そうではなくて、これはみな愛のきずなんのだ。」(Nakayama 99) ["No, you don't understand". The voice was not of a child, but soft and crystal clear. "That's not it. These are all wounds of love."] (my translation) *NB: Nakayama's translation was completed under Nishimoto's supervision. Target audience: 6 to 12-year-old primary school children.*
> TTc: 「いけません！」と男の子はこたえました。「だって、これは愛のきずなのですから」(Kitamura 20) ["You mustn't!", answered the boy. "For these are the wounds of love."] (my translation). *Target audience: 6 to 12-year-old primary school children.*
> TTd: 「そうではない！」その子は答えました。 「これは愛の傷なのだよ」(Yuki) ["You don't understand!", answered the child. "These are the wounds of love."] (my translation) *Target audience: not stated.*

There are no extra or intratextual strategic glosses (Franco Aixela 66) to aid understanding in any of the above translations, and it is unlikely that many Japanese children without a certain level of Christian knowledge would understand the complex symbolism, whether pre-school or primary-aged. But while the existence of certain target-culture norms may be a compelling reason for the disappearance of Christ, the publisher suggests it was more of an ethical consideration:

> *Our company sells picture books to both kindergartens and nursery Schools. We try as much as possible to avoid putting out texts of a particular religious slant, as the religious nature of these institutions vary, from Buddhist, Shinto, Christian, etc.* (see Appendix).

Skopos

From the late 1970s, a number of translation theorists (including Justa Holz-Mäntärri, Christiane Nord, Katharina Reiss, and Hans J Vermeer) advocated approaching translation as

an action primarily governed by a purpose (Skopos) or function (Vermeer 191). They reasoned that by asking what the text was trying to achieve, for whom it was written and for what purpose the translation serves, translators may shift their focus away from the primacy of the source text and onto the needs of their target audiences. Translators can then make appropriate choices regarding which translation strategies are most suitable for any given audience. This idea is significant when discussing both Nishimoto's rendition and Wilde's source text. As discussed above, Wilde's "ambivalent text" (Shavit 63) appears to have been written almost exclusively for a readership of adults, however it is difficult to define the purpose of his story with any certainty. Some critics (Aoife Bryne, Jarlath Killeen and others) have suggested The Selfish Giant is an allegorical capitalist critique (Bryne 91) – a theme Wilde would later explore in his essay "The Soul of a Man Under Socialism" (23-54) – which seems reasonable given its more overt theme on the virtues of selflessness. To understand the purpose that guided Nishimoto, it is first necessary to identify the agents involved in and around his translation, for translators do not often have complete autonomy and generally must negotiate the terms of the translation within a larger network of agents. Nord (20) argues that the main players involved in the process of translation are the initiator and the translator, with the former specifying the purpose for which the target text will be used. Here, then, the role of initiator is filled by Chairudo Honsha Ltd – a publisher of children's picture books and educational materials (http://www.childbook.co.jp) – with the role of translator belonging to Nishimoto. Chairudo Bukku Ltd, upon inquiry, stated that they likely requested from Nishimoto a translation which didn't depict any one particular religion (and as mentioned previously, was intended for an audience of 4 to 5-year-old children):

> *I can no longer clearly remember the time the book was produced, but when we first approached Mr Nishimoto to translate the story, we probably asked him to not to produce a specifically religious version* (see Appendix).

Now, in light of the fact the source text was clearly not composed with primarily children in mind (see ***History***), and in following a translation commission for a target text specifically intended for children (i.e. easy to understand and divested of any violent elements), Nishimoto's changes seem to perfectly reflect the needs of his particular target text audience – at least in terms of function, and as far as contractual obligations extend. The moral lesson of selflessness in Wilde's story also remains intact – a lesson which is arguably the main purpose of both the source and target texts.

Ethics

Certainly, many varied ethical values collide and compete to influence the outcome of any translation undertaken. At the very least, the ethics of the translator, both personal and professional, in dialogue with the values and professional practices of a publisher will shape an end translation product. Depending on the training and relevant education of the translator, certain ethics proposed by academics working within the discipline may also hold sway. But this model is limited. There must necessarily be at least as many ethical positions as there are active agents involved in the translation process. Riitta Oittinen (35) considers that "the situation of translation also involves the patronage, which – or who – act outside the literary system, such as powerful individuals (Elizabeth I in Shakespeare's England) or powerful groups of people such as publishers, the media, a political class or party". It would follow that, due to their influence, their ethics would no doubt be better represented. With regard to Nishimoto's translation, we know from the publisher's response (see Appendix) that their particular position concerning religious representation was probably the major factor in his decision to replace the Christ-child, but how did this and other factors reason in to his decision?

Andrew Chesterman, in his essay Proposal for a Hieronymic Oath (139) describes four different models of translation ethics that he feels sum up the many and varied ethical perspectives translators currently hold. These are an Ethics of representation, Ethics of service, Ethics of communication, and Norm-based ethics. To each of these he assigns a different ethical value: Truth, loyalty, understanding, and trust, respectively.

Ethics of representation: Chesterman (139) suggests that these ethics represent a desire to render a target text as an unmodified, unadulterated version of the source text "without adding, omitting or changing anything" (139). Generally, we can assume that most translators seek to 'sincerely' represent a given source to the greatest extent they can under any given constraints, but without comment by Nishimoto we can only refer to the publisher's position regarding direct representation (see above) in this instance, regardless of what Nishimoto may or may not have felt toward his omission.

Ethics of service: Chesterman (140) states that this model is concerned with a translator's loyalty to his or her client (but also audience). As mentioned under ***Skopos*** above, Nishimoto had an obligation to fulfill his commission according to his client's wishes – a translation suitable for a children's picture book. There is little doubt that his professional ethics were a major influence in the omission, and indeed in all aspects of his translation.

Ethics of communication: From the point of view of translation as a communicative act, this model is concerned with profitable communication between the main parties involved: the author, translator and reader. Chesterman invokes "cross cultural understanding" (141), later suggesting that for him, this *understanding* is the highest value that should guide translators (152). While there is little chance a young Japanese child could understand the symbolism of the Stigmata, the figure of an angel would be easily recognized by most Japanese elementary school aged children. This model clearly reflects the publisher's statement:

> *This book being a picture book, we intended it from the beginning to be an abridged translation, leaving out anything we thought young children would have difficulty understanding* (see Appendix).

Here, both translator and publisher presumably held very similar values to those represented in Chesterman's model, and it is reasonable to suggest that they strongly influenced Nishimoto's adaptation.

Norm-based ethics: These ethics emphasize the role of the reader. Chesterman (141) explains how they reflect expectations of what *translation products* should look like. They may be governed by culture, genre, or other constructs. Although violence (in this case, the wounds on the child's hands) is common in many fairy tales and parables (Tatar 3), explicit Christian symbolism is definitely not a common feature of Japanese children's stories. Again, both translator and publisher were no doubt aware of these norms, and quite possibly acted to preserve them.[2]

Conclusion

To excise the image of Christ from a Christian-themed fairy tale by a writer for whom Christ held a special fascination (Umetsu 7) would surely be considered drastic and imprudent by many writers, readers, translators, and of course Christians. However, Nishimoto's decision, when "mirrored against the total situation of language, culture and translators as professionals and human beings" (Oittinen 35), starts to appear rather matter-of-fact. The sheer distance between cultures alone necessarily engenders seemingly drastic translation strategies, but given

[2] It is important to note that these models are only a summary of the various positions translators may hold, and should not be considered exhaustive, although they are helpful to understand in a general comparison how Nishimoto and the publisher's own ethical considerations may have come to influence their target text.

the many practical and ethical issues that translators must consider, it comes as no surprise that stories change considerably when they travel across borders. From the historical context, we can see that Wilde's purported capitalist critique was plainly intended for an audience of adults, although the main message of sharing and selflessness is universal and can easily be understood by children. It is because of this universal moral lesson that it will most likely remain a popular choice for translators with younger target audiences in mind, and will perhaps undergo further revisions just as radical as Nishimoto's. Although it may be difficult to describe his effort as a 'faithful representation' or 'true to the original', Nishimoto's translation is sensible and immediately comprehensible for a readership of young Japanese children. It also demonstrates how he, together with the publisher Chairudo Honsha Ltd, considered the gulf between his readership and Wilde's story, and acted accordingly in the interests of clarity. Many forces act on translators, and "every time texts are translated they take on a new language, a new culture, new readers, and a new point of view" (Oittinen 35). This intercultural communication, when successful, creates new common ground and new dialogues between people. This is surely something to be encouraged.

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Note: During the writing of this essay I contacted Chairudo Bukku Ltd to ask if they would comment on the translation Nishimoto provided them. I have reproduced their generous reply here. Their answers to the questions I posed were both relevant and insightful, and provide some concrete answers to a number of the questions posed by this essay. The original language of our exchange was Japanese but in the interests of concision, I have decided to attach only my translation of it here as an Appendix. I will also omit my initial inquiry to the company on the same grounds, but as Mr Kawamoto incorporates my questions into his reply this should not be an issue.

Appendix: Response from Chairudo Bukku Ltd

March 5th, 2016

(As both the staff responsible for, and in charge of this picture book at the time of production are no longer with us, I can only answer to the extent of what we currently know about the book.)

1) *Why did we replace Christ with an angel?*
   Our company sells picture books to both kindergartens and nursery Schools. We try as much as possible to avoid putting out texts of a particular religious slant, as the religious nature of these institutions vary, from Buddhist, Shinto, Christian, etc. (For Japanese, we believe the term 'angel' sounds less specifically religious than the name of 'Christ'.) Furthermore, in our version of the tale, we used the phrase "taken on the form of an angel" which doesn't specifically denote an "angel", just as in the original story Christ is not explicitly mentioned. It was not so much our intention to "replace Christ with an angel" or to "change the story" as it was to depict the little boy who foreshadows Christ, in the form of an angel in a way that Japanese children could understand.

2) *Did we feel the Stigmata was too violent for children? Or too difficult to understand?*
   Depending on the manner in which it is drawn, we don't necessarily feel that it's violent, but for children with no knowledge of Christianity, we don't think they'll understand what it is (for this book's target age group of 4–5-year-old children we felt that this would be the case.) This book being a picture book, we intended it from the beginning to be an abridged translation, leaving out anything we thought young children would have difficulty understanding.

3) *How the decision was made to replace Christ with an angel.*
   I can no longer clearly remember the time the book was produced, but when we first approached Mr Nishimoto to translate the story, we probably asked him to not to produce a specifically religious version.

   Kawamoto Kenji
   Second Editing Department
   Chairudo Bukku Ltd.

A Conversation with Tim Parks: Global Literature and Translation

KYLIE DOUST
La Trobe University

Tim Parks was born in England, studied at Cambridge and Harvard and has lived in Verona (Italy) since 1981. He is known across the world under three different guises. In Italy he is recognised as a Professor of Literary Translation and Technical Translation at the prestigious Independent University of Modern Languages (IULM) and a brilliant critic of translated English fiction. Across Europe, his works have led him to critical acclaim, with his novel *Europa* shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize in 1997. In the US, he is an outspoken critic of translated Italian works for the *New York Review of Books* and is considered an expert on Italy and Italian culture. He has written 17 novels, 13 works of non-fiction and most interestingly for readers of *The AALITRA Review*, he has translated some of Italy's most prestigious authors including Alberto Moravia, Italo Calvino, Antonio Tabucchi, Niccolò Machiavelli, Giacomo Leopardi and Roberto Calasso. His work as a translator, author, professor and critic in two languages make him a perfect subject with which to discuss the topic of 'global literature'. This interview took place on the 3rd of September, 2016 at Monash University following a Master Class held by Tim Parks on the topic *Global Literature and Translation.* He was visiting Melbourne as guest of the Melbourne Writer's Festival.

Kylie Doust (KD): I am very interested in this concept of the globalization of literature. I worked as the Literary Agent for Niccolò Ammaniti [a contemporary, Italian author translated into more than 40 languages] for over ten years and I had the opportunity to see different publishers around the world and how they reacted to his texts. I found that, despite the fact that his books seem simple and by that I meant that he's good at making things easily understandable –

Tim Parks (TP): Simplicity at a stylistic level can be part of complexity. What interests me is that it is not so much about how good or bad the book might be, but that there are other factors at work such that they cause a kind of natural selection. Books of a certain kind, regardless of how good or not good they are, are going to get more exposure. Sometimes it is because the books are easily translatable.

KD: I found that in the translation of *Come Dio comanda* into Scandinavian languages there was a common problem. The first sentence was "Cazzo. Svegliati, cazzo!" [literally: "Fuck. Wake up, fuck!"] and the Scandinavian languages tend not to use swear words. During an event in Ammaniti's honour at the Italian Cultural Institute of Oslo in 2007, the Norwegian translator, Birgit Owe Svihus, spoke at length about her difficulty in maintaining the aggressive tone without having a suitable option in Norwegian. So even though the book is more accessible it felt…

TP: It might have a bit of impact. One of the problems of course is that Italians swear at slightly different moments and use slightly different kinds of swear words. You just can't find a way to give that kind of emphasis, I've seen that go on. And vice versa. If you think of the number of times the English introduce "fucking" as an adverb in the middle of sentence structures.

KD: My feeling is that while globalization moves forwards it also moves sideways as well because the natural selection process can overcome some hurdles but others will always remain.

TP: Actually, the mistake is to imagine that a certain kind of communication is going on. As I see it, what you've got is: new readers appropriating a text and putting it out there and it's different, it's a product. You don't create a great deal more communication in terms of syntax and content. What you begin to create is a public who will read the same things and so they can talk to each other because they move in the same world. The public rhetoric is that you translate greatness and other people absorb it and are enriched by it. It may be that that happens to a certain extent, but that is not why there is this phenomenon. This phenomenon is happening [in order] to create an international community (which is not that big). What about the actual quality of the literature? As you can see by looking at some of the people that win the Nobel Prize or the Booker Prize – you can see it's more a question of having an object that, for its political or ideological content, or its topical interest in relation to the country it's coming from, can be dropped into the international conversation. If you've got some fantastically precious book which talks about whichever particular Kenyan tribe and how it reacts to a certain event it's just not going to sell, no matter how good the book is for Kenyan people. I deeply object to the notion that a book will reach out to everybody. I think the idea that everybody has to like it because it's good is a disaster. Because, who is everybody? Does that include all the guys who never read a book anyway?

KD: And because also, often good books take time to –

TP: – acquire a different audience at different times.

KD: If they're challenging what people know about literature it can take years –

TP: It's all the windy rhetoric blowing around literature that obscures the nature of what's going on. And the nature of what's going on is so interesting. We went to a translation seminar recently where we were discussing these issues and the chairperson said: nobody actually looks at or wants to look at the exact correspondence to quality translation anymore because what matters is getting the books out there into all these countries. It's really not what matters to me but it might be what matters to some in an overarching agenda.

KD: That was another interesting thing that I found – that you mentioned that one Italian publisher, you didn't specify which but I can imagine, found that Italian readers were not affected by the quality of a translation.

TP: We've got the Goldstein [Ann Goldstein, English translator of Elena Ferrante and Primo Levi] example there, which shows that the same thing happens. There are loads of miserable translations out there but it's the content that makes the difference. The Goldstein translation was basically exotic and gives people the feeling that they are reading something else that is stranger than they've ever heard. There are loads of bad translations around. I don't mind reading a bad translation if the book is interesting, but I know it's a bad translation. Publishers are right about the Italians: there are loads of bad translations and the books did very well.

KD: Well, now they appear to choose the translator that costs the least.

TP: But also translators are agreeing to work for awful money.

KD: I used to believe that we needed to introduce a union for the translators in Italy, like in Norway.

TP: One hears this stuff all the time. There are reasons why, in a country like Holland or Germany, you can impose this stuff. It's never going to work in Italy. Why? Because it's generally understood that you get the work you get through a system of relationships and contacts and because then what matters to you is your contact with the people giving you the work on a human basis and you will never go against that by uniting against them. So unionization in Italy would only work there where the job is not considered to be given out in that way. Factory workers, for example. But even inside the university system, they've never really managed to get the unions to have that much bite because they worry about whoever is

protecting them. The thing that really prevents translators from being protected is that the Italians are never going to stop working for nothing.

KD: With the ease of communication today, one would expect that translators could collaborate more directly with authors to find working solutions for their books. Yet in my experience this doesn't happen a lot.

TP: No, it doesn't happen a lot. There are reasons why it doesn't happen a lot and it has to do with the whole psychology. I myself kept away from authors as much as possible. One of the problems, particularly with English, is that the author always knows enough English to *think* they understand. Calasso [Roberto Calasso, Italian author and editorial director of Adelphi Publishing House in Milan] was an unusual case there. Calasso was very good because he knew when I'd made a semantic error but he realized that I knew a lot more than him about British style and about how to put prose into English. In general, if a translator feels they've really understood the original there is no reason why they should be contacting the author. Of course, if the author can read the language like I can read Italian, it can be very useful just for pointing out mistakes. There are authors like Umberto Eco or Gunter Grass who will gather together all their translators. I always felt like it was just holding court.

KD: I saw that happening once at the Frankfurt Book fair. These famous authors would sit there surrounded by their publishers and translators and it did look like they were holding court and I feel that it was their way of propagating their own fame, and like Eco, they managed to make a career out of it.

TP: Why did they propagate it? They propagated it because once they'd been canon they had made it. The whole thing about holding court is that some people want to sit around a court. I would turn it down. If parts of a translation are difficult, we can figure them out. My translators will usually write and ask me a few questions. The Dutch translator was incredibly diligent. She sent me six pages of comments. She's very good at finding mistakes.

KD: Translators love to point out mistakes.

TP: I'm all for that. I wish she'd told me before I'd published it. I'll tell you what I think should be done. For example, when books are "fuori diritti" [out of copyright] – suddenly all these editors rush to publish their version of the book which is now past copyright, but nobody actually seems to work on the translation. If, instead, the publishers just paid for the translators to spend just one day with someone like me, where I explain, "Look, this is what this paragraph is doing…". Then it's up to the translator to figure out the solution. You look at the different translations of *The Great Gatsby* and you just get the feeling that these translators just didn't realize what was at stake.

I think that translations would best be improved by having publishers that are genuinely aware that this is a part we need to pay attention to. We don't need to necessarily pay the translators more but they should pay them to be in contact with someone that can really make a difference.

KD: That's something I find myself in agreement with. I used to find, when I would read books translated from Australian English into Italian, that no-one had even thought of talking to an Australian to work out the difference in the language.

TP: Isn't that unbelievable?

KD: They would just say. "I don't know what that means so, I'll ask an American". And an American wouldn't necessarily have any idea of what it meant either. Your American publishers try and force you to Americanize everything so that the American public –

TP: They don't try, they force you. You can argue your point – I remember I argued my point with the difference between "carriages" and "cars". I just said: "Look, it's such a different syllable length and I hear my sentences when I write them". If we just automatically used a "search" and "change" some of the sentences would sound wrong.

KD: It's not even that hard as a concept. In your whole discussion about this, minority English language speakers such as Canada, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand do not even figure.
TP: For you it's a big issue, I guess, because when you are translating into English you are thinking, "Am I translating for Australians or for all English readers?"
KD: No Australian publisher can really afford to do a translation unless the cost of the translation is shared with other English language publishers, usually British or American.
TP: You know that, when I was translating Calasso, for example, I managed to translate *The Marriage of Cadmus* – that's 120 pages – without ever using the past participle of got. It just has to be international. So, obviously, there are many other issues but I think that's fine that we try. You know it is bad when we're reading American translations and they sound like they're American. Of course the Americans would very rarely make these kinds of concessions because they're dominant. It's not because they're stupid or "cattivi" [mean], it's just because they have the upper hand.
KD: My feeling is that they're scared, they really are scared that anything foreign will scare off the reader.
TP: You're absolutely right. But surely you read a little bit to learn.
KD: And to have a sense of a different country.
TP: For example, I wrote a novel and the title was *Cara Massimina* in English but in America they wouldn't accept that. They picked up something in the text and called it *Juggling the Stars*, which is a terrible title.
KD: Before we finish I wanted to ask you for a heartfelt piece of advice for Australian translators. Do they have to fight for the right to translate and get their translations published?
TP: If they're translating they've been commissioned to translate. The two things are very [interesting and] different. If you've been commissioned to translate, the publisher will have told you what will be required; you're being paid to do something. I was always working with the knowledge that it would be read in the UK and in America. I would work hard and there were a few markers that are particularly important and I would fix them and it was never a problem for me. I don't know enough about Australian English – but obviously the more markers the language has, the more the problem develops. We don't even realize how different things are. I was amazed when the American editors edited *Italian Ways*, because they changed a whole bunch of things, particularly adverbial positions, which felt really weird to me. I thought: "I've been reading American books with these adverbial positions without ever noticing it".

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Review of *Invisible Planets: Contemporary Chinese Science Fiction in Translation* (trans. Ken Liu)

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Invisible Planets: Contemporary Chinese Science Fiction in Translation.
Translated by Ken Liu. New York: Tor Books, 2016.

The introduction to Ken Liu's translated volume, *Invisible Planets* (2016) is titled "China Dreams". Here, Liu indicates that "the phrase 'China Dreams' is in fact a play on President Xi Jinping's promotion of the 'Chinese Dream' as a slogan for China's development", used here because "science fiction is the literature of dreams". As in any literary culture, the imaginative possibilities of science are given a voice in science fiction. This is not the first such anthology of Chinese science fiction to be translated into English; *Science Fiction from China* (Murphy xxxiv) first appeared in 1989 (Praeger Press), edited by Patrick D. Murphy. It featured translations of well-known stories such as Tong Enzheng's "Death Ray on Coral Island" and Ye Yonglie's "Reap as You Have Sown".; these authors were, at the time, two of the most eminent science fiction writers in China. In the introduction of Murphy's volume, Wu Dingbo (Shanghai International Studies University) painted a rather bleak picture of the cultural position in which science fiction had found itself by the end of the 1980s in China. Writers complained that readers were not "scientifically literate" enough to appreciate their works, while readers blamed authors for their poor writing abilities and critics blamed writers for favouring scientific content over literary craft.

Today, however, there is a renewed, popular interest in Chinese-language science fiction in China, and the genre is attracting increased attention from abroad. Thus, the publication of Ken Liu's *Invisible Planets* could hardly have come at a better time. Liu is responsible for all of the translations presented in the work. A science fiction writer himself (in English), Liu is a native of China's Lanzhou province, but a long-time resident of Boston. He has contributed significantly to the popularization of Chinese-language science fiction in the West over the last fifteen years; his most famous work is a translation of Liu Cixin's trilogy *Diqiu Wangshi*, translated as *The Remembrance of Earth's Past* (Liu, 2008, 2015, 2016). The first volume, *The Three-Body Problem*, won a Hugo award, which is the first such international accolade for a piece of Chinese science fiction.

Most striking is Ken Liu's summation of science fiction as a literary genre in the Chinese context. In the introduction to *Invisible Planets,* Liu suggests that attempting to define Chinese science fiction is as absurd as trying to find an essential definition for Anglophone science fiction. He points out, moreover, that the diversity of themes in Chinese-language science fiction works is equal to that of the English genre: if we cannot pin down what makes Anglophone science fiction inherently "English" or "American" etc., how can one neatly distinguish it from Chinese science fiction? It is from this premise that Liu seeks to display the thematic and stylistic variety of the genre by presenting an array of short stories and essays from some of the major contributors to the current Chinese science fiction scene.

Crucially, the volume features two short stories and an essay from Liu Cixin. In addition to earning high praise from many western critics, Liu Cixin is responsible for exposing science fiction to a more mainstream Chinese audience. In his essay, he discusses the effect of *The Remembrance of Earth's Past* on Chinese culture, particularly young readers, mainstream literary critics and science popularizers. Interestingly, he seems to dismiss the interpretation of

his work as reflecting a particularly Chinese view of the world, adding that "the China of the present is a bit like America during science fiction's Golden Age". His first piece, *The Circle*, is a historical allegory of scientific progress and politics, which describes how the latter can bring the former to a halt. His second piece, *Taking Care of God*, could be described as a critique of filial piety, played out on a more cosmic scale.

Chen Qiufan has also submitted an essay and short stories to the volume. Born in the 1980s, Chen is primarily concerned with the many social contradictions faced by his generation, and his essay aims to situate contemporary science fiction within this context. In the introduction he provides, he writes as a representative for a generation of young science-fiction-reading Chinese, first attracted to the genre because of the rapid economic changes brought about by Deng Xiaoping in the 1980s. Science fiction, for him, has an important role to play in providing an imaginative language through which the current generation can express this sense of social, spatial and economic change. I particularly enjoyed the variety of Chen's work; he is, in translation, one of the most promising current Chinese science fiction authors. One of his three stories, "The Year of the Rat", features a platoon of soldiers who live in a dystopian future where they are at war with "Neorats" or *xinshu*, a play on the Chinese term for mice, *laoshu*, which translates literally as "old mice". This reveals one of the difficulties of translating science fiction ideas from Chinese, where it is not always clear whether to embellish the foreignness of made-up terms, or to localize them, as wordplay often depends on the semantic idiosyncrasies of the characters rather than cultural difference. In Liu Cixin's *Taking Care of God*, the Chinese source text includes the term *shangdi*, which is often translated as "God". But this traditional term means, more specifically, a "higher deity"; an idea now often conflated with the Christian "God". The employment of this term in the target text is slightly different; the deities are referred to as *zhe shangdi*, *you banye kesou* (this god was coughing all night…), *women shi shangdi* (We are gods), or *tamen queshi shangdi* (they really were gods) and so on. Given the vagaries of singularization and pluralization in Chinese, Ken Liu uniformly translates the term using the capitalized singular "God", with the above-mentioned phrases translated respectively as "God was coughing all night", "We are God" and "the Gods really were God". The nominalized, monotheistic form, makes the existence of a higher alien being living in human surroundings seem as odd and inexpressible as it should be.

Another story worth mentioning is Ma Boyong's *The City of Silence*, an explicitly Orwellian tale about freedom of expression. The piece is set in contemporary New York, where physical interactions and emotions, even the utterance of curse words, can cause one to be immediately locked away by the state. The title references American folk duo Simon and Garfunkel's *The Sound of Silence* (1964), and the Chinese original opens with the English lyrics, left untranslated for the Chinese reader (In Chinese, the *Sound of Silence* and *City of Silence*, *jijing zhi sheng* and *jijing zhi cheng*, rhyme with each other). However, Ken Liu's translation leaves this allusion up to the reader. Rather than translating this familiar song and setting for the English reader, he makes the story's setting more ambivalent, adding a brief paragraph about its timing, the year 2046, and "the State" which "needed no name" in which it is set, rather than New York. For Liu, the issue appears to be the preservation of foreignness in the translation where it is necessary for literary effect. In the source text, for example, one character elaborates on the censorship of the English term "politics" in all its forms, which includes the Chinese equivalent *zheng*. In the English translation, however, Ken Liu retains this Chinese character *zheng* (for politics), rendered as "政-itics", making the cultural and historical context of this story even less anglicized and less certain. It achieves something equivalent to the estrangement of an English language song in the Chinese source text.

The volume also features translations of Xia Jia's work (science fiction author and scholar at Xi'an Jiaotong University, in Shaanxi province), ending with her essay "What makes Chinese Science Fiction Chinese?", a question which Ken Liu cites, in the introduction, as

somewhat problematic. Her preoccupation with Chinese-ness reveals itself in her three stories, particularly the emphasis on Chinese folklore or mythical imagery, which do not in and of themselves relate to science fiction themes. As the final piece to be featured in this book, the essay feels somewhat out of place, particularly given Xia Jia's view that Western science fiction draws from the West's historical experience, while arguing that Chinese science fiction "can be read as a national allegory in the age of globalization". This description somewhat misrepresents science fiction's place in China's modern literary history by essentializing its Chinese-ness, rather than recognising it as a tradition inspired by, and consistently drawing from, the translations of original works by foreign authors. She describes science fiction in China as a consistent teleological enterprise across a century of historical change, rather than one which waned and flourished alongside other genres of modern Chinese literature.

Across the anthology, Ken Liu's lucid and unassuming translation style allows the reader to observe the thematic diversity within this genre of Chinese writing. The anthology, above all, shows that the emergence of science fiction in China should be acknowledged as a growing literary and cross-cultural phenomenon.

Review of Two Novels by Yuri Herrera (trans. Lisa Dillman)

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Yuri Herrera. *The Transmigration of Bodies and Signs Preceding the End of the World*. Translated by Lisa Dillman. Melbourne: Text, 2016.

———. *Señales que precederán al fin del mundo.* Cáceres: Editorial Periférica, 2010.

———. *La transmigración de los cuerpos*. Cáceres: Editorial Periférica, 2013.

Signs Preceding the End of the World and *The Transmigration of Bodies*, both translated by Lisa Dillman and published together in a single volume by Text, are Yuri Herrera's first two novels to appear in English, although his debut novel, *Trabajos del reino* (2005) (*Kingdom Cons*, Penguin, 2017 and also translated by Dillman) has already earned him some recognition in the Spanish-speaking world. All three of his novels are short (around 25,000 words a piece, at a glance), revolving around protagonist heroes deeply engaged with the complexities of communication and connection in violent environments. His writing in Spanish is characterised by a concentrated lyricism based on – but not completely representative of – colloquial Mexican language, artfully reshaped until it attains poetic depth and power.

Signs follows Makina on her journey across a border and into an unnamed foreign land in order to deliver a message from her mother to her long lost brother. She is a central figure in her community in Little Town, the only one who speaks "native tongue", "latin tongue" and "anglo" in her work at the phone switchboard and, occasionally, as a messenger for the local heavies. She is strong, intelligent and self-sufficient without ever seeming invulnerable, which is key to the sense of tension maintained throughout her nine-stage quest to reconnect with her kin. This nine-chapter structure echoes the legendary Nahua underworld Mictlan, where a deceased soul must overcome nine challenges in order to rest in peace, and its use as an intertextual reference is indicative of the intercultural framework supporting Herrera's wonderful novel: the Mictlan legend is just one of a host of disparate intertexts which guide both the construction and reception of Makina's story, without providing keys for any "definitive" interpretation. Herrera does not hide his sources, but at the same time retains impressively independent control of his material, using both similarity with, and departure from, his reference points to construct a rich and suggestive text. If, as I believe, *Signs Preceding the End of the World* is a masterpiece, it is partly because it is both deeply embedded in multiple cultures and strikingly unique.

This combination of recognisability and unmistakeable particularity, along with its themes of border-crossing, language-switching, and intercultural relations, makes the novel both an ideal candidate for translation and a unique challenge for the translator. Makina lives and functions between cultures, and yet while the afore-mentioned ideas form the guiding themes of the novel, words such as "migration", "translation", "transculturation", and "colonialism" are all conspicuously absent from the text. The novel's exploration of each of these topics is never schematic but always personal; they are not intellectualized, but felt in the characters' flesh – particularly Makina's – and, consequently, the reader's. The language of the original reflects this, using a markedly Mexican Spanish (including a large helping of Anglicisms such as "troca", meaning "truck") peppered with highly polysemic neologisms,

the most important of which is “jarchar”, meaning “to leave” in the context of the novel, but derived from “jarcha”, meaning a verse written in Mozarabic – ancestor language to Spanish – used in Arabic and Hebrew poetry in medieval Iberia. Dillman, after some agonising, opted to translate it as “to verse”. The result is the creation – through dialect – of an imaginary space that both must, and could not possibly be, the Mexico-U.S. border. The question of how to linguistically recreate the categories of “self” and “other” from the other side of a language divide that determines those same categories, although implicit in all translation, becomes more complex when it is this intercultural difference, and its subsequent effect on place and selfhood, which is perhaps the central concern of the novel. Clearly, this is a text that calls for something special from its translator.

In *The Transmigration of Bodies* we are once again introduced to a protagonist who is a professional communicator/negotiator with an acute sensitivity to the importance of language:

> He helped the man who let himself be helped. Often, people were really just waiting for someone to talk them down, offer a way out of the fight. That was why when he sweet talked he really worked his word. The word is ergonomic, he said. You just have to know how to shape it to each person.
>
> (Hererra, Tr. Dillman 42)

This is “*el Alfaqueque*”, which Dillman renders as “the Redeemer” – the original word again entered medieval Spanish via Arabic, and refers to a kind of combat agent whose job was to win the release of Christians who had been captured and enslaved by the Moors during the wars of the Christian reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula, a job that required proficiency in multiple languages. In an unnamed city whose terrified citizens are trapped indoors by a mysterious mosquito-borne illness, the Redeemer is called upon to act as go-between for two feuding families, each of which finds itself with the other’s child in its control.

As in *Signs*, the language of the source text is both geographically anchored to a certain place (the unnamed city feels a lot like Mexico) and subtly estranged, creating a mixed environment of local particularity and dislocation which in some ways recalls “alternative history” science fiction. Disconcertingly, however, *Transmigration* offers no historic explanation of the weird prevailing situation, as we find in, say, Michel Houellebecq’s *Atomised!* (2006, translated English title) or Alan Moore’s *Watchmen* (1986-7). This conspicuous absence is particularly effective because it leads readers to recreate the hidden part of the narrative in much the same way as a horror story might only hint at the true nature of a monster – although for all its implied violence, the novel is far too life-affirming to be called “horror”.

Herrera has said repeatedly that in his writing, he considers rhythm to be a constituent of meaning. In that sense, we could say that his work calls for translation techniques as proper to poetry as prose. It’s a demanding brief. When the publishing house that originally purchased the English language rights to *Señales que precederán al fin del mundo* received draft copies of the initial chapters of Dillman’s translation, they reneged on their original opinion and decided not to go ahead with the publication because of the complexity of the target text. The rights were then picked up by another publisher: Herrera agreed to the transfer, on the condition that Dillman would still be the translator.

Along with being an extraordinary writer of Spanish, Herrera clearly has outstanding judgement as a reader of English: Dillman’s performance is inspired and her writing merits close attention in its own right. One obvious feature is the inclusion of a healthy dose of hispanisms in the English texts, particularly among words identifying social status or interpersonal relationships, such as “compadre”, “señora” and “jefecita”, which seem more closely bound to their culture of origin because they describe in some way its social

functioning. To that extent we might be tempted to say that she is foreignising the target text, but that would be to ignore the complexity of the linguistic environment she is translating: "Spanglish" is, after all, a dynamic subdialect of both English and Spanish, and could not be said to be wholly foreign to either. It exists – lives – between the two.

Of course, translating geographically-marked Spanish for ethnically-marked English is potentially problematic in terms of the social situation of the characters and narrative, but in *Signs* those questions are effectively resolved by the exaltation of the "intermediary tongue" by the novel itself:

> They speak an intermediary tongue that Makina instantly warms to because it's like her: malleable, erasable, permeable; a hinge pivoting between two like but distant souls, and then two more, and then two more, never exactly the same ones; something that serves as a link […] Using in one tongue the word for a thing in the other makes the attributes of both resound: if you say Give me fire when they say Give me light, what is not to be learned about fire, light, and the act of giving? It's not another way of saying things: these are new things.
>
> (Herrera, Tr. Dillman 183-4)

Evidently, the texts' stance on potential richness of the interliminal space between languages not only legitimates, but virtually demands that some of the Spanish text be visible in the English, but it is unclear in this case whether that constitutes either foreignization or domestication. Indeed, for cultures in close contact with each other, these texts challenge the validity of those categories themselves.

This leads us to the second standout feature of Dillman's translations: the aesthetic pleasure offered by her prose. She skilfully deploys the prosodic effects and chimes available to writers of English, modulating pace and subtly linking significations to sounds, especially through assonant rhyme, judicious use of alliteration, and tightly controlled rhythm. These translations are to be read aloud, repeated, and sensually savoured, in much the same way as Herrera's texts can be read in Spanish, although whether that is enough to constitute an "equivalent effect" on the reader is debatable. What is interesting to note, however, is the lineage of this particular style. Herrera has spoken of Raymond Chandler's influence on him, and the mixture of striking similes and unmistakably-oral yet impossibly-cool dialogue that characterises his writing bears a clear relationship with the U.S. hard-boiled detective style. Dillman's translations retain or even enhance the use of this stylistic toolset, but it is not clear whether these techniques make the translation "foreignising" or "domesticating", "visible" or "invisible": the writing itself is visible as an artifice, and that must be desirable for any art that does not attempt to represent itself as a window on reality. The "unreality" of the use of slick, sophisticated English to represent apparently Mexican characters simply forms another part of the fiction that readers must agree to believe in order to enjoy the novels. It is a brave strategy for a translator, and the jury of the Best Translated Book Award have already rewarded the risk with first prize in their 2016 edition. Hopefully Australian readers will be equally appreciative.

Review of Yan Lianke's *The Explosion Chronicles* (trans. Carlos Rojas)

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Yan Lianke. *The Explosion Chronicles*. Translated by Carlos Rojas. Melbourne: Text Publishing. 2016.

———. *Zha Lie Zi*. Shanghai: Shanghai Wenyi Chubanshe.

Yan Lianke, arguably the most controversial literary figure in contemporary China, is widely considered the most likely Chinese candidate for another Nobel Prize for literature (after Mo Yan, the Nobel laureate of 2012). Yan, who started publishing in 1979, has authored more than a dozen full-length novels and nearly a hundred novellas and short stories. As a writer, he was initially affiliated with the Chinese army; when his military career concluded in 2004, he became an independent novelist.

In addition to the many literary awards he has secured in China and Asia, Yan won the prestigious Franz Kafka Prize (an international literary award presented in honour of Franz Kafka, the German language novelist) in 2014. It was the first time a Chinese writer was awarded the prize, but ironically, the winning novel entitled *si shu* (四书, translated title *The Four Books*) was actually banned in China. In March 2017, Yan received his third nomination for the renowned Man Booker International Prize for the book *Zha Lie Zhi* (literal translation "Explosion Chronicles", which was preserved as the title of the English version), together with his English translator Carlos Rojas.

Explosion Chronicles is a fictional work modelled on the ancient Chinese system of documenting traditional local history. The novel is set in an unknown village in the central China province of Henan, *Zhalie* (炸裂, or "Explosion"), which expands within a matter of decades into a town, then a county, a metropolis, and eventually, a mega metropolis. Its economic transformation is accompanied (or rather driven) by all kinds of material pursuits: politicians at all levels go to every extreme –organizing large-scale theft and sex bribery – to secure their promotion, while moral standards are completely ignored along the way. The ordinary citizens care about nothing else but the wealth they accumulate, regardless of the means of such monetary gains. They admire the wealth a fellow villager gained from prostitution to such a degree that they openly encourage their own daughters to follow suit.

The English translation, *The Explosion Chronicles*, was devised by Carlos Rojas, a professor of Chinese Studies at Duke University. Having previously translated two of Yan's full-length novels, Rojas came to appreciate the experimental nature of his works, and thus the significance of Yan's narrative structure and voice. In the *Explosion Chronicles*, the mythorealisam advocated by Yan found its way not only in its narrative mechanism, but also in such descriptions as the following:

> When he walked over from the village street, the spring sun had flowers bloom for him and enveloped him in tints of tender green and fresh red. The scholar tree to the north of the village was covered in flowers in his honor, including red roses and white peonies.
>
> (Yan 72)

The translator has rendered, with great ease, the narrative force of the source text, where descriptions are frequently employed in the stead of the conventional depiction of the natural environment. Rather than reflecting the state of mind of the protagonists, they are used as a literary device for the author to make satirical comments on the events in question. In this regard, both the form and the effect of the authorial comments disguised as descriptions have been transferred intact into the target text.

Interestingly, there are several different published versions of the Chinese source text, some with footnotes to supplement the main text with additional information, and some without. While it is not regular practice to include footnotes in translated fictional works, Rojas, who emphasized (in an interview from 2015) the importance of footnotes in an earlier work of Yan, opted to keep them in his translation. English readers will appreciate his efforts to do so, for expressions such as "China's Three and Five Overturnings campaign" (9) and "ten-thousand yuan households" (19) allude to particular historical events or moments, which are by no means universally comprehensible – even to some of the source text readers.

The footnotes in the translation serve to enhance the visibility of the translator (whose name, following Anglophone norms) is missing altogether from the front cover, back cover and the spine of the book. But there are other means available for the translator to reinforce his presence in other ways – through negotiation with the publisher, for example. Here, we can count the inclusion of footnotes and translator's note, either as preface or postscript. Rojas was able to take advantage of both in his translation. While the footnotes in the English translation are mainly a faithful reproduction of the Chinese source text, the *Translator's Note* is a product and a reflection of Rojas's ethos as a Chinese specialist, as demonstrated by the scale of knowledge about Chinese literature and history that he effortlessly incorporated into his *Translator's Note*.

Despite the fluent, vibrant and exotic reading experience provided by Rojas's target text, his rendering – as in any other translated work – has certain shortcomings. Culturally-bound terms, which are often considered a high-risk area for translators, are among the few flaws in the English target text. For instance, the Chinese system of kinship terms is so complicated that an equivalent English term does not always exist. On page 29 of the English text, a character named "Zhu Damin" is described as: *Zhu Qingfang's nephew, Zhu Damin. He is Zhu Ying's uncle*. The corresponding Chinese source text is *朱庆方的侄儿朱大民，他是朱颖的叔伯哥* (literal translation: *It's Zhu Qingfang's nephew, Zhu Damin, who is the older cousin of Zhuying*). The misinterpretation happens with the term "叔伯哥", which does not make literal sense: the first character, 叔 *shu* (one term for uncle), refers to the younger brother of one's father, the second, 伯 *bo* (another term for uncle), is used to address the elder brother of one's father, and the third one, 哥 *ge*, is "elder brother" in English. When the three characters are combined, they form a term used o refer specifically to the son of a paternal uncle who is older than oneself, aka "an older cousin". In this example, Zhu Ying is the daughter of Zhu Qingfang and the cousin of Zhu Damin. Therefore, when a simple linguistic transfer fails to convey the key message, extralinguistic knowledge is needed in order to settle the translational issue.

In a similar vein, there are some occasional omissions which, at first sight, seem fairly trivial, but are actually critical for the intended effect of the source text. An example can be found on page 273: *He stood for a moment in front of the wall of books and then suddenly he pulled down a well-thumbed copy of* The Carnal Prayer Mat *[...]*. This is a description of the younger brother visiting the grand office of the protagonist, the city mayor Kong Mingliang. As the mayor was out at the time, the brother looked casually around while waiting. The source text reads: *[他]站在那一大排书前呆了很大一会儿，猛然间，从那一面墙的新书中抽出一本被看久了的《肉蒲团》[...]* (literal translation: *He stood in front of the large shelves of*

books for a long time, and then suddenly pulled out a well-thumbed copy of The Carnal Prayer Mat *from the wall of* ***brand new*** *books)*. The only major omission with the translation, really, is the expression "brand new", without which, however, the exaggerating, satirical effect achieved through comparison is pitifully lost: there are thousands of canonical works, classical and contemporary from China and elsewhere in the mayor's office, but they all remain unread and are thus only decorative; the only one that gets "well-thumbed" over time is an obscene book full of graphically explicit sexual descriptions. Apparently, the epithets in the source text are deliberately arranged in such a way to highlight the satirical effect. With "brand new" being left out, that sharp contrast, though not totally disappearing, is to a large extend, weakened.

Nevertheless, when the translation is evaluated as a whole, luckily, very few flaws – even those as subtle as mentioned above – are found. This is partly, one would assume, due to the translator's background as a specialist in Chinese Studies. For those who expect to learn more about Yan, his writing mechanism or about the Chinese literary movement of mythorealism, Carlos Rojas's translation provides an enjoyable and insightful read. The development of the village Explosion, together with its accompanying throes, chaos and absurdity, is a true representation of China's fast-developing society. But – bear in mind that real life in China can sometimes be even more preposterous than the stories in this novel!

Review of Anja Reich-Osang's *The Scholl Case (*trans. Imogen Taylor)

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Reich-Osang, Anja. *Der Fall Scholl: Das tödliche Ende einer Ehe*. Berlin: Ullstein Extra, 2014.

———. *The Scholl Case: The Deadly End of a Marriage*. Translated by Imogen Taylor. Melbourne: Text Publishing, 2016.

In the Anglophone world, the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 is often referred to as a fixed point in time – a time that connotes everything from the triumph of the human spirit and liberation to the triumph of the graffiti that still adorns what's left of the wall today. In German, however, the term most frequently used to describe this event – "die Wende" – is not so much a fixed point in time as a process or "turning point". What happened later was described as the "Wiedervereinigung" or "reunification", which speaks specifically to the stumbling blocks encountered by the two separate Germanys after decades of separation. It encompasses the complexities of adapting the lagging East Germany to a free market economy as well as the social issues that arose when the two diverging populations were brought together once more.

It is against this backdrop that Heinrich Scholl came into the spotlight. He became a legend in his East German hometown of Ludwigsfelde following his 18 years as mayor. He was renowned for bringing thousands of jobs to the town and was regarded as one of the most successful mayors in the former German Democratic Republic. When Scholl was arrested for the murder of his wife three years after his retirement, it was no surprise that the trial was closely scrutinised. Award-winning journalist Anja Reich-Osang was one of the reporters covering the trial. Initially, she only intended to be present for a few days, but she quickly grew transfixed by the unreliable witnesses, the complicated histories, and the changing alibis. And, perhaps most curiously, by Heinreich Scholl's adamant denial of any wrongdoing, despite having no confirmed alibi, and DNA evidence and a (later discarded) mobile phone record placing him at the crime scene. In 2014, Reich-Osang's complete investigation of the case was published in German by Ullstein under the title *Der Fall Scholl,* and was later translated into English by Imogen Taylor as *The Scholl Case.*

Like his trial, Heinrich Scholl's life was complex and perhaps not quite what it seemed. In rendering the events, Anja Reich-Osang's pacing is exemplary. Opening the book with a recreation of Brigitte Scholl's movements on her final day, up until she took that fateful walk into the woods from which she never returned, Reich-Osang presents us with an image of the Scholls' marriage as viewed from the outside. But there is a long history behind the words that appear on the first page of chapter one: "Their marriage was said to be irreproachable." And this history is as confusing as only true stories can be. As Reich-Osang goes on to unravel the story of the Scholls' lives, each added layer builds the suspense and mysteriousness of their shared history. As a true story, *The Scholl Case* works quite well as a thriller, though it never fully commits to being a 'whodunit'. As each new facet of the Scholls' life together (and apart) is revealed, a general sense of foreboding begins to grow. Reich-Osang builds a compelling narrative that constantly stays one step ahead, continuing to give just enough information to keep the reader engaged. Following the eight months she spent observing the trial, and the hours of interviews with friends and family of Brigitte and Heinrich Scholl, Reich-Osang paints a complex – and confusing – portrait of the man who, to this day, denies his guilt. But at the

moment one expects her to interweave and overlay her own analysis, she takes a step back and simply chooses to allow the reader to form his or her own opinion.

Starting with Heinrich Scholl and Brigitte Knorrek's childhoods, the story winds its way through the confusing series of events that led Brigitte Knorrek, the Ludwigsfelde beauty, to marry the small and inconspicuous Scholl. The subtlety with which Reich-Osang is able to do this is remarkable. From the foreshadowing of that first sentence which claims their marriage was "said to be irreproachable", through her own keen observations and recreations of events as well as the voices of friends, family, and Heinrich Scholl himself, Reich-Osang explores what was, in actuality, more like a marriage of convenience. She carefully retraces their lives, from their childhood friendship to their marriage to Scholl's job in the circus that took him away from Ludwigsfelde, and finally to the way he began to clash with his wife and moved to Berlin following his retirement. *The Scholl Case* delves deep into the human psyche and into the politics of manipulation and deception. But in the end, Reich-Osang is transparent in her intentions. While she uses the power of suggestion to build suspense throughout the book, in the final pages she is clear in separating her opinions from fact, writing: "It is hard to know what to say. Is this an ice-cold murderer and a liar speaking? Or is it a madman? Or a victim of the justice system? Heinrich Scholl makes for a very convincing innocent" (200). Reich-Osang does not intend to solve a mystery, but rather to connect as many pieces of a very complicated puzzle as possible.

Published in 2016 by Text, Imogen Taylor's English translation manages to tread a careful line between retaining the ubiquitous references that place the story in former East Germany, while also providing a certain amount of explanation to a readership that could otherwise be left in the dark. While she does occasionally use words like "mum" or, more significantly, "loo", that could connote a particular (unintended) English-speaking context, Taylor has made a point of not ripping the story from its German setting by inserting repetitive and facile explanations for every unknown concept. The brief glosses (for example, her reference to the "department store Kaufhaus des Westens" on page 27) and insertions she does provide are generally incorporated into the text in a way that, rather than being noticeably instructional, work instead to enhance the reader's knowledge of relevant German culture and history. She introduces Klaus Wowereit, Scholl's associate and former governing mayor of Berlin, as "an icon of the gay rights movement" (74), and describes "the border crossing point known as the 'Palace of Tears', the site of many emotional reunions and farewells" (44). With every one of Scholl's actions so important, given Reich-Osang's open-ended conclusion, Taylor's careful analysis of the text is vital in ensuring that the reader has access to every layer of meaning.

The Scholl Case functions primarily on two planes: both as a murder mystery and a psychological thriller. While it is a German story – one that sold well in Germany by delving into an already mysterious national affair – Taylor's ability to focus on the relevant makes it accessible to an Anglophone readership as well. Those looking for a true crime novel, where the clues come together to determine the perpetrator's unequivocal guilt, will be disappointed; rather, *The Scholl Case* is for those readers interested in probing the darker side of humanity. It is a fascinating portrayal of an enigmatic man and an enigmatic time, laying bare the many complicated – and disturbing – facets of human life.

Translation of Erri De Luca's "Il pannello" into English

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"Il pannello" is a short story by the contemporary Italian writer Erri De Luca, published in his 1994 collection, *In alto a sinistra*. De Luca has been described as an "original" and "strikingly valuable voice in the panorama of contemporary Italian fiction" (Klopp 137). Yet, despite the wide acclaim received for his work (he is the recipient of several prestigious literary awards, including the Prix Femina Étranger and, most recently, the European Prize for Literature), and the translation of several of his novels into English, the author's oeuvre has attracted relatively little critical attention in the English-speaking world.

De Luca was born in Naples in 1950. The central position he occupies in the Italian literary landscape belies the singularity of his career trajectory: after completing secondary school, De Luca moved to Rome where he became a member of the radical left-wing movement *Lotta Continua* and worked as a manual labourer. He continued working in this occupation even after the publication of his first novel, *Non ora, non qui,* in 1989. De Luca's fiction often draws on fragments of the author's own experiences, and this "autobiographical drive" informs the moral concerns which permeate his narrative universe (Spunta 384-5). "Il pannello" is no exception: like the narrator, De Luca studied at the Liceo Umberto I in Naples where the classicist Giovanni La Magna, the short story's voice of reason, was a teacher.

"Il pannello" traces the response of a class of adolescent boys to the dilemma with which they are faced when two pupils decide to unscrew a panel on a desk to reveal their (female) teacher's legs. They must decide whether to denounce their classmates and escape punishment or remain silent and suffer collectively for the wrongdoing of the few. The strategy I adopted in translating "Il pannello" was twofold: at the linguistic level, I endeavoured to maintain the lyrical simplicity and essentiality of De Luca's prose, while preserving the social and cultural specificity of the source text (ST) for the English language reader.

In relation to the first-mentioned objective, the overarching aim of the target text (TT) was to replicate the direct and unadorned style of the original. The translation of "spirito di corpo" (and its variants) posed a particular challenge in this respect. My translation exhibits a clear preference for English language equivalents of this expression, despite the fact that the French "esprit de corps" forms part of the English lexicon and exhibits a one-to-one correspondence with the Italian. However, I considered that the use of the French term would introduce a measure of ornateness not present in the ST, and so employed it only once in La Magna's monologue, its use there being justified by the speaker's erudition.

The second aim of my translation strategy gave rise to a series of cross-cutting demands on the translator and merits particular discussion. Obviously, a degree of loss of meaning is an inevitable consequence of the passage from one language and culture to another. For example, the use of the idiomatic expression of Neapolitan origin, "a tarallucci e vino", serves to locate the text in a particular geographical space, and this effect cannot be conveyed in English. However, as a portrait of power relations within a mid-1960s Italian high school, I sought to preserve in translation the militaristic language De Luca employs throughout the "Il pannello", in order to evoke both the strict discipline of the school system of that period and the hostility between staff and students following the headmaster's threat of suspension. Where a loss of connotation would result from the absence of correspondence between the source and target languages, I employed a compensatory strategy, favouring target-language terms that would maintain the nuance of the original. For instance, the most direct translation of the adjective "caporalesco", derived from the noun "caporale" ("corporal"), is "bossy". However, I chose to

render “caporalesco” as “commanding” to preserve the symbolic associations inherent in the Italian original and to minimise impoverishment of the TT.

The student revolt of 1968, which engendered a radical transformation in Italian society, looms large over the events that unfold in De Luca’s hierarchical Neapolitan classroom. Although allusions to this cultural revolution are more immediately apparent to the source reader of “Il pannello” than to the target reader, I endeavoured to maintain its spectral presence in the original by refraining from any explicitation in my translation. Further, the events that took place in Italy in 1968 must be situated within a context of global social unrest with which the English speaker is more likely to be familiar and, in any case, De Luca unambiguously refers to the turmoil of that year (“l’anno di subbuglio 1968”) in the concluding paragraph.

A second culture-specific element that merits particular attention is the concept of “omertà”, the Mafia code of silence which functions in the story as a counterpoint to the virtues of solidarity. In many respects, De Luca has simplified the translator’s work in ensuring the intelligibility of this concept to the target reader: as “omertà” is a geographically-bound notion, the Sicilian teacher must de-foreignize it for his Neapolitan students. From the translator’s perspective, this obviates any potential need for explanation in the TT.

Finally, my translation sought to remedy some of the weaknesses of an existing English translation of “Il pannello” published (anonymously) in electronic format by Feltrinelli. The strategy employed by the translator in that case is problematic, as the TT is internally inconsistent and fluctuates between a source and target-oriented approach in relation to the translation of culturally-specific elements in the ST (for instance, “liceo” is variously left untranslated or rendered as “high school,” with no apparent justification for this lack of consistency). Other attempts to bridge the cultural distance between source and target audiences have the effect of diminishing the fictionality of the TT. This is most manifest in the insertion of the explanatory “i.e.” between “TAR” and “the administrative tribunal” as a gloss for the target reader. This undermines the artistic organization of the text and comes at the expense of fidelity to the stylistic choices of the author. The translation strategy I employed endeavoured to maintain the coherence of De Luca’s short story as an expressive text and to ensure target-language readability, so that the English language reader may more fully appreciate both the universal and particular aspects of the narrative.

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Il pannello
By Erri De Luca

Era stato staccato un pannello della cattedra per guardare le gambe della supplente. Eravamo una classe maschile, seconda liceo classico, sedicenni e diciassettenni del Sud, seduti d'inverno nei banchi con i cappotti addosso. La supplente era brava, anche bella e questo era un avvenimento. Aveva suscitato l'intero repertorio dell'ammirazione possibile in giovani acerbi: dal rossore al gesto sconcio. Portava gonne quasi corte per l'anno scolastico 1966-1967.

Si era accorta della manomissione solo dopo essersi seduta accavallando le gambe: aveva guardato la classe, la mira di molti occhi, era arrossita e poi fuggita via sbattendo la porta. Successe il putiferio. In quel severo istituto nessuno si era mai preso una simile licenza. Salì il preside, figura funesta che si mostrava solo in casi gravissimi. Nell'apnea totale dei presenti dichiarò che esigeva i colpevoli altrimenti avrebbe sospeso l'intera classe a scadenza indeterminata, compresi gli assenti di quel giorno. Significava in quei tempi perdere l'anno, le lezioni e i soldi di quanti si mantenevano agli studi superiori con sacrificio delle famiglie. Non esisteva il TAR, quel tribunale amministrativo cui oggi si sottopongono ricorsi per ristabilire diritti. Non c'erano diritti, le scuole superiori erano un privilegio. C'era la disciplina caporalesca degli insegnanti, legittima perché impersonale e a fin di bene. Il preside uscì, si ruppe quel gelido "attenti" che avevamo osservato. Non riuscimmo a sputare una parola.

Accadde una cosa impensabile: sottoposti all'alternativa di denunciare due nostri compagni o patire conseguenze gravi nello studio, quei ragazzi si zittirono a oltranza e nessuno riuscì a estorcere loro quei nomi.

The Panel
Erri De Luca
Translated by Thea Lendich

Someone had detached a panel from the teacher's desk so we could admire the relief teacher's legs. We were a class of boys, in our second year of high school, sixteen and seventeen year olds from the South, sitting in wintertime at our desks with our coats on. The relief teacher was clever as well as beautiful, and this was cause of a great excitement among us. She had sparked the whole catalogue of possible displays of admiration in immature boys, from blushing to obscene gestures. She wore skirts that were almost short for the 1966-1967 school year.

She had only noticed our meddling after she had sat down, crossing her legs: she had looked at the class, the target of many pairs of eyes, blushed, and then fled, slamming the door behind her. There was hell to pay. In that strict establishment, no one had ever taken such liberties before. The headmaster came up, a foreboding figure who only ever appeared when an extremely serious incident occurred. As those present waited with bated breath, he declared that the culprits should come forward, or else he would suspend the whole class indefinitely, including students absent that day. At that time, that meant wasting the year, classes and money, for those whose education was supported by their family's sacrifices. No administrative tribunal existed yet at which you could lodge an appeal to vindicate your rights. There were no rights; high school was a privilege. There was the commanding discipline of the teachers, legitimate because it was impersonal and well-intentioned. The headmaster left, and that frozen 'Attention!' to which we had stood broke up. We couldn't manage to splutter out a word.

Something unthinkable happened: faced with the alternative of either denouncing two of our classmates or of suffering serious consequences in our studies, those boys were silent to the bitter end and no one was able to

Nessuno parlò. Questo è il racconto del comportamento ostinato di un gruppo di studenti uniti solo dal fatto di essere iscritti alla sezione B, secondo anno di liceo, dell'Istituto Umberto I di Napoli nell'anno scolastico 1966-1967. Tranne una combriccola composta da ragazzi di agiata famiglia con residenza al centro, o un altro gruppo di ragazzi di pochi mezzi che si trovavano nel pomeriggio per studiare insieme, tranne qualche partita a pallone la domenica, niente univa quei ragazzi. Però è vero che niente ancora li divideva sanguinosamente, come sarebbe accaduto in pochi anni. Non ho più visto i compagni di quella classe, non fummo amici né soci, solo membri di un'età costretta a essere seme delle successive, inverno delle altre. Di colpo quei ragazzi spaventati si irrigidirono in un silenzio impenetrabile.

Quando il preside uscì non avevamo più freddo. Cominciava la tensione di un assedio ancora senza parole tra noi. Parlò il solo che si era opposto, quel mattino prima dell'inizio delle lezioni, allo svitamento del pannello. Era il più ligio di noi e spesso veniva preso in giro per quel suo impulso all'ordine. Quel mattino era stato zittito, ora recriminava perché aveva ragione e perché quel provvedimento contro tutta la classe era un'ingiustizia ai suoi occhi. Molti non erano ancora saliti in aula quando il pannello era stato tolto. Protestava accorato con voce che sbandava tra l'acuto e il grave come succede agli adolescenti. Stavolta non faceva ridere. Non so dire perché non si rivolse mai ai due colpevoli, non li additò alla classe che ancora ne ignorava i nomi, invece se la prendeva con noi, quei pochi presenti che non l'avevano aiutato a impedire quel gesto. Si sentì solo la sua voce in quell'intervallo. Ognuno cercava di rendersi conto delle conseguenze. Qualcuno aveva la famiglia povera che non gli avrebbe permesso di ripetere l'anno. Tutti temevamo la reazione che l'episodio indifendibile avrebbe prodotto in casa. C'era chi sarebbe stato promosso a occhi chiusi e che vedeva sfumare il diritto alla borsa di studio, chi aveva già fatto spendere soldi per le lezioni private. Ognuno aveva un grado nel

prise the names from them. No one spoke. This is the story of the obstinate behaviour of a group of students united only by the fact that they were enrolled in class B in their second year of high school at the Istituto Umberto I in Naples in the 1966-1967 school year. Except for a clique of boys from well-to-do families living in the city centre, and another group of poor boys who met in the afternoon to study together, nothing united those boys besides the occasional football game on Sundays. But it is true that they were not yet savagely divided by anything, as they would be a few years later. I haven't seen my classmates again; we were neither friends nor acquaintances, only members of a generation compelled to be the germ of those to follow it and the winter of the others. Suddenly those frightened boys froze in an impenetrable silence.

When the headmaster left we were no longer cold. The tension of an as yet wordless siege fell upon us. The lone boy who had opposed the unscrewing of the panel that morning before the start of class spoke up. He was the most dutiful of us and was often mocked for his instinct for order. That morning he had remained silent; now he complained because he was right and because that punishment directed at the entire class appeared to him an injustice. Many boys were not in the classroom when the panel was removed. He made a heartfelt protest with a voice that wavered between treble and bass as it does in teenage boys. This time it wasn't funny. I can't say why he never appealed to the two culprits. He didn't point them out to the class, which still did not know their names; rather, he became angry with us, the few boys present who hadn't helped him to prevent the act. Only his voice was heard in that lull. Everyone tried to come to grips with the consequences. Some had poor families that wouldn't allow them to repeat the year. All feared the reaction that the indefensible episode would provoke at home. There were those who would have passed their exams with their eyes shut and who now saw their entitlement to a scholarship go up in smoke, those who had

pericolo. Eppure nessuno denunciò gli autori dello svitamento, neppure sotto la nobile causa di salvare gli altri. Nessuno chiese ai due compagni di denunciarsi. Questi si rimisero alla decisione della classe e la classe li coprì. Avrebbero altrimenti patito punizione esemplare, sarebbero stati espulsi da tutte le scuole. Questo sembra incredibile a chi conosce quello che è successo nelle aule d'Italia solo pochi anni dopo, eppure le cose stavano così: la scuola italiana un quarto d'ora prima di essere sovvertita dagli studenti era saldamente in mano alla gerarchia docente.

Eravamo ancora zitti quando entrò il professore dell'ora successiva. Squadrandoci fieramente pretese di conoscere immediatamente i nomi dei colpevoli. Alzò la voce. Diede agli sconosciuti il titolo di vigliacchi e a noi che li coprivamo attribuì colpa ancora più grave, degna del più severo provvedimento. Richiese i nomi un'altra volta. Dopo il secondo silenzio applicò la rappresaglia: interrogò alcuni di noi che nella sua materia tentennavano, li confuse con domande difficili e atteggiamento sprezzante, li congedò annunciando, cosa mai prima accaduta, il pessimo voto riportato. Quella palese ingiustizia fece del bene a tutti. Era iniziato un assedio, ne andava della vita scolastica di ognuno, che era tutta la nostra vita pubblica di cittadini.

Sotto il duro ricatto di denunciare dei compagni o incorrere in provvedimenti disciplinari spuntò d'improvviso uno spirito di corpo. Ragazzi che avevano in comune la frequentazione di un'aula per alcune ore al giorno diventarono un organismo disposto a cadere tutto intero pur di non consegnare due suoi membri. Passò nelle fibre di uno scucito gruppo di coetanei una di quelle scariche elettriche che su scala più grande trasformano varie genti in un popolo, molte prudenze in un coraggio. C'è una soglia segreta di pazienza passata la quale ci si

already spent money on private tuition. Everyone had something to lose. And yet no one revealed who was responsible for the removal of the panel, not even for the noble cause of saving the others. No one asked our two classmates to turn themselves in. They submitted to the class's decision and the class protected them. Otherwise they would have suffered some exemplary punishment; they would have been expelled from every school. This seems incredible to those who know what happened in the classrooms of Italy only a few years later, but that was the way it was: a quarter of an hour before being overthrown by its students, the Italian school system was firmly in the hands of its academic hierarchy.

We were still silent when the teacher for the next class arrived. Fiercely surveying us, he demanded to know the names of the culprits immediately. He raised his voice. He conferred the title of coward upon the unidentified miscreants and ascribed even greater blame, deserving of the harshest punishment, to us as we were shielding them. He demanded the names again. After the second silence, he inflicted his retaliation: he grilled some of us who were struggling in his subject, confused them with difficult questions and his contemptuous attitude, and dismissed them with the lowest mark they had ever received, something which had never happened before. This flagrant injustice served us all well. It was the beginning of a siege in which the academic life of each of us, which was in fact our entire public life as citizens, was at stake.

Blackmailed with the threat of betraying our classmates or having disciplinary action taken against us, a common bond suddenly emerged between us. Boys who would gather together in a room for a few hours a day became one being, willing to suffer defeat together so as not to have to sacrifice two of their kind. One of those electric shocks that, on a larger scale, transforms different clans into a people, individual prudence into collective courage, flowed into the fibres of a motley peer group. There is a secret threshold of patience which, when passed,

oppone di colpo alla disciplina quotidiana. Occasione è spesso un motivo all'apparenza insignificante. Anni dopo, partecipando a lotte operaie, avrei appreso con stupore che la lunga catena di scioperi spontanei e di aperte rivolte di fabbrica cominciarono alla FIAT, nel 1969, con richieste semplici come nuove tute da lavoro o la distribuzione di latte nelle lavorazioni tossiche. Piccole occasioni di rottura della pazienza quotidiana contengono grandi scosse: di colpo le strade si riempiono di scontento che sembra nato di pioggia come un fungo.

Non fu una rivolta, non chiedevamo niente, ma uno scatto di reazione contro chi voleva perquisirci dentro.

Fuori di scuola quel giorno si discusse. In mezzo all'assembramento notammo la strana presenza dei bidelli. Qualcuno di noi chiedeva almeno di sapere a chi doveva il rischio di rinunciare all'anno scolastico. Lì fuori venne zittito. Alla fine questa curiosità per vie traverse venne esaudita al nostro interno, ma in quel primo scambio di battute prevalse una spontanea disciplina. Il più ligio di noi trasferì il suo impulso all'ordine a servizio di quel silenzio. Qualcosa tra lui e la gerarchia scolastica si era guastato per sempre.

Quel giorno nelle nostre case si ripropose intero l'assedio. L'atmosfera fu inquisitoria come e più che a scuola. L'unico scampo: rifugiarsi nell'impossibilità di fare nomi di compagni senza esserne certi. Nessun retroterra familiare si mostrò comprensivo nei confronti della colpa, nessuno sostenne almeno un poco i diritti al silenzio di fronte al ricatto. Nessuno: tempi tutti d'un pezzo, non era solo a scuola il campo del dovere, esso si estendeva a tutta la piccola vita privata. Da adulto ho visto le famiglie difendere figli colpevoli di stupro e di linciaggio, un tempo invece stavano dalla parte dell'accusa. Se un ragazzo non si trova di colpo solo al mondo, mai cresce. Forse era difficile essere giovani in quei tempi anche se, per misericordia, non lo sapevamo. Molte più cose di oggi, in quegli anni erano considerate importanti, molto del futuro di

causes you to revolt against the discipline of daily life. Opportunity is often an apparently insignificant motive. Years later, joining in the struggles of the working class, I learned with astonishment that the long chain of strikes and open factory revolts began at the Fiat factory in 1969, with simple demands such as new overalls and the distribution of milk in the toxic processing plants. Small opportunities for the wearing thin of day-to-day patience contain great shocks: the streets are filled at once with a discontent that seems to have sprouted up after the rain like a mushroom.

It wasn't a rebellion – we weren't demanding anything – but a jolt against those who wanted to ransack our group.

Outside of school, the events of that day were discussed. In the middle of the gathering, we noticed the strange presence of the janitors. One of us asked at least to know to whom we owed the risk of forfeiting the school year. He was told to keep quiet. In the end, his curiosity was indirectly satisfied in our very midst; but in that first exchange of words a spontaneous discipline won out. The most dutiful of us transferred his instinct for order to ensuring the preservation of that silence. Something between him and the school hierarchy was broken forever.

At home that day, the whole siege played out again. The atmosphere was inquisitorial like it was at school, but even more so. Our last refuge was to retreat into the impossibility of naming our classmates without being sure who the miscreants were. No one's family appeared sympathetic towards the crime; no one maintained our right to silence in the face of blackmail in the slightest. No one: this was the time for each of us to demonstrate our integrity. The field of duty did not only exist at school but extended across our entire private lives. As an adult, I have seen families defend children guilty of rape and lynching, when they were previously on the side of the prosecution. If a child never finds himself suddenly alone in the world, he never grows up. Perhaps it was difficult to be young back then, even if, thank God, we didn't know it was. Many more

ognuno si decideva sui banchi di quelle scuole.

Nei giorni successivi si ripeté in classe la richiesta di denunciare i colpevoli, fino al limite dell'ultimatum. Arrivarono al preside anche diverse lettere anonime coi nomi dei presunti responsabili, ma discordanti tra loro. La faccenda però non era più ferma ai colpevoli, si voleva rompere quell'inaudita ostinazione. Ma non ci fu verso di farci denunciare quei compagni. Penso che ci sentissimo tutti colpevoli, quelle gambe avevano emozionato ognuno. Fu perciò un po' di immedesimazione verso quel gesto, anche se ce ne vergognavamo. La giusta linea di condotta proveniva da alcuni di noi che avevano già qualche relazione amorosa e trasmettevano agli altri un senso di superiorità da adulti nei confronti di quel gesto da guardoni nel buco della serratura. Ci piaceva credere di essere superiori agli scopi di quel sabotaggio, anche se non era così. Ma questo non contava più, stavamo andando dritti verso le conseguenze inevitabili. Ci eravamo irrigiditi dentro, pur mostrando all'esterno la costernazione dei malcapitati. Sotto quell'assedio eravamo diventati soldatini, imparando a difenderci tutti allo stesso modo.

C'era già in quegli anni una specie minore di solidarietà tra studenti che stava nel non farsi avanti a dare al professore una risposta che un altro non era stato in grado di fornire. Nessuno chiedeva di rispondere al posto del compagno. Forse era un comportamento legato al pudore di mostrarsi saputelli ed è troppo pretendere che fosse solidarietà. Questa era voce che si applicava a grandi cause come quelle dei terremotati, degli affamati e degli alluvionati. Però quel trattenersi dal dare la risposta era una pratica che insegnava a non mortificare il proprio compagno, a rivolgergli perciò un'attenzione non solo scolastica. Ovunque simili usanze sono sparite.

Prima dell'ora di scadenza dell'ultimatum entrò a fare la sua lezione il professore di greco e latino. Erano già passati alcuni giorni

things were considered important in those days than today; a great part of our future was determined at our school desks.

In the following days, the demand that we denounce the culprits was repeated, to the point that we were given an ultimatum. The headmaster received various anonymous letters containing the names of the suspects, but they were contradictory. Yet the whole matter didn't stop with the perpetrators: they wanted to break our unprecedented intractability. But there was no chance of making us turn in our classmates. I think we all felt guilty; those legs had excited all of us. We all identified with that act, even if we were ashamed of it. The right course of action came from a few of us who had already had experience with romantic relationships and conveyed to the others an adult sense of superiority towards that act of voyeurism. We liked to believe that the aims of that sabotage were beneath us, even if it wasn't really so. But this no longer mattered: we were heading straight for the unavoidable consequences. We had all hardened, although we outwardly displayed the dismay of victims. Under that siege we had all been conscripted into an army, learning to defend ourselves each in the same way.

In those years, there already existed a minor type of solidarity between students that lay in not putting yourself forward to give an answer to the teacher that another student hadn't been able to provide. No one asked to respond in place of a classmate. Perhaps that behaviour was linked to the shame of appearing a know-it-all and it is unreasonable to claim that it was solidarity. That was a word you would use to describe noble causes like relief for the hungry and victims of earthquakes and floods. Yet refraining from giving the answer was a practice that taught us not to humiliate our classmates, to pay an attention to them that was not confined to the classroom. Such customs have disappeared everywhere.

Before the ultimatum was due to expire, our Greek and Latin teacher came to deliver his lesson. A few days had already passed

e non ci aveva detto una parola sulla faccenda, tranne al suo primo ingresso in aula dopo il putiferio. Era entrato, si era seduto, ma invece di aprire il registro ci aveva guardati tutti quanti a lungo, poi aveva giunto le enormi mani in preghiera e le aveva agitate in avanti e indietro, secondo quel gesticolare che sta per: "Cosa diavolo avete combinato?» Era un gesto semplice, temperato di sollecitudine, con un piccolo accento buffo mischiato al rimprovero muto. L'accogliemmo con gratitudine. Subito dopo diede inizio alla sua lezione. Bisogna ora che io nomini quest'uomo: Giovanni La Magna. Siciliano, completo conoscitore della lingua greca della quale aveva redatto una grammatica e un vocabolario, mostrava un corpo massiccio, dal passo pesante. Il volto era aperto, cordiale e i tratti gli si spianavano quando con la sua grave voce di basso compitava i versi greci e latini facendo cadere l'accento sulle sillabe con suono incalzante di zoccolo di cavallo sul selciato. Ci innamorò di Grecia antica perché ne era innamorato. Gli piaceva insegnare: questo verbo per lui si realizzava nell'accendere nei ragazzi la voglia di conoscere che sta in ognuno di loro e che aspetta a volte solo un invito sapiente. Era alla fine della sua carriera, mostrava anche più dei suoi sessanta. Aveva il gusto sicuro della battuta folgorante che detta dal suo faccione imperturbabile faceva esplodere la classe in una risata improvvisa, come un colpo di frusta. Non ne ha mai ripetuta una due volte, non le pescava da un repertorio, le inventava. Credo che nessuno abbia saputo raccontare i dialoghi tra Socrate e i suoi discepoli meglio di lui. Nemmeno Platone, che li scrisse, poteva essere così bravo.

Incitava a essere leali con lui: non teneva conto di una insufficiente preparazione se lo studente gliela dichiarava spontaneamente prima della lezione. A chi si avvicinava alla cattedra per bisbigliare le sue giustificazioni, prestava a volte ascolto con gesto scherzoso, appoggiando la mano all'orecchio e strabuzzando gli occhi per manifestare il suo stupore. Lo amavamo: di quel cupo Olimpo di numi da cattedra era il nostro buon Zeus.

and he hadn't said a word to us about the matter, except for the first time he appeared in class after the commotion. He had entered and sat down, but instead of taking the roll he contemplated us at length, then folded his enormous hands as if in prayer, and moved them back and forth, in that motion that asks, 'What on earth have you been up to?' It was a sincere gesture, tempered with concern, with a slight touch of humour combined with silent reproach. It was met with gratitude. Immediately afterwards he began his lesson. I must name this man now: Giovanni La Magna. He was Sicilian, an expert in the Greek language, of which he had published a grammar and a dictionary; he was solidly built and walked with a heavy tread. His face was open and warm, and his features became smooth when he recited Greek and Latin verses in his grave, deep voice, letting the accent fall on the syllables with the insistent sound of horses' hooves on pavement. We fell in love with Ancient Greece because he was in love with it. He enjoyed teaching: for him, that word became reality when he kindled in his students the desire to learn that lies in each one of them and is sometimes only waiting for some expert encouragement. He was at the end of his career; he looked older than his sixty years. He had an instinct for brilliant witticisms which, when articulated by his large, imperturbable face, made the class instantly burst into laughter, like the crack of a whip. He never repeated the same one twice, he didn't fish them out of his repertoire; he invented them. I think that no one has ever been able to recount the dialogues between Socrates and his disciples better than he could. Not even Plato, who wrote them, could have been as good.

He encouraged us to be honest with him: he didn't take inadequate preparation into account if the student told him about it before class without being asked. Sometimes he would listen in a comical pose to whoever approached the teacher's desk to whisper his excuse, placing his hand on his ear and opening his eyes wide to show his astonishment. We loved him: on that dark Olympus of the blackboard gods, he was our

Quel giorno dell'ultimatum entrò nell'aula e togliendosi il cappotto annunciò che non avremmo parlato né di greco né di latino. Si sedette, accantonò il registro e ci parlò. Confido di non tradire il suo tono di voce e i suoi argomenti provando a ripeterli con le parole che ricordo:

"Voi sapete che sono siciliano. Nella mia terra c'è un costume che vieta di denunciare i colpevoli di reati: si chiama omertà. Voglio parlarvene per stabilire i punti di contatto e quelli di differenza tra questo costume e lo spirito di solidarietà. L'omertà nasce dal bisogno di difendersi da un regime sociale di soprusi in cui la giustizia è applicata con parzialità e favoritismi, ma contrappone malauguratamente a questo un altro regime di soprusi: la mafia. L'omertà è un comportamento radicato in tutta la popolazione quando considera l'intero apparato statale un grande sbirro. La mafia che è nata da questa silenziosa protezione popolare, l'ha trasformata in legge di sangue sicché oggi l'omertà è frutto principale della paura. Essa non distingue tra chi si ribella a un sopruso e chi agisce da criminale, copre tutti, il povero cristo e il malfattore. L'omertà è diventata cieca ed è al servizio di un'altra prepotenza".

"Lo spirito di solidarietà è invece un sentimento che onora l'uomo. Non è una legge, come l'omertà, sorge di rado. Spunta di colpo tra persone che si trovano in difficoltà, comporta il sacrificio personale, non si nasconde dietro il mucchio formato da tutti gli altri. Nel vostro caso la solidarietà può essere quella di tutti per proteggere due, ma potrebbe anche essere quella di due che si fanno avanti per proteggere tutti gli altri. La solidarietà è opera preziosa di un'occasione, appena compiuto il suo dovere rompe le righe, lasciando in ognuno la coscienza tranquilla. Se siete d'accordo con me su queste differenze, allora potrete meglio conoscere quello che vi succede in questi giorni. Io non credo che gli svitatori di pannelli della seconda B abbiano intimorito

benevolent Zeus. On the day of the ultimatum, he entered the classroom, and taking off his coat, announced that we would not discuss Greek or Latin. He sat down, put the roll to one side and spoke to us. I hope not to betray his tone of voice or his reasoning in repeating it here with the words I recall:

"You know that I am Sicilian. In my land there is a custom that forbids a person from informing on someone guilty of a crime: it is called *omertà*. I want to speak about it with you to set out the similarities and differences between this custom and the spirit of solidarity. *Omertà* is born of the need to defend oneself from a social regime based on abuses of power in which justice is served with bias and favouritism, but regrettably another unjust regime is set against that one: the mafia. *Omertà* is a behaviour which becomes entrenched in the whole population when it believes that the entire government apparatus is just one massive police force. The mafia, which was born of this silent popular protection, transformed it into a law of blood so that today *omertà* is the foremost fruit of fear. It doesn't distinguish between those who are revolting against injustice and those who are criminals; it encompasses everyone, victim and wrongdoer alike. *Omertà* has become blind and serves another form of oppression".

"In contrast, the spirit of solidarity is a sentiment that honours mankind. It is not a law, like *omertà*; it seldom arises. It emerges all of a sudden between people who find themselves in difficulty, and calls for personal sacrifice; it doesn't hide behind the heap in which everyone else is piled. Your solidarity may be the solidarity of the group to protect two individuals, but it could also be the solidarity of two individuals who come forward to protect all the others. Solidarity is the priceless work of chance; once it has accomplished its task, it breaks ranks, leaving each individual with a clear conscience. If you agree with me about these differences, then you can better understand what has happened to you these past few days. I do not believe that those members of

tutti gli altri inducendoli a tacere. Credo invece che sia sorto tra voi in questi giorni uno spirito di squadra contro un provvedimento che ritenete ingiusto. Pensate forse di stare subendo un sopruso: il ricatto di denunciare i vostri compagni oppure essere sospesi a tempo indeterminato. Ma non è stato un sopruso far arrossire di vergogna una donna che è entrata in quest'aula per insegnare e che, per poter accedere al privilegio di mostrare a voi le sue gambe, ha studiato per anni ed è appena giunta all'occasione che ha tanto aspettato? Un sopruso, una prepotenza di molti contro una donna, questo è accaduto qui dentro. Non siete. innocenti, nessuno qui è innocente. Il torto è spesso meglio distribuito di quanto ci piace credere".

"Io faccio parte di questo regime scolastico contro il quale avete fatto muro. Anzi sono il più vecchio insegnante di questa scuola. Noi siamo insegnanti, voi studenti, siamo per questo più forti di voi, possiamo bocciarvi, sospendervi tutti, compromettere i piani scolastici forse irrimediabilmente per alcuni di voi. Ma vogliamo farlo? Credete che vogliamo rovinarvi? Noi che siamo i più forti ci stiamo in verità difendendo da voi. Ritenete vostra facoltà levare un pannello di cattedra per vedere le gambe di un'insegnante? Presto riterrete vostra facoltà abbassarle la gonna per ammirarle intere. Perché non l'avete fatto con me? Perché sono un uomo o perché non sono un supplente? Noi ci stiamo difendendo da voi, voi da noi: così le aule diventeranno campi di battaglia, vincerà il più forte, ma la scuola sarà finita. È con profonda tristezza che vedo questo accadere. È contro tutto quello che ho fatto nei miei molti anni di insegnamento. Mi accorgo di non avere più un posto in un'aula ridotta a schieramento, di non poter fare più niente per voi. Mi state licenziando voi, i miei colleghi, tutti. Questo spirito di ostilità che scorgo in loro e in voi mi avvisa di tempi in cui non avrò parte".

Class B who detached the panel intimidated everyone else into keeping silent. Rather, I believe that in the last few days a spirit of camaraderie has emerged among you against a measure that you believe is unjust".

"Perhaps you think that you are being subjected to an abuse of power: the blackmail of betraying your classmates or being suspended indefinitely. But wasn't it an abuse of power to make a woman blush with shame who came into this room to teach and who, to obtain the privilege of displaying her legs to you, studied for years and just obtained the opportunity that she has waited so long for? An abuse of power, the arrogance of many against one woman – this is what took place inside this room. You aren't innocent; no one here is innocent. The blame is often better apportioned than we would like to believe".

"I am part of that scholastic regime you have taken a stand against. Indeed, I am the oldest teacher in this school. As we are teachers, and you are students, we are more powerful than you. We can fail you, suspend you all, irreparably jeopardise the academic plans of some of you. But do we want to? Do you believe that we want to ruin you? We who are strongest are actually defending ourselves from you. Do you think it's your right to remove a panel from the desk to see a teacher's legs? Soon you will think it's your right to lower her skirt to admire them more fully. Why didn't you do it to me? Because I am a man or because I am not a relief teacher? We are defending ourselves from you and you from us. This is the way the classroom becomes a battlefield, and the strongest will win, but school will be doomed. It is with deep sadness that I see this happening. It is against everything I have done in my many years of teaching. I realize that I no longer have a place in a classroom reduced to the drawing of battle-lines, that I can no longer do anything for you. It's you who are dismissing me – you, my colleagues, everyone. This hostile attitude that I see in them and in you forewarns me of times I will have no part in".

“Non approvo un provvedimento così drastico nei vostri confronti, non lo farò applicare per quello che potrò, ma non so approvare nemmeno la vostra caparbietà. Ce l'ho con tutti voi: il vostro spirito di corpo è la cosa più preoccupante alla quale assisto da quando vivo nella scuola. Il vostro serrare i ranghi è il gesto più duro da intendere per uno come me che pensava di stare in una classe e si ritrova a visitare una barricata. Non credo che il vostro silenzio sia omertà, che stiate diventando una mafia. Però so che questo guaio può scaturire da ogni ostilità di parte. Se c'è ancora una lezione che posso permettermi di darvi è quella di insegnarvi a distinguere nella vostra vita l'omertà e la solidarietà. Siate pure oggi leali tra voi fino a sopportare il sacrificio di un duro provvedimento disciplinare, ma non imparate domani a proteggere l'ingiusto, il prepoténte, il vendicatore. Prima che siate sospesi in blocco dalle lezioni, propongo a voi di fare le più sentite e solenni scuse all'insegnante che avete offeso. Fate questo senza aspettarvi niente in cambio, fatelo solo perché è giusto. Fatelo prima che il vostro silenzio si indurisca troppo contro di noi, si avveleni di avversione, distrugga il mio lavoro con voi e la vostra possibilità di trarre profitto dalle ore trascorse insieme in queste aule”.

Mi perdoni, lì dove riposa, l'uomo al quale attribuisco queste parole e del quale provo a ricordare una lezione. Essa fu certamente più intensa ed efficace di quella che posso ricostruire. La sorreggeva una voce che rimaneva paterna anche nel tratto amaro, grave senza severità. Era voce di uomo che si spogliava della dignità della cattedra per parlare da pari ad altri pari. A una classe di sedicenni pieni di brufoli e di barbe ancora a chiazze sul viso, si rivolse come a un'assemblea, svolgendo un ordine del giorno. Ci sentimmo spaesati, ma più grandi, senza parole, certo, ma finalmente spogli del bisogno di difenderci. Quell'uomo ci trattò da uomini. Nessuno di noi lo era ancora, ma tutto dentro di noi in quei giorni spingeva a diventarlo. Ci fece provare la responsabilità di persone che intendono l'ora e il luogo in

“I do not approve of such a drastic measure being taken against you, and as far as I can I will not enforce it, but neither can I approve your obstinacy. I am angry with all of you: your esprit de corps is the most worrying thing I have witnessed since I have been at this school. Your closing ranks is a most difficult act to understand for someone like me who thought he was in a classroom and who found himself surveying a barricade instead. I do not believe that your silence is *omertà,* that you are becoming a mafia. But I know that this trouble can stem from any one-sided hostility. If there is still one lesson I can afford to give you, it is to teach you to distinguish *omertà* from solidarity in your own lives. Today, you are loyal to each other to the point of suffering the sacrifice of a harsh disciplinary measure, but don’t learn tomorrow to protect those who are unjust, domineering or vengeful. Before you are collectively suspended from class, I suggest that you offer your most sincere and solemn apologies to the teacher you have offended. Do this without expecting anything in return; do it only because it is right. Do it before your silence hardens too much against us, becomes poisoned with hatred, destroys my work with you and the possibility that you can benefit from the hours we have spent together in this classroom”.

May the man to whom I attribute these words and whose lesson I try to remember forgive me from his final resting place. It was certainly more heartfelt and incisive than the one I can reconstruct. It was sustained by a voice that remained paternal even when the speech was bitter, a voice that was solemn without harshness. It was the voice of a man who cast off the dignity of the teacher’s desk to speak as an equal to other equals. He addressed a class of sixteen year olds, covered in pimples and whose beards were still patchy on their faces, as he would a meeting, following the order of business. We felt uncomfortable, but more mature; silent, certainly, but relieved of the need to defend ourselves. That man treated us as men. None of us was a man yet, but at that time, everything inside us spurred us into

cui sono. Disfece con i suoi modi leali il rozzo campo di battaglia nel quale ci sentivamo rinchiusi. Non ci additò una scappatoia, sgomberò semplicemente l'assedio mostrando il male di quell'ostilità, addossandosene una parte. Accese in noi il desiderio di rispondere, come già altre volte aveva incitato il nostro desiderio di apprendere. Uno di noi si alzò, il più mite, e uno tra i più diligenti, disse a nome di tutti che le nostre scuse erano il passo minimo che ci sentivamo di fare e che l'avremmo già fatto se solo ne avessimo avuto la possibilità. Nessuno disse cosa contraria o diversa.

Le scuse vennero accettate. Le lezioni ripresero con la palese disapprovazione di alcuni insegnanti insoddisfatti della riparazione e contrari a quella composizione "a tarallucci e vino". Il partito della fermezza contava i suoi effettivi in vista delle future prove. Noialtri ci considerammo scampati, rompemmo subito le righe piegando ancora di più il collo sui libri. Ancora per poco l'atteggiamento prevalente dei professori fu di rappresaglia, poi lo spirito dell'insegnamento prevalse e ritornò in vigore la bilancia dei meriti e dei profitti. Quell'anno fummo promossi in molti, compresi i due svitatori. Solo allora quella pagina di calendario fu per noi voltata del tutto.

L'anno seguente, stagione scolastica 1967-1968, avremmo affrontato la maturità. Prima di quell'appuntamento il professore Giovanni La Magna mancò a una lezione per la prima volta in tre anni. Si era rotto il cuore del nostro buon Zeus, fermate le mani enormi che ci avevano aperto le vie della Grecia classica, zittita la voce che aveva calcato per noi i versi più soavi della terra. Salimmo alla sua casa sulla collina del Vomero come un gregge disperso. Era disteso eppure sembrava ritto in piedi, manteneva anche così tutta la forza della sua presenza. Aveva le grandi mani intrecciate in grembo, gli occhi molto chiusi. Per la prima volta un

becoming one. He made us experience the responsibility of people who are conscious of the time and place in which they exist. With his sincere manner, he destroyed the brutish battlefield in which we felt imprisoned. He didn't show us a way out; he simply lifted the siege by demonstrating the wrongness of our hostility, bearing some responsibility for it himself. He awakened in us the desire to be held accountable for our actions, as other times he had encouraged our desire to learn. One of us stood up, the meekest and one of the most diligent, and said on behalf of all of us that apologising was the least we felt we should do and that we would have already done so if we had only had the chance. No one contradicted him.

Our apology was accepted. Lessons resumed with the clear disapproval of some teachers who were unsatisfied with our act of atonement and opposed to the amicable ending of the dispute. The camp that insisted on intransigence mustered its members in contemplation of future trials. We considered ourselves escapees and we fell out of our ranks immediately, getting our heads down and poring over our books more than usual. For a while, the dominant attitude among the teachers remained a retaliatory one, but later the spirit of education prevailed and the balance between merit and profit was restored. That year many of us, including the two culprits, passed our exams. Only then was that page of the calendar completely turned for us.

The following school year, in 1967-1968, we were to sit our leaving exams. Before that occasion, our teacher Giovanni La Magna missed a class for the first time in three years. The heart of our benevolent Zeus had broken, the enormous hands that had cleared the paths of Ancient Greece for us came to rest, the voice that had declaimed the most melodious verses in the world fell silent. Like a scattered flock, we went up to his house on Vomero hill. He was lying down, but seemed to be standing up, maintaining the full force of his presence. His large hands were entwined in his lap; his eyes were tightly shut. For the first time, a boy among

ragazzo tra i tanti ebbe misura dello spreco insensato contenuto nella morte di un uomo. Tutta quella Grecia svisceratamente amata da un siciliano, tutta quella sapienza si perdeva, a nessuno poteva più trasmettersi. Ne trattenevamo frammenti lucenti da un vaso in frantumi, noi suoi allievi. Ma se tutti gli studenti che aveva avuto, avessero potuto mettere insieme i loro pezzetti, non avrebbero ricomposto l'interezza da lui posseduta. Le lacrime che ad alcuni di noi vennero agli occhi se le era guadagnate con quello che gronda dal cuore.

Morì in quei primi mesi dell'anno di subbuglio 1968, senza vedere le aule abbandonate sotto i colpi di una guerra che aveva intravisto e aveva scongiurato di evitare. La scuola finiva e non solo per i maturandi di quell'anno. Dopo di lui la Grecia tornò a essere la patria di una grammatica molto esigente. Ci sono uomini che morendo chiudono dietro di loro un mondo intero. A distanza di anni se ne accetta la perdita solo concedendo che in verità morirono in tempo.

many others could gauge the senseless waste that was contained in the death of a man. All that Greece passionately loved by a Sicilian, all that erudition was fading away and could no longer be imparted to anyone. We, his pupils, clung to the glistening fragments of a shattered urn. But even if all the students he had ever taught could have pieced together the fragments they held, we would still not have made up the whole. He had earned the tears that came to some of our eyes with the outpourings of his heart.

He died in the early months of the tumultuous year of 1968, without seeing the classrooms abandoned under the shots of a war that he had foreseen and implored us to avoid. That was the end of school, and not just for those who graduated that year. After him, Greece became once more the homeland of very difficult grammar. There are men who, when they die, close the door to an entire world behind them. Years later, you come to terms with the loss only by acknowledging that in fact, they died at the right time.

Embracing Performative Dialects in Hyŏn Chingŏn's "Mistress B and the Love Letters"

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Hyŏn Chingŏn's (1900-1943) short story "Mistress B and the Love Letters" is a paradigmatic example of early modern Korean fiction. Published in 1925, this story, along with the rest of the author's oeuvre, was composed during the Japanese colonial annexation of Korea (1910-1945). In his short stories, Hyŏn renders brief character sketches of life in this particular colonial landscape. Rather than engaging the political climate directly, he focuses on subjects from the everyday. The colonial experience is embedded into the mundane elements of these subjects' existence, shaping their imaginations. In "Mistress B and the Love Letters," Mistress B, a strict dormitory superintendent, guards the moral virtue of the students at an all-girls boarding school. In Korea, universal primary education and formalized education for girls was introduced by the imperial authority through a series of reforms beginning in 1911. Thus, a boarding school for girls was at this time a foreign concept, one that represented the modernizing influence of the metropole along with the pervasive Japanese colonial presence that punished any sign of resistance with a variety of brutal disciplinary mechanisms.

In the story, the metropole permeates daily life, most immediately through modern, imported consumer goods. The reader encounters elements of Western furnishings or modern appliances throughout the narrative. For example, Hyŏn interrupts his story to mention the Western-style bed in the room, in place of the traditional floor mattress. Mistress B's nighttime read-aloud sessions are illuminated by an electric lamp, not candlelight. Along with the tangible objects that locate the story within the modern colonial era, the clash of beliefs between subjects (and perhaps within subjects) is at the core of the narrative. The reign of Mistress B's de-sexed Christian morality is challenged by an unruly European Romanticism in an institution where young women are educated as modern subjects with an allegiance to Japanese colonial (and cultural) authority. In her capacity as disciplinarian for the young women, Mistress B seems to model a devout adherence to Christian teachings, while the students are vulnerable to secular notions of romantic love. In the opening scene, this antagonism surfaces in the Mistress' diatribe. She laments "free love" 자유 연애 (*chayu yŏnae*), a new concept popular with the younger generation. *Chayu yŏnae* celebrates individualism through freely chosen marriage partners, in a revolt of sorts against the custom of families arranging marriage through matchmakers.

New vocabularies of desire allow for new ways of understanding and relating to love. The novelty and possibility that *chayu yŏnae* offered is most poignant in the three students' fantasy imaginings. It is primarily through the format of a motion picture that they are able to make sense of the romantic encounter they overhear from the Mistress' quarters. They are part of the early twentieth-century circulation of cosmopolitan romantic ideals through new media forms such as radio and film. Importantly, love-letter correspondence was a similarly newly-imported practice. These letters read like a student's dutiful imitation of the genre of European Romantic literature. The story's title underscores the novelty of love letters for Hyŏn and his contemporaries, as the term is Romanized from the English (러브레터). Hyŏn also indicates a degree of general unfamiliarity with the convention by prefacing his use of the term with 소위, translated as "so-called". The final scene captures the irony of Mistress B unwittingly enacting the dramas of *chayu yŏnae* for the very students whose moral conduct she regulates through dramas of interrogation and confession.

Within the new and ambivalent setting of the Japanese-style boarding school for girls, the characterization of the Mistress is decidedly performative. The text reads in places like a

script, with stage direction and settings. The rhythmic flow of the lines, most apparent in line breaks and tense shifts, adds a sensation of breath in the work; of a live performance, as with Mistress B's enactment of the confiscated love letters. As a translator, my approach to the text aimed to extend this dramatic perspective. In my reading and interpretation of the text, it was most important to preserve the performative gestures that embodied the original. In order to do so, I made conscious alterations in syntax and emphasis when necessary, in order to establish a corresponding rhythm that would translate effectively for a wide range of target readerships, both commercial and academic. Using this criteria, I opted for a more semantic approach to this translation, according to Newmark's definition, which was to deliver the contextual meaning of the source text "as closely as the semantic and syntactic structures of the second language allow" (39).

To retain the rhythm of the original, I also domesticated certain terms which would have otherwise interrupted the flow. For example, rather than give the full cultural context behind the term 장승 (*changsŭng*) (a carved wooden or stone idol thought to bring good luck to villages and communities), I opted for a compromise, using the familiar target language term, "totem pole". In context, the use of the original term simply implies that the student is keeping still, or speechless. With this translation, I attempted to keep the same indigenous connotation while also conveying the idiom in context. It was also important to keep the alternating narrative tone of the original, which varies throughout the story and affects the rhythm in reading. At some points, the narration is curt and commanding, as in the early interrogation scene. In others, the narration tends to be romantic and ornamental, most notably when the three young girls fantasize about a potential love affair taking place in the dormitory. To render these shifts, I chose target-language terms that seemed appropriate to the given tone, as well as to the period in which the story takes place. For example, to translate 활동 사진 (*hwaldong sajin*), I used the term "moving picture" rather than "motion picture". As the story centerpieces the tensions encountered by early twentieth-century Koreans between pre-modern and modern, colonial and metropolitan, and so on, it was critical to make the target audience aware of these differences.

Another challenge was the 'anecdotal' perspective applied to Mistress B's character. The readers' perspective overlaps with that of the students. For them – and, by proxy, for the reader – the Mistress' identity depends on the availability of witnessing students; she is never depicted alone or outside of her interactions with the students. These traumatizing exercises in moral re-education are serialized and dramatized through students' hallway gossip. It is through this intersubjective lens that we access the Mistress' character. Thus, the writing reflects a dramatization of events. Her exaggerated movements and utterances are the result of a snowballing, cumulative rhetoric based on rumor – a mingling of happenings condensed into one exaggerated prototypical happening. In the last scene, however, Hyŏn upsets our prejudiced view in his presentation of Mistress B in her intimate space. Consistent with the stage metaphor, the reader's view of the character is framed by her scripted, onstage performance as "The Mistress". The final scene offers a glimpse backstage through the eyes of the willful, curious, and sympathetic young women living under Mistress' reign of terror. Through her pitiable monologue behind the curtain, we encounter a complexity to her character, a dimension which Hyŏn carefully withholds until the narrative's very close.

With this in mind, I employed a distinctive English dialect to portray Mistress B, which corresponded most closely with the spirit of the original, yet would remain intelligible in English. In this story, the liberal use of onomatopoeic phrases and vulgar metaphors create a flow to the narrative and a metre to the wording. Thus, the summary description of the Mistress embodies both a written and oral flair. A literal or Romanized translation of these unique phrases would not render the same effect into English. Instead, I highlighted their exaggerated,

colloquial quality with verb choices and a few domestic clichés. To illustrate with the underlined phrases in the below excerpt:

> 달짝지그한 사연을 보는 족족 그는 더할수 없이 흥분되어서 얼굴이 붉으락푸그락, 편지 든 손이 발발 떨리도록 성을 낸다.
>
> (Hyŏn, 1993:754)

> Each time her eyes encounter some sugar-coated message, she plunges into a manic state; shades of red and indigo alternate on her face, the paper trembles in her fingers as the rage boils over.
>
> (My translation)

For the first expression, 얼굴이 붉으락푸그락, I expanded the English translation to emphasize the meaning, inserting a minor alliteration to echo the lyricism of the original. In the following clause, 편지 든 손이 발발 떨리도록 성을 낸다, I added an English colloquialism to the verb in the form of "rage boils over" to replace the visceral aspect of 발발.

Another major issue was the text's inconsistency in its use of tense. Though it was, and still is, common practice for Korean authors to mix present and past tense indiscriminately, it seemed – at least in this case – to be a clear and tactical use of tense. The deliberate pattern emerges through a line-by-line reading of the source text. The switch to present tense in this story signifies a moment in which the reality or origin of the featured speech is called into question. For example, the tense stays consistently in the past when the three girls are in their room, but switches whenever the mysterious noise outside the room is described. Hyŏn attaches the same present tense he used during the episodic reprimand scene in the beginning to the unknown origin of this noise (which we later discover is Mistress B). He subtly connects these two events through tense endings, both of which involve the Mistress. This use of tense conveys a dramatic inflection not present in the depictions of the three schoolgirls. Such tense shifts, when read in Korean, are not as apparent as in English, as they alternate fluidly from line to line. When translated, however, they may appear jarring for the reader. Still, I have opted to keep the tense as-is, delivering a similar juxtaposition of dramatic levels within the text. In the process, I have tried to keep the transitions as smooth as possible, while working to deliver their intended mood change.

A thorough appreciation of the range of Hyŏn's literary techniques is vital to the interpretation and effective translation of this work. Throughout the translation process, I experimented with syntax and word choice to clarify the text's anecdotal quality and faithfully render the author's intent. The performative aspect of this story acts as a subtle interpretation of the outward projection of the self, juxtaposed with the reality discovered in private spaces. To preserve Mistress B's tragic arc to the full extent of the original, it is important to treat expressions embedded between the lines with the same meticulousness – or even passion – that the Mistress accorded the "so-called love letters."

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B 사감과 러브레터

현진건

C 여학교에서 교원 겸 기숙사
사감 노릇을 하는 B 여사라면 딱장대요
독신주의자요 차진 야소꾼으로
유명하다. 사십에 가까운 노처녀인 그는
주근깨 투성이 얼굴이 처녀다운 맛이란
약에 쓰려도 찾을 수 없을 뿐인가,
시들도 거칠고 마르고 누렇게 뜬 품이
곰팡 슬은 굴비를 생각나게 한다.

여러겹 주름이 잡힌 훨렁 벗겨진
이마라든지, 숱이 적어서 법대로
쪽지거나 틀어올리지를 못하고
엉성하게 그냥 빗겨 넘긴 머리꼬리가
뒤통수에 염소똥만하게 붙은
것이라든지, 벌써 늙어가는 자취를
감출길이 없었다. 뽀족한 입을 앙다물고
돋보기 너머로 쌀쌀한 눈이 노릴 때엔
기숙생들이 오싹하고 몸서리를 칠만큼
그는 엄격하고 매서웠다.

이 B 여사가 질겁을 하다시피
싫어하고 미워하는 것은 소위
러브레터였다. 여학교 기숙사라면 으레
그런 편지가 많이 오는 것이었지만,
학교로도 유명하고 또 아름다운
여학생이 많은 탓인지 모르되 하루에도
몇장씩 죽느니 사느니 하는 사랑타령이
날아들어 왔었다. 기숙생에게 오는
사신을 일일이 검토하는 터이니까 그
따위 편지도 물론 B 여사의 손에
떨어진다. 달짝지그한 사연을 보는 족족
그는 더할수 없이 흥분되어서 얼굴이
붉으락푸그락, 편지 든 손이 발발
떨리도록 성을 낸다.

아무 까닭없이 그런 편지를 받은
학생이야기말로 큰 재변이었다. 하학
하기가 무섭게 그 학생은 사감실로
불리어 간다. 분해서 못 견디겠다는
사람 모양으로 쌔근쌔근하며 방안을

Mistress B and the Love Letters

Hyŏn Chingŏn
Translated by Carrie Middleditch

Here comes Mistress B of C Girls School, whose absolute reign over the dormitory and classroom, along with her righteous singlehood and devout faith, has earned her a certain fame. The blush of youth is entirely stamped out of the almost-forty-year-old spinster's freckle-ridden face. The withered, tough, dry, yellowed skin reminds one of dried-out fish.

Perhaps it's her widening forehead overrun with wrinkles, or the way she combs her thinning hair into a goat dung-sized mound on the back of her head—whatever the cause, any trace of her fleeting youth is long gone. With pursed lips and icy eyes peering over reading glasses, the fierce severity contained in a single glance is enough to induce shudders and shakes in any student.

The foremost appalling and vexing concern of this Mistress B was the so-called "love letters". As a girls' dormitory, notes of the like are to be expected. Still, the high repute of the institution or the uncommon number of beauties contained therein likely caused several lovesick ballads to flutter in daily. And with all correspondence monitored, these love letters invariably end up in Mistress B's hands. Each time her eyes encounter some sugar-coated message, she plunges into a manic state; shades of red and indigo alternate on her face, the paper trembles in her fingers as the rage boils over.

However unfairly, these letters spelled calamity for the recipient. The girl is summoned to the Mistress' office at the end of class. Unable to contain her fury, Mistress B paces lines across the room, seething through her nostrils. The

왔다갔다하던 그는, 들어오는 학생을 잡아먹을 듯이 노리면서 한 걸음 두 걸음 코가 맞닿을만큼 바짝다가 들어서서 딱 마주선다. 웬 영문인지 알지 못하면서도 선생의 기색을 살피고 겁부터 집어먹는 학생은 한동안 어쩔 줄 모르다가 간신히 모기만한 소리로,

"저를 부르셨어요?"

하고 묻는다.

"그래, 불렀다. 왜!"

팍 무는 듯이 한 마디 하고 나서 매우 못마땅한 것처럼 교의를 우당퉁탕 당겨서 철석 주저앉았다가 학생이 그저 서 있는 걸 보면

"장승이냐? 왜 앉지를 못해!"

하고 또 소리를 빽 지르는 법이었다.

스승과 제자는 조그만한 책상 하나를 사이에 두고 마주 앉는다. 앉은 뒤에도, '네 죄상을 네가 알지!' 하는 것처럼 아무 말없이 눈살로 쏘기만 하다가 한참만에야 그 편지를 끄집어내어 학생의 코앞에 동댕이를 치며,

"이건 누구한테 오는 거냐?"

하고 문초를 시작한다. 앞장에 제 이름이 씌었는지라,

"저 한테 온 것이야요."

하고 대답 않을 수 없다. 그러면 발신인이 누구인 것을 재차 묻는다. 그런 편지의 항용으로 발신인의 성명이 똑똑지 않기 때문에 주저주저 하다가 자세히 알 수 없다고 내대일 양이면,

"너한테 오는 것을 모른단 말이냐?"

고 불호령을 내릴 뒤에 또 사연을 읽어 보라 하여 무심한 학생이 나직나직하나마 꿀같은 구절을 입술에 올리면, B 여사의 역정은 더욱 심해져서 어느 놈의 소행인 것을 기어이 알려 한다. 기실 보도 듣도 못한 남성이 한 노릇이요, 자기에게는 아무 죄도 없는 것을 변명하여도 곧이 듣지를 않는다. 바른 대로 아뢰어야 망정이지 그렇지 않으면 퇴학을 시킨다는 둥, 제 이름도 모르는 여자에게 편지할 리가

moment the girl steps over the threshold, she pounces. One stride, and another, until their noses nearly touch. The oblivious pupil sees the woman's state and dread begins to sink in. Stupefied, at last she musters the thinnest voice,

"Did you summon me, Miss?"

"That's right, I did. Do you *mind?*" she snaps.

Demonstrating her displeasure, she drags a chair across the room and crashes down. Eyeing the girl still standing, she strikes again, screeching,

"What are you, a totem pole? Sit down!"

A small desk separates teacher and student as they sit facing one another. The Mistress continues her piercing glare, as if to say, "you know why you're here!" Eventually, she produces a letter and shoves it under the girl's nose.

"Who is this addressed to?"

The interrogation begins.

Spotting her own name on the page, the student can all but reply,

"To me, Miss."

The next question – the identity of the sender. The girl hesitates. With such correspondence, one can never be sure... She eventually answers that she doesn't know. The Mistress erupts,

"So, you have *no* idea who sent this to you?"

She then orders the girl to read out the contents. As the unwitting student mumbles through each honey-soaked line, the Mistress' frenzy escalates to the point that she must know the culprit's name. No matter the girl's pleas – that she's never heard of that name, that it doesn't involve her – the Mistress won't hear it. The student is threatened to fess up or face expulsion, and goaded for an explanation as to how it was possible for the boy to send a letter without knowing her name. The Mistress makes accusations of immoral behaviour,

만무하다는 둥, 필연 행실이 부정한 일이 있으리라는 둥…….

하다못해 어디서 한 번 만나기라도 하였을 테니 어찌해서 남자와 접촉을 하게 되었느냐는 둥, 자칫 잘못하여 학교에서 주최한 음악회나 바자에서 혹 보았는지 모른다고 졸리다 못해 주워댈 것 같으면 사내의보는 눈이 어떻더냐, 표정이 어떻더냐, 무슨 말을 건네더냐 미주알 고주알 캐고 파며 어르고 볶아서 넉넉히 십년 감수는 시킨다.

두 시간이 넘도록 무초를 한 끝에는 사내란 믿지 못할 것, 우리 여성을 잡아먹으려는 마귀인 것, 연애 자유니 신성이니 하는 것도 악마가 지어낸 소리인 것을 입에 침이 없이 열을 띠어서 한참 설법을 하다가 닦지도 않은 방바닥 (침대를 쓰기 때문에 방이라 해도 마룻바닥이다)에 그대로 무릎을 꿇고 기도를 올린다. 눈에 눈물까지 글썽거리면서 말 끝마다 하느님 아버지를 찾아서 악마의 유혹에 떨어지려는 어린 양을 구해 달라고 뒤삶고 곱삶는 법이었다.

그리고 둘째로 그의 싫어하는 것은 기숙생을 남자가 면회하러 오는 일이었다.

무슨 핑계를 하든지 기어이 못 보게 하고 만다. 친부모, 친동기간이라도 규칙이 어떠니 상학 중이니 무슨 핑계를 하든지 따돌려 보내기가 일쑤다.

이로 말미암아 학생이 동맹 휴학을 하였고 교장의 설유까지 들었건만 그래도 그 버릇은 고치려 들지 않았다.

이 B 사감이 감독하는 그 기숙사에 금년 들어서 괴상한 일이 '생겼다'느니보다 '발각되었다'는 것이 마땅할는지 모르리라. 왜 그런고 하면 그 괴상한 일이 언제 '시작된' 것은 귀신밖에 모르니까.

그것은 다른 일이 아니라 밤이 깊어서 새로 한 점이 되어 모든 기숙생들이 달고 곤한 잠에 떨어졌을 때

insisting the girl has brought it upon herself.

She applies more pressure, insisting the two must have met at least once. If the student, unable to endure more harassment, creates an excuse that they accidentally met eyes at a school-sponsored concert or charity event, the Mistress probes every detail. How did the boy look at you? What was his expression? What did he say? She digs and digs until she's dug at least ten years from the girl's life.

After over two hours of questioning, the Mistress begins a crazed sermon. She spouts that boys cannot be trusted… they're demons set to prey on females… the likes of "free love" and "sacred love" are the devil's fictions… She rambles on in a feverish state without stopping, not even to swallow saliva. Then, collapsing to her knees, she begins to pray on the coarse, unkempt floor (as the beds are of the Western style, the concrete floor is left unfinished). Her eyes swell with tears as she repeats her pleas to the Heavenly Father, repeatedly begging deliverance for this young lamb who has strayed onto Satan's path…

After love letters, the Mistress above all hated male visitors to the dormitory students.

Regardless of whether they were a parent or relative, she made any excuse necessary for the meeting not to take place. She might say that the student was busy in class, or cite some other regulation, and send them away. This led to students skipping lessons in protest, with the issue going as high as a reprimand from the principal. Still, the Mistress made no efforts to change her habit.

As autumn set in, a strange happening was "discovered" involving Mistress B in the dormitory she oversaw. "Discovered" is a more accurate term than "began", because only the ghosts would know just when this happening "began."

난데없는 깔깔대는 웃음과
속살속살하는 낱말이 새어 흐르는
일이었다. 하룻밤이 아니고 이틀밤이
아닌 다음에야 그런 소리가 잠귀 밝은
기숙생의 귀에 들리기도 하였지만
잠결이라 뒷동산에 구르는 마른잎의
노래로나, 달빛에 날개를 번뜩이며 울고
가는 기러기의 소리로나 흘려 들었다.
그렇지 않으면 도깨비의 장난이나
아닌가 하여 무시무시한 증이 들어서
동무를 깨웠다가 좀처럼 동무는 깨지
않고 제 생각이 너무나 어림없고
어이없음을 깨달으면, 밤소리 멀리
들린다고 학교 이웃집에서 이야기를
하거나 또 딴 방에 자는 제 동무들의
잠꼬대로만 여겨서 스스로 안심하고
그대로 자버리기도 하였다. 그러나 이
수수께끼가 풀린 때는 왔다. 이때
공교롭게 한방에 자던 학생 셋이
한꺼번에 잠을 깨었다. 첫째 처녀가
소변을 보러 일어났다가 그 소리를 듣고
둘째 처녀와 셋째 처녀를 깨우고 만
것이다.

"저 소리를 들어 보아요. 아닌
밤중에 저게 무슨 소리야."
하고 첫째 처녀는 휘둥그래진 눈에
무서워하는 빛을 띤다.

"어젯밤에 나도 저 소리에
놀랬었어. 도깨비가 났단 말인가?"
하고 둘째 처녀도 잠 오는 눈을 비비며
수상해 한다. 그 중에 제일 나이 많을
뿐더러 (많았자 열여덟밖에 아니되지만)
장난 잘 치고 짓궂은 짓 잘하기로
유명한 셋째 처녀는 동무 말을 못
믿겠다는 듯이 이윽고 귀를 기울이다가,

"딴은 수상한 걸. 나도 언젠가 한
번 들어 본 법도 하구먼. 무얼 잠 아니
오는 애들이 이야기를 하는 게지."

이때에 그 괴상한 소리가 땍대굴
웃었다. 세 처녀는 귀를 소스라쳤다.
적적한 밤 가운데 다른 파동없는 공기는
그 수상한 말마디가 곁에서 나는 듯이
또렷또렷이 전해 주었다.

"오! 태운씨! 그려면 작히
좋을까요."

간드러진 여자의 목소리다.

The discovery occurred during the darkest part of night, when every student was fast asleep. It was at this hour when sudden bursts of laughter, mingled with soft murmurs, were heard echoing through the halls. Occasionally a few lighter sleepers were roused by the noise, but in their drowsiness they passed it off as dried leaves blowing on the nearby hill, or geese fanning their wings under the moonlight. One girl spooked herself with the thought of goblins playing pranks. She tried to wake her roommates to no avail, but eventually realized her childish logic. Assuring herself of a simple neighbourly ruckus, or girls talking in their sleep, she drifted off again. The mystery was soon brought to light. As it happens, one night three students of the same room all woke by chance. The first girl, after stirring to use the toilet, heard the noise and woke the next two.

“Listen to that! What could that be at this hour?” She said, her eyes glossy with fear.

“I heard the same noise last night. It can’t be a… goblin… can it?” ventured the second girl, rubbing the sleep from her eyes. The third and eldest among them (though, despite this distinction, she was just seventeen), known for her playful, mischievous manner, kept a doubtful silence before perking up her ears, adding,

“How strange. Come to think of it, I’ve heard this same noise before… I’m sure it’s just some girls who can’t sleep.”

Just then, the strange noise erupted in a roar of laughter. The three shrunk in fear, their ears homing in on the sound. Every odd word rang out clearly in the still night, where no other sound carried through the air. It was as if it were transpiring right next to them.

“Oh! Mr. T’aeun! How marvelous that would be.”

"경숙 씨가 좋으시다면 내야 얼마나 기쁘겠습니가? 아아, 오직 경숙 씨에게 바친 나의 타는 듯한 가슴을 이제야 아셨습니까?"

정열에 뜬 사내의 목청이 분명하다.

한동안 침묵……

"인제 고만 놓아요. 키스가 너무 길지 않아요? 행여 남이 보면 어떻해요?"

아양떠는 여자 말씨.

"길수록 더욱 좋지 않아요? 나는 내 목숨이 끊어질 때까지 키스를 하여도 길다고는 못하겠습나다. 그래도 짧은 깃을 한하겠습니다."

사내의 피를 뿜는 듯한 이 말끝은 계집의 자지러진 웃음으로 묻혀 버렸다.

그것은 묻지 않아도 사랑에 겨운 남녀의 허물어진 수작이다. 감금이 지둑한 이 기숙사에 이런 일이 생길 줄이야! 세 처녀는 얼굴을 마주보았다. 그들의 얼굴은 놀랍고 무서운 빛이 없지 않으되 점점 호기심에 번쩍이기 시작하였다. 그들의 머리 속에는 한결같이 로맨틱한 생각이 떠올랐다. 이 안에 있는 여자 애인을 보려고 학교 근처를 뒤돌고 곱돌던 사내 애인이 타는 듯한 가슴을 걷잡다 못하여 밤이 이슥하기를 기다려 담을 뛰어 넘었는지 모르리라.

모든 불이 다 꺼지고 오직 밝은 달빛이 은가루처럼 서린 장문이 소리 없이 열리며 여자 애인이 흰 수건을 흔들어 사내 애인을 부른지도 모르리라. 활동 사진에 보는 것처럼 기나긴 피륙을 내리워서 하나는 위에서 당기고 하나는 밑에서 매달려 디룽디룽하면서 올라가는 정경이 있었는지도 모르리라.

그래서 두 애인은 만나 가지고 저와 같이 사랑의 속삭그림에 잦아졌는지 모르리라…….

꿈결같은 감정이 안개 모양으로 눈부시게 세 처녀의 몸과 마음을 휩싸 돌았다.

그들의 뺨은 후끈후끈 달았다.

괴상한 소리는 또 일어났다.

A coquettish woman's voice.

"If you agree, Kyŏngsuk, how happy would I be! Do you now trust my burning devotion to you?"

Undoubtedly, the fervent pleas of a young man.

A long pause…

"Let me go! Your kisses are too lengthy, are they not?" the lady bleats. "What if someone catches us?"

"The longer the better, surely? If my lips never left yours, even till the day I die, I wouldn't think it lengthy... but I'll keep it short."

His heartfelt words were obscured in the woman's pealing laughter.

Without question, it was some unrestrained exchange between lovers. That such an affair could occur in the dreadful confinement of this dormitory! The three girls exchanged looks. Shock and fear mingled in their faces… but a sheen of curiosity soon took over. A whole host of romantic scenarios formed in their minds. Perhaps this man had come to see his love, and wandered around the school walls, unable to quell the scorching embers in his heart… and awaiting the cover of night, leapt over.

With every light extinguished, the lady pushes open the moonlight-dusted window ever so mutely, dangling a white handkerchief to signal to her lover. Like a scene in a moving picture, a long sheet lowers for one to pull above and one to climb below; the cloth sways to and fro.

In this way, they unite and are carried off by whispers of love…

A dreamy haze of shimmering sentiments swathed the three girls, body and soul.

Their cheeks glowed.

The strange noise erupted again.

"난 싫어요. 당신같은 사내는 난 싫어요."

이번에는 매몰스럽게 내어대는 모양.

"나의 천사, 나의 하늘, 나의 여왕, 나의 목숨, 나의 사랑, 나를 살려 주시오. 나를 구해 주어요."

사내의 애를 졸이는 간청…….

"우리 구경가 볼까?"

짓궂은 셋째 처녀는 몸을 일으키며 이런 제의를 하였다. 다른 처녀들도 그 말에 찬성한다는 듯이 따라 일어섰으되 의아와 공구와 호기심이 뒤섞인 얼굴을 서로 교환하면서 얼마쯤 망설이다가 마침내 가만히 문을 열고 나왔다. 쌀벌레같은 그들의 발가락은 가장 조심성 많게 소리나는 곳은 향해서 곰실곰실 기어간다. 컴컴한 복도에 자다가 일어난 세 처녀의 흰 모양은 그림자처럼 소리없이 움직였다.

소리나는 방은 어렵지 않게 찾을 수 없었다. 찾고는 나무로 깎아 세운 듯이 주춤 걸음을 멈출 만큼 그들은 놀랐다. 그런 소리의 출처야말로 자기네 방에서 몇 걸음 안되는 사감실일 줄이야! 그렇듯이 사내라면 못 먹어 하고 침이라도 배알을 듯하던 B 여사의 방일 줄이야! 그 방에 여전히 사내의 비대발괄하는 푸념이 되풀이되고 있다…….

"나의 천사, 나의 하늘, 나의 여왕, 나의 목숨 나의 사랑, 나의 애를 말려 죽이실 테요. 나의 가슴을 뜯어 죽이실 테요. 내 생명을 맡으신 당싱의 입술로……."

셋째 처녀는 대담스럽게 그 방문을 빠끔히 열었다. 그 틈으로 여섯 눈이 방안을 향해 쏘았다. 이 어쩐 기괴한 광경이냐! 전등불은 아직 끄지 않았는데 침대 위에는 기숙생들에게 온 소위 러브레터의 봉투가 너저분하게 흩어졌고, 그 알맹이도 여기저기 두서없이 펼쳐진 가운데 B 여사 혼자—아무도 없이 저 혼자 일어나 앉았다. 누구를 끌어당길 듯이 두 팔을 벌리고 안경을 벗은 근시안으로 잔뜩 한 곳을

"I hate you. I *detest* men like you!"

This time a tone of cold refusal.

"My angel, my sky, my queen, my life, my love! I beg you, spare me, *please!*"

The man cries in agony…

"Shall we go have a look?"

The mischievous third girl sat up, suggesting. The others rose in agreement, each exchanging looks. They wavered in hesitation a few moments, shades of doubt, fear, and curiosity mingled on their faces. Finally, they opened the door softly and crept out. Their toes wiggled toward the sound, each like tiny rice weevils. Their pale silhouettes stirred silently, like shadows along the dark hallway.

They found the room easily. And in their shock, each turned rigid like boards. Who could have guessed! The source of the sound, only a few paces from their own, was Mistress B's room! The same Mistress B who would happily spit in the face of any man! From within, the young man's exacerbated woes continue…

"My angel, my sky, my queen, my life, my *love*! Will you drag out my love and slay me? Will you carve out my heart and end me? With those lips, those which control my fate…"

The mischievous third girl boldly cracked open the door and six eyes peered into the room. And what a bizarre sight it was! With the electric lamp still burning, envelopes belonging to the students' so-called love letters were strewn across the bed, their contents scattered here and there. Perched among them was the Mistress, alternating poses—completely alone. With her arms stretched out, she reaches to pull someone close; without the aid of her spectacles, her short-sighted eyes strain to locate their target. Her

노리며 그 굴비쪽같은 얼굴에 말할 수 없이 애원하는 표정을 짓고는 키스를 기다리는 것같이 입을 쫑긋이 내어민 채 사내의 목청을 내어 가면서 아까 말을 중얼거린다. 그러다가 그 넋두리가 끝날 겨를도 없이 급작스레 앵돌아지는 시늉을 내며 누구를 뿌리치는 듯이 연해 손짓을 하며 이번에는 톡톡 쏘는 계집의 음성을 지어,

"난 싫어요. 당신 같은 사내는 난 싫어요."

하다가 제물에 자지러지게 웃는다. 그러더니 문득 편지 한 장(물론 기숙생에게 온 러브레터의 하나)를 집어 들어 얼굴이 문지르며,

"정말이야요? 나를 그렇게 사랑하셔요? 당신의 목숨같이 나를 사랑하셔요? 나를, 이 나를."

하고 몸을 추스르는데 그 음성은 분명히 울음의 가락을 띠었다.

"에그머니, 저게 웬일이냐!"

첫째 처녀가 소곤거렸다.

"아마 미쳤나 보아, 밤중에 혼자 일어나서 왜 저러고 있을꼬."

둘째 처녀가 맞방망이를 친다…….

"에그 불쌍해!"

하고 셋째 처녀는 손으로 괸 때 모르는 눈물을 씻었다.

dried, fish-like face is puckered up in anticipation, impatient for a kiss. One moment she grumbles pleas in a masculine low-tone, the next, she assumes a woman's rejecting mode, waving her arms in protest.

"I hate you. I *hate* men like you!"

Then, in an eruption of laughter, she snatches up another letter (one addressed to a student) and rubs it over her face.

"Really?" she cries. "You really love me that much? You love me with your whole life? *Me?*"

She draws herself in, a tearful pinch caught in her throat.

"Oh my, what *is* this!" whispered the first girl.

"She must be mad," chimed the second. "What else could explain this?"

"How sad…" muttered the third, swiping away the unbidden tears brimming in her eyes.

Translating Marek Hłasko's "Searching for Stars"

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Marek Hłasko (1934-1969) emerged as a writer before the age of twenty, when Poland was still under Stalinist rule. He belonged to a generation deeply marked by the destruction and disruptions of the Second World War and the German occupation. This meant that he had little formal education, and soon came to be seen as an *enfant terrible* of post-war Polish writing, combining a naturally rebellious temperament with the nihilistic spirit of many of his contemporaries. Hłasko was a product, he wrote, of wartime Poland; that was "the reason for the intellectual poverty of my short stories. Simply, I cannot think up a story that does not end in death, catastrophe, suicide or imprisonment" (Czyżewski, p. 24). He left Poland in 1958 and lived in France, Israel, the USA and Germany, where he died at the age of 35. He is best remembered for his short novels *The Eighth Day of the Week* (1957), *The Graveyards* (1958) and *Next Stop Paradise* (1958).

Most Holocaust literature has the power to shock. Hłasko's miniature has it in concentrated form, largely by having children as its protagonists, and indeed, a child guilty of the central act of betrayal. It shocks by the gradual disclosure of its theme, the late revelation of the sinister meaning concealed in the title, and by paradoxical details. Small acts of kindness towards Ewa are performed by a German in the firing squad, who rebukes the Polish policeman for taking a stuffed toy from her.

The narrative is spare, the dialogue economical. The final act, the execution, is not shown. Emotion is suppressed, but comes close to the surface in the last paragraph, describing the enduring effect of the scene on the young witness. A recurrent motif of remembering, of retaining in memory things which cannot and should not be forgotten, is strongly present. The boy is *zakochany na całe życie* (in love for his entire life), we are told in the first sentence, and reminded later in the opening scene, and again in the very last sentence. In a variation on this phrase, the boy's father says to his mother that he should never forget the scene he is about to witness: *niech [...] pamięta przez całe swoje życie* (let him remember for his entire life). Stylistic features such as this need to be replicated, as far as possible, in the translation.

Repetition as a device may pose a small problem for the translator, so careful consideration is needed: will the components which need repeating work as effectively in the translation as in the original? Phrases which may be unexceptionable if used only once may obtrude and appear gauche if used twice, or, as here, four times. While various renderings may suggest themselves for *na całe życie*, e.g. "for the whole of his life", "for all of his life", "his whole life through", "until his dying day", preference has been accorded to an unobtrusive modulated version, intended as one which will withstand the repetition: "as long as he lived". ("All his life" combines readily with "remember", but less happily with "in love".)

Worth noting is the often vexed question of matching register in the translation of the commonest kinship terms: *father/dad/daddy*; *mother/mum/mummy*. Kornei Chukovsky has demonstrated that an overly-literal approach, taking the neutral Ukrainian and Russian words for "mother" to be stylistically "equivalent", may lead to highly unsatisfactory results (Chukovsky, pp. 62-64). French *mère* and *maman* often present Anglophone translators with the same problem, as may be seen in the much-discussed opening line of Albert Camus's novel *L'étranger* (1942): "Aujourd'hui maman est morte" (Bloom). In the case in hand, the translator has been guided primarily by the target-language (TL) context. Neutral "father" (*ojciec*) must be retained in the narrative, but when the children speak of their parents the same word is rendered by *my/your dad*, which also translates the familiar *tato* when the hero addresses his

father. Similarly, "for my/a child" (*dla dziecka*) was felt to be out of keeping with the tone of the dialogue, so by default the choice falls on *kid*, which also avoids the choice of "boy" or girl" where the sex of the policeman's child is unknown and irrelevant. Given the situation, it is possible, and indeed likely, that the exchange between the Polish policeman and the German soldier was actually in German – the narrative does not tell us – but this would not affect the chosen translation: *das Kind*, like Polish *dziecko*, does not indicate sex, and English *child* would be a doubtful match for the colloquial context.

A further problem arises here in the form of the potential ambiguities posed by the dropping of possessive pronouns, common in the source language (SL). Does the speaker mean his own child, or simply "*a* child" (my emphasis)? Similarly, given the absence of articles in Polish, does *zastrzelił Niemca* (shot a/the German), in the closing paragraph, refer to the German with whom the policeman was conversing, or a separate, unknown individual? In the translation, a choice has to be made, and that choice has little to do with linguistic factors; it relies solely on the balance of probabilities in the context.

The over-riding principle in the translation has been to match Hłasko's natural SL prose with natural TL prose in the narrative, in the children's dialogue and in adult dialogue. In 1813, the German philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher, in a famous essay, advocated a form of translation which communicated to the reader *ein Gefühl des Fremden* (a sense of the foreign), which he supposed the translator, as a non-native speaker of the SL, must experience. That translator would, Schleiermacher contended, "bring the reader to the author" (rather than the reverse) by producing a form of language different from that used by TL writers in their own language, and emphasizing the difference. This line of thinking has not influenced the translation of Hłasko's story below; it departs from the literal wherever the TL requires and any *Gefühl des Fremden* in the English translation is the result of accident rather than design.

Lawrence Venuti's "foreignizing" principle, which owes much to Schleiermacher, might perhaps be applied if any indication were given that at some point German was being spoken. In that case, it might usefully highlight the Polish-German divide, but since this is not stated, and the dialogue throughout is in natural Polish, there seems to be no sound reason to avoid traditional "domestication" (Venuti 1995/2008). The aim has been to achieve something as close as possible to equivalent effect, without blunting the emotional impact of Hłasko's striking narrative, and without dissonances and distractions of the kind which mismatched register may introduce.

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Szukając gwiazd
By Marek Hłasko

to Robert Azderdallow

Chłopiec miał dziewięć lat, był zakochany i wiedział już, że zakochany jest na całe życie. Powiedział to zresztą swojemu ojcu poprosiwszy uprzednio o dochowanie tajemnicy, ale później za namową ojca zgodził się, aby wtajemniczyć w to także i matkę, chociaż wątpił, aby matka umiała go zrozumieć. Dziewczynka, którą kochał nazywała się Ewa, była młodsza od niego o jeden miesiąc i dwanaście dni. Mieszkała z rodzicami w sąsiednim domu i przychodziła do chłopca wieczorami.

- Czy nie możesz przyjść wcześniej? – zapytał któregoś dnia.

- Nie – powiedziała.

- Dlaczego?

- Ojciec mi nie pozwala. Mogę wyjść z domu dopiero kiedy jest ciemno.

- Porozmawiam z twoim ojcem – powiedział chłopiec.

- Nie zgodzi się.

- Zobaczymy.

Siedzieli w szopie w której chłopiec hodował kiedyś króliki dopóki ktoś nieznajomy nie wdarł się w nocy i zabrał ich. Potem nie chciał już hodować królików; poprosił tylko ojca aby mógł urządzić sobie tę szopę i zachować ją dla siebie i aby nikt nigdy tu nie wchodził i ojciec jego zgodził się na to, poprosiwszy tylko, aby jesienią chłopiec pozwolił na zwalenie drzewa które mieli razem piłować. Tak zostało. Siedział teraz z dziewczynką na kupie trocin – sypkich, jasnych i pachnących; był wieczór, cicho, i słyszał bicie własnego serca i słyszał jak bije jej serce. Kiedy ma się dziewięć lat, to nie wie się jeszcze czym jest pożądanie, bo

Searching for Stars
By Marek HŁASKO
Translated by Kevin Windle

to Robert Azderdallow*

The boy was nine and in love and knew that he would be in love as long as he lived. He had told his father about it, having asked him beforehand to keep it a secret, but later, at his father's urging, he agreed to tell his mother, although he doubted whether she would be able to understand. The girl he loved was called Ewa, and she was one month and twelve days younger than him. She lived with her parents in the house next door and used to come and see him in the evenings.

"Can't you come any earlier?" he asked her one day.

"No," she said.

"Why not?"

"My dad won't let me. I can only go out after dark."

"I'll talk to him," said the boy.

"He won't agree."

"We'll see."

They were sitting in the shed where the boy had once kept rabbits, until somebody broke in one night and stole them. After that he hadn't wanted to keep rabbits anymore; he had asked his father if he could have the shed for himself, so that nobody else could ever come in. His father had agreed, asking only that the boy would let him use it to stack the firewood which they would saw up together in the autumn. So now he was sitting with the girl on a heap of powdery, scented, light-coloured sawdust; it was a quiet evening, and he could hear his own heart beating, as well as hers. At the age of nine, nobody yet knows what desire is, for later desire replaces

*Dedication as given, in English. Robert Azderball directed the films *Biały niedźwiedź* (1959) and *Eine Frau sucht Liebe* (1969). [*Trans.*]

wtedy pożądanie zastępuje ciekawość i zdziwienie, którego dostarcza drugie ciało i wtedy właśnie staje się suche, serce bije szybko a włosy jeżą się na głowie niby sierść psa. Ale o tym, iż ta ciekawość silniejsza jest od pożądania chłopiec nie wiedział. Siedział na kupie trocin obok dziewczynki, wodził rękami po jej ciele i wiedział tylko, że jest zakochany na całe życie.

- Przyjdź jutro wcześniej – powiedział.

- Spróbuję.

- Naprawdę nie chcesz, żebym pomówił z twoim ojcem?

- Ojciec jest chory – powiedziała. – Może kiedy indziej.

- Jutro już będę wiedzieć – powiedział.

- Od kogo?

- Od takiego jednego, który chodził ze mną do szkoły - powiedział. – Umówił się ze mną na jutro. Mam mu za to dać klatki. – Chłopiec westchnął. – Nie chciał mi niczego powiedzieć, dopóki nie zobaczy klatek.

- Myślisz, że on wie?

- Wie na pewno - powiedział. – Wiesz kto to jest? Nadera.

- Nadera – powtórzyła dziewczynka.

- Tak – powiedział szeptem. – To jest brat tego Nadery, wiesz. Jego ojciec jest kolejarzem; kiedy wychodzi z domu, to zamyka tamtego w piwnicy, albo przywiązuje łańcuchem za nogę. On ma już siedemnaście lat, ten większy Nadera. A to właśnie jego brat. I on mi powie.

- Myślisz, że będziemy to mogli robić?

- Jeśli nam tylko powie, - jak? A powie nam na pewno. Widzisz te klatki? Robiłem je z ojcem; trzeba tylko pociągnąć za sznurek i otwierają się. – Odwrócił się nagle i popatrzył na nią ale nie widział jej twarzy; widział tylko w ciemności błysk piły stojącej w kącie. – Będziesz się bać? – zapytał.

- Nie wiem – powiedziała.

- Jak będziesz mieć dziecko to muszą cię puszczać w dzień – powiedział. – Twoi starzy ... Nie będą mieli nic do gadania. Będziesz dorosła i będziesz mogła robić co chcesz.

- Muszę już iść - powiedziała.

- Tak - powiedział. – Odprowadzę cię.

curiosity and the surprise caused by another's body, and then one's throat goes dry, one's heart beats faster and one's hair bristles like the fur of a dog. But the boy did not know that this curiosity was stronger than desire. He sat beside the girl on the heap of sawdust, running his hands over her body, and knowing only that he would be in love as long as he lived.

"Come earlier tomorrow," he said.

"I'll try."

"Are you sure you don't want me to talk to your dad?"

"He's ill," she said. "Maybe another time."

"Tomorrow I'll find out," he said.

"Who from?"

"From a boy I used to go to school with. I'm seeing him tomorrow. I'm giving him the rabbit hutches in exchange," he sighed. "He won't tell me anything till he's seen the hutches."

"Do you think he knows?"

"I'm sure he does. You know who it is? Nadera."

"Nadera," the girl repeated.

"Yes," he whispered. "Nadera's brother. You know the one? His dad works on the railway. When he goes out he locks him in the cellar, or chains him up by the leg. He's seventeen, the older one. This one's his brother. And he'll tell me."

"Do you think we'll be able to do it?"

"Yes, if he just tells us how. And he'll tell us for sure. You see those hutches? I made them with my dad. You just pull the string and they open." He turned suddenly and looked at her, but could not see her face in the dark – only the glint of a saw standing in the corner. "Will you be afraid," he asked.

"I don't know," she said.

"If you're going to have a baby, they'll have to let you out during the day," he said. "Your mum and dad … They won't be able to say anything. You'll be grown up and can do what you like."

"I've got to go now," she said.

"Yes," he said. "I'll walk you home."

Czekał następnego dnia; był zniecierpliwiony, zły; ale kolega nie nadchodził. Był znowu wieczór, ciemno, siedział z Ewą na kupie trocin, które były ciepłe przejąwszy ciepło ich ciał, a wtedy usłyszał gwizd. Wstał i wyszedł na podwórko.

- Dlaczego tak późno? – zapytał.

- Nie mogłem przyjść wcześniej – powiedział tamten. – Ojciec się upił i robił awantury w domu. Teraz śpi. Gdzie masz te klatki?

- Chodź – powiedział chłopiec.

Weszli do szopy.

- To jest właśnie brat Nadery – powiedział chłopiec do Ewy. – Tego, którego ojciec przywiązuje łańcuchem. Przyszedł po klatki.

- Ale muszę już iść – powiedziała dziewczynka.

- Nie chcesz poczekać?

Pokręciła głową.

- Przepraszam cię - powiedział chłopiec do kolegi. – Mamy tajemnicę. To tylko chwila.

- Popatrzę se na te klatki - powiedział tamten.

- Dobrze.

Odszedł z dziewczynką w kąt.

- Dlaczego nie chcesz poczekać? – zapytał. – Przecież on właśnie po to przyszedł, żeby nam powiedzieć.

- Jeśli nie wrócę do domu, to jutro w ogóle mnie nie puszczą – powiedziała szeptem. – Ty nie znasz mojego ojca.

Uścisnął jej dłoń.

- Tak – powiedział. – Idź. Ja tu przez ten czas wszystko załatwię. Ale przyjdź jutro wcześniej.

- To zajmie nam dużo czasu? - zapytała.

- Nie wiem – powiedział. – Nie robiłem przecież tego nigdy – Ale dziecko jest dzieckiem. To chyba nie idzie tak raz dwa.

Dziewczynka wyszła. Młody Nadera patrzył za nią dopóki nie weszła do domu i nie zamknęła drzwi.

- Co to za frajerka? – zapytał.

- Taka jedna - powiedział chłopiec.

- Z Warszawy?

- Tak.

The next day he waited. He was restless and out of sorts, but his schoolfriend did not come. Again in the dark of the evening he sat with Ewa on the heap of sawdust, which their bodies had warmed. Then he heard a whistle. He stood up and went out into the yard.

"Why so late?" he asked.

"I couldn't come any earlier," came the answer. "My dad got drunk and started making trouble at home. He's asleep now. Where are those rabbit hutches?"

"Come and see," said the boy.

They went into the shed.

"This is Nadera's brother," he said to Ewa. "His brother's the one their dad keeps on a chain. He's here for the hutches."

"But I've got to go," she said.

"Don't you want to wait?"

She shook her head.

"Sorry," said the boy to his friend. "We have a secret. I won't be a moment."

"I'll be looking at the hutches," replied the friend.

"All right."

He went into the corner with the girl.

"Why don't you want to wait?" he asked. "He's come specially to tell us."

"If I don't get back they won't let me come at all tomorrow," she whispered. "You don't know my dad."

He squeezed her hand.

"Right," he said. "Off you go. I'll see to everything. But come earlier tomorrow."

"Will it take us long?" she asked.

"I don't know. I've never done it. But a baby's a baby. I don't think you can make one in five minutes?"

The girl left. The younger Nadera watched her until she had entered her house and closed the door behind her.

"Who's that kid then?" he asked.

"Just someone I know."

"From Warsaw?"

"Yes."

- Czarna - powiedział kolega w zamyśleniu. – I włosy ma czarne, i oczy ma czarne.

Chłopiec wystawił lewą nogę do przodu, podbródek przycisnął do piersi.

- Nie podoba ci się? - zapytał. – Powiedz, że ci się nie podoba.

Tamten uderzył go nagle głową w brzuch, ale chłopiec znał go już, był przygotowany. Ojciec uczył go trochę jak bić; podskoczył teraz do tamtego, uderzył go silnie dwa razy i znów odskoczył w tył pamiętając o tym, aby nogi pracowały równo i aby noga szła za ciosem ręki.

- Powiem bratu – zaszlochał tamten.

- Nie boję się twojego brata – krzyknął chłopiec; wierzył teraz w to co mówi; trzymał tamtego za klapy marynarki i potrząsał nim. - Nie boję się nikogo, nikogo. – A potem odepchnął go i tamten pobiegł przez podwórko.

Wszedł do domu oglądając w świetle swoje pokrwawione ręce.

- Upadłeś? – zapytał ojciec.

- Nie - powiedział. – Pobiłem się z bratem Nadery.

- O co?

- Proszę?

- Ty już dobrze wiesz. Pytam: o co wam poszło?

- Nie mogę ci powiedzieć – powiedział cicho chłopiec.

- Mnie nie możesz powiedzieć?

Wskazał błagalnie na matkę.

- Nie mogę - powiedział.

- To co innego – powiedział ojciec. – Kładź się spać. – A potem, kiedy chłopiec leżał w łóżku przysiadł i pochylił się nad nim. – Czy powiedziałeś mu gdzie mieszka Ewa? – zapytał.

- On wie – powiedział chłopiec.

- A czy ty wiesz?

- Co, tato?

- Czy ty wiesz kim jest Ewa?

- Ewa? – powtórzył chłopiec. – Co chciałeś powiedzieć, tato?

- To nic - powiedział ojciec. – To dobrze. Ale ten Nadera. On chyba pracuje dla Niemców. Przynajmniej ludzie tak mówią. – Wstał nagle, podszedł do szafy; wyciągnął

"Very dark," said Nadera thoughtfully. "Dark hair, dark eyes."

The boy put his left foot forward and lowered his chin. "Don't you like her? Are you saying you don't like her?"

Nadera suddenly head-butted him in the stomach, but the boy knew him and was ready for him. His father had taught him a bit about fighting: he sprang up close, punched him hard twice, and sprang back again, remembering his footwork and that the leading foot should follow the punch.

"I'll tell my brother," sobbed Nadera.

"I'm not afraid of your brother," shouted the boy, meaning every word. He gripped him by the lapels and shook him. "I'm not afraid of him or anybody!" Then he pushed him away and Nadera scurried across the yard.

As he entered his house he looked at his bloodied hands in the light.

"Did you fall over?" asked his father.

"No," he replied. "I had a fight with Nadera's brother."

"What about?"

"Eh?"

"You heard. I asked what you were fighting about."

"I can't tell you," said the boy softly.

"You can't tell me?"

He gestured imploringly towards his mother. "No," he said.

"All right then. Go to bed." Later, when he was in bed, his father sat down and bent over him. "Did you tell him where Ewa lives?" he asked.

"He knows," said the boy.

"And do you know?"

"Know what, Dad?"

"Do you know who Ewa is?"

"Ewa?" repeated the boy. What do you mean, Dad?"

"Nothing. That's fine. But that Nadera may be working for the Germans. Or so people say." He rose, went quickly to the wardrobe, and took out his rucksack,

stamtąd plecak, kożuch i czapkę narciarską. – Wam nic nie zrobią - powiedział. – Ale ja wolę się ulotnić na parę dni. – I powiedział do matki: - Idź tam do nich i powiedz im, że będzie lepiej jeśli znikną stąd na parę dni. Ja się boję tych Naderów. Może się mylę, ale wolę odczekać.

Matka wyszła.

- Czy wiesz, tato – powiedział chłopiec zasypiając – że tego Naderę ojciec przywiązuje łańcuchem jak wychodzi? A kiedyś nawet zamknął go w piwnicy i ten Nadera siedział tam trzy dni? – A potem zapomniał już Naderę; pomyślał tylko z żalem, że nie dowiedział się tego czego chciał się dowiedzieć; i że Ewa będzie musiała poczekać jeszcze jakiś czas i wychodzić z domu dopiero o zmroku. Nie słyszał już kiedy wróciła jego matka.

- No i co? - zapytał ojciec.

- Nie chcą odejść – powiedziała. – Mówią, że nie mają dokąd iść. I że tak musi się stać wcześniej czy później. – Patrzyła na jego grube, ciemne dłonie szarpiące się ze sznurowaniem plecaka. – I ty chcesz teraz odejść? – powiedziała.

- I tak nie potrafiłbym was obronić – powiedział. – Nic wam nie zrobią. Wierzę w to. Ale rozwalą tamtych.

- Czy nic nie można zrobić?

- Teraz za wcześnie o tym mówić – powiedział. – Będziemy o tym myśleć kiedy skończy się wojna. Może Bóg zachowa Niemców a zachowa ich na pewno. Ja myślę że ze wszystkich narodów oni właśnie są najbardziej potrzebni Bogu i dlatego ich zachowa. Żeby wszyscy ludzie wiedzieli i czuli jak wygląda zło. Tylko po to, aby można było wybierać dobroć.

- Nie powinieneś tak mówić – powiedziała. – Jeśli jeszcze raz będziesz mógł nauczać, to chyba nie tego.

- Byłem złym nauczycielem – powiedział. – Ale nauczyłem się chyba czegoś. Kiedy skończy się wojna będę o tym mówić. A teraz pójdę aby ich zabijać i będę się modlić do Boga, aby ich zachował. Dam wam znać. – Zarzucał plecak na ramię, podszedł do łóżka i pocałował chłopca. Potem podszedł do pieca, ostrożnie wysunął jeden z kafli i

sheepskin coat and skiing cap. “They won’t do anything to you, but I’d best disappear for a day or two.” To the boy’s mother he said, “Go next door and tell them it’ll be best if they disappear for a few days. I don’t trust those Naderas. I could be wrong, but I’d rather get away and wait it out.”

His mother went out.

“Do you know,” said the boy sleepily to his father, “that Nadera’s dad chains his brother up when he goes out? And once he even locked him in the cellar and left him there for three days.” Then he forgot about Nadera, and only thought regretfully that he had not found out what he most wanted to know, and that Ewa would have to wait a while longer and only come out after dark. He did not hear when his mother returned.

“Well?” asked his father.

“They don’t want to leave,” she said. “They say they’ve nowhere to go, and that it’s bound to happen sooner or later.” She eyed his large dark hands as they tugged at the cords of his rucksack. “And now you want to leave too?” she asked.

“I wouldn’t be able to protect you anyway,” he said. “They won’t do anything to you. I’m sure of that. But they won’t spare the neighbours.”

“Can’t we do anything?”

“It’s too soon to talk about that,” he said. “We can think about that when this war is over. God’s sure to look after the Germans. Of all the people in the world, God needs them most, so he’ll look after them – that’s what I think – so that the whole world can see what evil looks like, and what it smells like. So they can choose the opposite.”

“You shouldn’t talk like that,” she said. “If you’re ever able to teach again, you can’t teach that.”

“I was a bad teacher. But I suppose I learned one thing. When the war is over I’ll tell you about it. But now I’m off to kill a few of them, and I’ll pray God to protect them. I’ll let you know.” He swung his rucksack onto his shoulder, bent over the bed and kissed the boy. Then he went to the stove, carefully pulled away one of the tiles and

wyjął owinięty w tłustą szmatę pistolet. – Weź jutro trochę gipsu i zasmaruj ten kafel - powiedział.

- Idź z Bogiem.

- Z Bogiem - powiedział. – I powiedz mu, żeby dobrze patrzył jak będą ich zabijać. Niech patrzy i niech się uczy. I niech ich pamięta przez całe swoje życie.

Ojciec wyszedł zamknąwszy cicho drzwi za sobą. Ale chłopiec spał twardo i nie słyszał wychodzącego ojca. Nie słyszał nawet ich, kiedy podjechali pod dom o godzinie czwartej rano; nie słyszał nawet ich głosów i walenia do drzwi, i szczekania psa; spał dalej nie wiedząc nic o ich obecności i o hałasie, który wnieśli z sobą o godzinie czwartej rano. Obudził się dopiero wtedy, kiedy potrząsnęła nim matka i usiadł na łóżku: czujny i wypoczęty, jak młode zwierzę.

- Ubieraj się – powiedziała matka.

- Przecież jest niedziela – powiedział chłopiec.

- Tak – powiedziała matka. – Potem znowu położysz się spać, ale teraz wstawaj.

Włożył ubranie i wyszedł przed dom. Chciał podbiec do samochodu ale matka złapała go za rękę. Stała na ganku drewnianego starego domu i oddychała głośno; a on czuł ciepło jej dłoni.

- Co to będzie? - zapytał. - Czy coś się stało, mamo? - Nie odpowiedziała mu, więc jeszcze raz powtórzył: - Czy coś się stało?

Patrzył na maskę samochodu lśniącą od rosy, na psa leżącego z wywieszonym ozorem i na lufy karabinów – potem zagwizdał cicho i pies uniósł czujnie spiczaste uszy. Policjant, który stał z boku wystąpił teraz naprzód i powiedział:

- Idźcie za nami.

- Dokąd nas prowadzicie? – zapytała matka chłopca.

- To tylko kawałek – powiedział policjant. – Popatrzcie sobie i wrócicie do domu.

- Pójdę sama – powiedziała matka. – Nie trzeba, żeby dziecko patrzyło na takie rzeczy. Pan to chyba zrozumie.

Policjant wahał się przez chwilę.

drew out a pistol wrapped in a greasy cloth. “Get some plaster and fix that tile tomorrow,” he said.

“Go, and God be with you.”

“God bless us. And tell the boy to watch carefully when they kill them. Let him watch and learn from it, and remember them for as long as he lives.”

The father went out, closing the door softly behind him. But the boy was sound asleep and did not hear him leave. He still heard nothing when the car drew up outside at four in the morning; he did not even hear the voices or the thumping on the door or the dog barking; he slept on, knowing nothing of the callers or the clamour they brought with them at four in the morning. He woke only when his mother shook him; then he sat up in bed, alert and fresh, like a young animal.

“Get dressed,” said his mother.

“But it’s Sunday,” said the boy.

“Yes. You can go to bed again later, but now get up.”

He dressed and went out in front of the house. He wanted to run to the car but his mother grabbed his hand. As she stood in the porch of the old wooden house he heard her loud breathing and felt the warmth of her hand.

“What’s happening?” he asked. “Has something happened, Mummy?” She said nothing, so he asked again, “Has something happened?”

He looked at the bonnet of the car, gleaming with dew, at the dog which lay with its tongue hanging out, and at the barrels of the rifles; then he gave a low whistle and the dog pricked up its pointed ears watchfully. A policeman who had been standing to one side stepped forward and said, “Come with us.”

“Where are you taking us?” the boy’s mother asked.

“Not very far. You’ll just watch and then go back home.”

“I’ll go by myself,” said his mother. “It’s not right for a child to see things like that. I’m sure you understand that.”

The policeman hesitated for a moment. “Orders are orders,” he said unwillingly.

- Taki jest rozkaz – powiedział niechętnie. – Powiedziane było, że wszyscy mają patrzyć. Dla przykładu.

Poszli za policjantem i Niemcami. Matka wciąż trzymała jego rękę i chłopiec wstydził się; próbował uwolnić się raz i drugi ale matka trzymała mocno. Żałował, że nie ma ojca: ojciec nigdy nie robiłby czegoś takiego. Najwyżej położyłby mu rękę na ramieniu i wtedy wyglądaliby po prostu jak dwaj koledzy wracający po pracy do domu.

Stali potem i patrzyli jak ojciec Ewy i chłop u którego mieszkał kopali dół pracując szybko i w milczeniu. Widział Ewę, którą jej matka trzymała za rękę tak samo jak i jego matka i wtedy szarpnął się ku niej, ale matka była silniejsza. Stał więc i patrzył. Widział jak któryś z Niemców podszedł do płaczącej Ewy i pogłaskał ją po głowie.

- Nie płacz mała - powiedział. – Wiesz, kim jesteśmy?

- No? – powiedziała Ewa.

- My jesteśmy poszukiwaczami gwiazd – powiedział. – Szukamy żółtych gwiazd.

- Przynieście jej lalkę – powiedział do policjanta.

- Lalkę? – zdziwił się policjant.

- Tak – powiedział Niemiec. – Coś dla zabawy.

Policjant wszedł do domu i wyszedł stamtąd po chwili trzymając pluszowego niedźwiedzia.

- Ile one ma lat? – zapytał Niemiec matkę Ewy.

- Osiem.

Niemiec podał jej niedźwiedzia i Ewa stała teraz z niedźwiedziem w ręku.

- No – powiedział. – Nie bój się. Znasz bajkę o wilku i siedmiu koźlątkach? Nie? Pewnego razu Mama-koza powiedziała do swoich dzieci: „Nie otwierajcie teraz nikomu kiedy mnie nie będzie" i poszła. Wtedy pod dom przyszedł wilk i zapukał łapą do drzwi. „Kto tam?" zapytały koźlęta. A on na to: „To ja, wasza babcia". A dlaczego masz taki gruby głos, babciu?" - zapytały koźlęta...

Policjant podszedł do niego i powiedział:

- Gotowe. Czy mają się rozebrać?

- Nie – powiedział Niemiec.

"They told us everybody has to watch. As an example."

They walked behind the policeman and the Germans. His mother kept hold of his hand and the boy was ashamed; he tried to free his hand but his mother held it tightly. He regretted that his father was not there: he would never have done such a thing. At most he would have put a hand on his shoulder, so they would have looked like two friends on their way home from work.

Then they stood and watched while Ewa's father and the peasant whose house they shared dug a pit, working quickly and in silence. He saw Ewa, whose mother was holding her hand just like his own mother, and tried to run to her, but his mother was stronger. So he stood and watched. He saw one of the Germans go over to Ewa, who was crying, and stroke her hair.

"Don't cry, little one," he said. "Do you know who we are?"

"No," said Ewa.

"We're the star-seekers," he said. "We look for yellow stars."

"Bring her a doll," he said to the policeman.

"A doll?" said the policeman, surprised.

"Yes," said the German. "Something to play with."

The policeman went into the house and came back shortly with a toy bear.

"How old is she?" the German asked Ewa's mother.

"Eight."

The German handed her the bear and Ewa stood holding it.

"There," he said. "Don't be afraid. Do you know the story of the wolf and the seven little kids? You don't? Once upon a time a mummy goat said to her children: 'Don't open the door while I'm away,' and off she went. Then a wolf came along and knocked on the door: 'Who's there?' said the little ones, and he said, 'It's me, your granny.' 'Why is your voice so deep, Granny?' they asked …"

The policeman went over to the German and said, "Everything's ready. Do they have to strip?"

Policjant wyciągnął rękę do Ewy.

- Daj tego niedźwiedzia, mała – powiedział.

- Dlaczego jej to odbieracie? – zapytał Niemiec.

- Chciałem dla dziecka – powiedział policjant.

- Przecież widzicie, że to też jest dziecko – powiedział Niemiec. – Dziwny z pana ale człowiek. Niech pan się wstydzi.

Wracali potem do domu i chłopiec płacząc cieszył się, że to jednak matka była razem z nim a nie ojciec. Bo przy ojcu wstydziłby się płakać i nic nie umiał na to poradzić. W ciągu następnych dni partyzanci zabili Naderę i jego najstarszego syna; jakiś młody człowiek w biały dzień zastrzelił Niemca na peronie stacji, a jakaś rodzina żydowska popełniła samobójstwo kładąc się nocą na szynach kolejowych – chłopiec wiedział to wszystko, słyszał o tym wszystkim i pomału zapominał. Płakał jednak od czasu do czasu; wtedy właśnie, kiedy przypominał sobie, że nigdy już nie będzie mógł mieć żony i dzieci, bo przysiągł już wierność; i że zakochany jest przecież na całe życie.

1962

"No," said the German.

The policeman held out his hand to Ewa. "Give me the bear, kid," he said.

"Why are you taking it?" asked the German.

"For my kid," said the policeman.

"Can't you see this one's a kid too? You're a strange one. You ought to be ashamed."

Afterwards, on the way home, the boy cried but was glad after all that his mother was with him, not his father. If his father had been there he would have been ashamed of crying, but he had to cry and couldn't help it. Over the next few days some partisans killed Nadera and his eldest son; a young man shot a German in broad daylight on the station platform; a Jewish family committed suicide by lying on the rails at night. The boy knew about all of this; he heard it all, and gradually forgot. But he wept from time to time, when he remembered that now he would never have a wife and children, because he had sworn to be true, and that he would be in love for as long as he lived.

1962

A Yi's "The Doctor" in English Translation

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I learned a lot from this translation, one of main things being that author A Yi enjoys crafting stories that act like bear-traps. If he never intended for a translator to lose sleep over the definite article in the title, then I would have to apologise for this accusation. But it seems unlikely, because nothing else in this tiny story happens by accident.

Why the lost sleep? The explicit concrete/abstract distinction made by the English indefinite "a" and definite "the" engages one of the central themes, but it is only implicit in the article-free Chinese, leaving the translator guessing. Some phrases have a strong lean to the general or the specific and are relatively easy, but A Yi is continually switching back and forth, leaving key phrases (like the title) ambiguous. Possibly accidentally, because the ambiguity is natural in Chinese, possibly deliberately, to keep the reader guessing.

The possibility of this being accidental starts to look increasingly unlikely in light of the intricate structure of the story, where every element has a contrasting partner, and these pairs are themselves related in pairs. There is that concrete/abstract duality, two branches to the doctor's story and, of course, two sons. There is also a nature/humanity duality, a modern/traditional duality, and probably others I have not spotted. Eventually everything "has a part to play" in the doctor's death; none of the pairs are allowed to stand in isolation. Every pair is paired with every other.

But none of the dualities are "clean" contrasts. The clearest example is the doctor himself. A symbol of pure abstraction if ever there was one, he first enters the story without a physical presence, and his fatal crime in the eyes of the girl is abstraction, a physical remoteness. But what kind of spirit of pure abstraction has a hole in its sock? Similarly, the villagers are as crazy as a bucketful of frogs and believe in the King of the Underworld and lynchings. However, "A doctor had made a girl drink pesticide, and then couldn't save her. So the villagers put him to death" is clearly a kind of logic, as inevitable as the deduction that Socrates is mortal.

It seemed on my first reading that delving into the structure of the story and trying to unravel the abstract/specific duality and its role in the drama was the best way to solve translation problems such as: should the second paragraph begin, "On one of the doctor's consultation visits" or "the first consultation visit" or "a single consultation visit"? But going down that road opens up an Escher-like structure where everything is connected to everything else, and every extreme also contains its opposite. Ultimately, it is what it is, and there is no simpler way of saying it than through the story itself. I can only hope that A Yi has derived some satisfaction from crafting his trap, and that the translation follows the original closely enough to share the pain a little.

Honestly, I have come to think that the most critically important character here is not the doctor, but rather the policeman.

医生

阿乙

医生的鬼魂骚扰整个村庄。但是巨大的恐怖其实由人心引起，他们害怕，只要有点风就吓坏了。自从杀了医生，他们就觉得因果必来，很久时间没人管这事让他们不安。几个月后，当第一个警察走进乡村，他们才感到踏实。他们既觉得应该逮捕人，又本能地觉得不会。他们看着警察浑然不知地走进他们。每个人都出了一份力，在杀死医生时。

他们将医生杀得不成样子。

在一次问诊时，医生和少女建立类似于邪教的关系。长着大理石脸庞、深邃眼窝和洁白牙齿的他将听诊器贴到少女胸上，说“不抽烟的”，然后转过头来，对少女说：“不要紧的。”寡言少语的他就说了这么四个字，便拥有了无限的支配权，可以命令她做任何事。但他不这样，他矜持、冷漠。有时怕得罪对方，才挤出笑容或客套话。一切的主动在于信徒。少女在医生喝了她家一碗水后，不许家人碰那只碗，将它供奉在床头；医生的袜子露出一只洞，她心里便永记他白皙的脚踝，整个冬天都在打毛线袜子，打了很多，送不到对方手里—当别人想要穿时，她羞愤地要去死。

她终于死掉了。

在医生无意做出一个冷淡的动作后，她明白掉彼此间的关系。她知道他宽厚的手永远不可能抚摸她的乳房，就像朝圣者

The Doctor

By A Yi

Translated by Steven Langsford

The soul of the doctor disturbed the whole village. Though actually, the greatest terror came from within the hearts of the people. They were so scared they started at the slightest puff of wind. Ever since they'd killed the doctor, they'd felt that retribution was at hand, and as time stretched on and still no-one noticed, they grew uneasy. It wasn't until a few months later, when the first policeman entered the village, that they felt themselves back on solid ground. They all felt that there should be arrests, and instinctively knew that there wouldn't be any. They watched the policeman walk oblivious amongst them. Every one of them had played a part, the day the doctor was killed.

It had been a brutal death.

On one of the doctor's consultation visits to the girl, a cult-like dependency arose between them. With his marble face, deep-set eyes, and shining white teeth, he placed his stethoscope on her chest. “Non-smoker” he said. Then, turning his head, he spoke to the girl: “Nothing to worry about”. With just those four words, this taciturn man suddenly had complete power over her, the power to order her to do anything at all. But he didn't. He was reserved, cold. Sometimes, afraid of offending, he would squeeze out a smile or some fragment of small-talk. All the initiative came from the 'disciple'. After he accepted a drink of water from the household, the girl wouldn't let her family touch the bowl he'd used, enshrining it at the head of her bed. The doctor's sock had a hole: she remembered forever the pale patch of ankle, and knitted socks all winter. So many socks, that she never gave to him... but if anyone else wanted to wear them, she'd become horribly embarrassed.

In the end she died.

After one of the doctor's unconsciously cold gestures, an understanding of their relationship fell into place for her. She knew that his generous hands would never caress her breast, like a pilgrim coming to the end of a

跋涉千里，被神一脚踢翻。她自杀了，留下一封信，欲言又止，欲止又言，终于越说越开，进入谵妄状态。在信里：医生和少女亲吻、拥抱、不穿衣服行走在雪地、交媾。医生绝情、背叛、伟大、冷漠、温和。

一个医生让一个姑娘喝了农药，同时还救不活她。因此村民处死医生。

填补医生空缺的会计的儿子，吊儿郎当，被县城卫校开除，连自己的感冒也治不好。人们在他身上建立不起崇拜、迷信，不能拜倒在他的权威之下，得到他的保佑。从此，村里人看病要去几十里外的县里。有些人宁死不去。

医生是在一个大风之夜来到村庄的。他说他能治疗他们肚子里的虫，以此换取到定居的资格，由此也背负起由无尽期望带来的风险。村庄一直没死过人，但在医生死掉一个儿子后，死亡像阴影笼着它。

他不能责怪那些一起游泳的小孩。他搬走的消息传出来，但一直没走。直到他的第二个儿子长大可以读书了，他还是背着医疗箱像知识分子走在田野。他就像一块冰拒绝了少女的诱惑，灿烂而遥远地走在南方暖和的村庄。有一天这个儿子也死掉了，应该是疯子掐死的。没什么能解除这种悲伤。因此当疯子被放回来后，就死在水泥桥上。因为洪水冲刷，桥是歪斜的。疯子吊在桥板上，赤身裸体。村庄没有任何反应，那只是一个疯子，由阎王爷寄托在这里的虱子。

thousand-mile pilgrimage only to be kicked flat on their back by their god. She committed suicide, leaving a note behind with words that stumbled into silences, silences that burst with pent-up words, in a flow which became a torrent which became a frenzy. In the note, the doctor and the girl kissed, embraced, walked naked in the snow, possessed each other. The doctor broke it off, betrayed her, grandly, coldly, gently.

A doctor had made a girl drink pesticide, and then couldn't save her. So the villagers put him to death.

The gap he left was filled by the accountant's son, a complete slacker who was kicked out by the county health department, a man who couldn't even treat his own colds. No one would ever worship him, superstitiously believe in him, no one would ever bow to his imposing presence and receive his protection. From then on, the villagers had to go 40-odd *li* up into the county to see a doctor. Some people just wouldn't go, no matter what.

The doctor came to the village on a stormy night. He said he could cure the worms in their bellies, and in this way at a stroke he both earned a place to stay, and shouldered the risks of limitless, boundless hope. No-one had ever died in the village, but after the doctor lost a son, death enveloped them like the dark shadow of a cloud.

He could not blame the kids, who had all gone swimming together. The word went around that he was moving out, but he never moved. His second son grew up and went to school, and all the while he carried his medical bag through the fields like an intellectual 'sent down' to the countryside. He rejected the girl's overtures like a block of ice, brilliant and remote as he moved through the warm southern village. One day this son also died, apparently strangled by some lunatic. Nothing could relieve that kind of sorrow. So when the lunatic was released back to the village, he died on the concrete bridge. The rush of flood-waters had left the bridge leaning at an angle. The lunatic hung from a beam, naked. There was no reaction in the village. It was just a

两个月后, 在少女喝农药死掉后, 人们谋杀了医生。医生的房子开始长出青苔, 青蛙在里边跳跃。没有人给他和他两个儿子上香。

医生第一次出现在村庄时, 背上背着一个孩儿, 手里牵着一个孩儿。一个睡熟了, 一个困死了。这个鳏夫找到这个距最近的卫生所有四十里的地方。他冷峻而理性地走进村长家。这是冷峻和理性这两个词, 第一次出现在村庄。

lunatic, a flea sent up here by the King of the Underworld.

Two months later, after the girl drank pesticide and died, the people murdered the doctor. Moss began to grow on the doctor's house, frogs jumped around inside. No-one burned incense for him and his two sons.

When the doctor first appeared in the village, he had one child on his back, and held another by the hand. One was fast asleep, the other dazed with fatigue. The widower had found this place, forty *li* from the nearest clinic. Grave, rational, he entered the home of the village headman. For the first time, the two words 'grave' and 'rational' appeared in the village.

A Yi's "The Doctor" in English Translation

ANDREW ENDREY
University of Western Australia

"The Doctor" is a dark, edgy piece that is said to draw on A Yi's previous life as a police officer. His work has something in common with traditional Chinese Gothic literature, a genre that focuses on monsters, the supernatural, and the beast within humans, and has a history going back to the very beginning of literary records. There is also some similarity with more recent British Gothic fiction of the 18th and 19th centuries, and the "horror" literature and movies of the 20th century, as exemplified in the writing of Stephen King and James Herbert. While horror and fear are elements common to both Chinese and English Gothic fiction, in the Chinese genre, there is also a didactic function that exposes society's dark side. According to Jing Cao and Linda Dryden (18-25), Chinese Gothic represents humanity, while British Gothic dwells on the beastliness of humans.

A Yi writes in both traditions, aiming to shock but also to provide a social commentary. "The Doctor" is more than just a weird tale about a remote village populated by murderous hillbillies. A contemporary Chinese reader would be reminded of the many media accounts in recent years of medical practitioners who were killed by aggrieved patients or family members. These media reports suggest that the medical profession in China no longer enjoys the respect and high standing it once had, in the wake of a dramatic rise in the incidence of disputes between patients and hospitals.

A Yi's language is unadorned and spare, though his meaning can be obscure. The main challenge in translating this story was to achieve an equivalent level of unease and slight bewilderment by both English and Chinese readers of the text. The end result was a largely literal translation that sought to be faithful to the source text, rather than to present a freer version that would use more idiomatic English. A free translation seemed to run the risk of blunting the tension that A Yi creates with each sentence arriving in almost staccato-like bursts.

One departure from the source text was to provide an elaboration on the description of the doctor, which appears in the source text as 长着 大理石脸庞(literally: "his face of marble"). The literal translation seemed inadequate, suggesting "his marbled face", which, of course, would be quite wrong. In the end, "his face hewn out of marble" appeared to best capture the original without undue diversion.

A more definite deviation from a literal translation, which may be frowned upon by the purist, was translating 他们看着警察浑然不知地走近他们 (literally: "they watched the policeman walk in among them without any idea") as "they watched the policeman plod clueless into their midst". This seemed a rather obvious allusion to the derogatory term for a policeman of "PC Plod", and a pun on "clueless". I allowed myself this licence as I felt it was consistent with the underlying dark humour and irony of the short story.

The late Pierre Ryckmans once said that the key to a good translation was to love the text one translates. I can only add that the profession and the art of translating should always be a labour of love. I have to thank AALITRA for its great work in supporting Australia's literary translators, and express gratitude for the generous donations of the Chinese Cultural Centre in Sydney, Text Publishing, Giramondo, and Margaret River Press.

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医生

阿乙

医生的鬼魂骚扰整个村庄。但是巨大的恐怖其实由人心引起,他们害怕,只要有点风就吓坏了。自从杀了医生,他们就觉得因果必来,很久时间没人管这事让他们不安。几个月后,当第一个警察走进乡村,他们才感到踏实。他们既觉得应该逮捕人,又本能地觉得不会。他们看着警察浑然不知地走进他们。每个人都出了一份力,在杀死医生时。

他们将医生杀得不成样子。

在一次问诊时,医生和少女建立类似于邪教的关系。长着大理石脸庞、深邃眼窝和洁白牙齿的他将听诊器贴到少女胸上,说“不抽烟的”,然后转过头来,对少女说:“不要紧的。”寡言少语的他就说了这么四个字,便拥有了无限的支配权,可以命令她做任何事。但他不这样,他矜持、冷漠。有时怕得罪对方,才挤出笑容或客套话。一切的主动在于信徒。少女在医生喝了她家一碗水后,不许家人碰那只碗,将它供奉在床头;医生的袜子露出一只洞,她心里便永记他白皙的脚踝,整个冬天都在打毛线袜子,打了很多,送不到对方手里——当别人想要穿时,她羞愤地要去死。

她终于死掉了。

在医生无意做出一个冷淡的动作后,她明白掉彼此间的关系。她知道他宽厚的手永

The Doctor

By A Yi

Translated by Andrew Endrey

The doctor's ghost was harassing the entire village. But the great terror was in fact all in their minds. They were afraid, and the slightest breeze would scare them witless. Ever since they had killed the doctor they thought that the day of reckoning was sure to come. It made them uneasy that for some time no one had bothered about it. They were relieved when, after several months, the first policeman walked into the village. They felt that an arrest was bound to be made while instinct told them that it was not going to happen. They watched the policeman plod clueless into their midst. They had all done their bit, in the killing of the doctor.

It was horrendous how they had done the doctor in.

During a consultation, the doctor had entered into a cult-like relationship with a young girl. With his face hewn out of marble, his deep-set eyes and dazzling white teeth, he placed his stethoscope to the girl's chest and said: "Non-smoker". He then turned his head to her, saying: "Nothing serious". A man of few words, this was all he needed to have said to gain total control over her, and to have her obey his every command. But that was not him, he was reserved, detached. At times, afraid of offending his interlocutor, he would put on a forced smile or come out with some polite chit-chat. The initiative was entirely in the hands of his disciple. After the doctor had drunk from a bowl of water at her place, she would allow no one in the family to touch that bowl which she then placed beside her bed to be venerated. She had fixed in her memory the sight of his fair ankle peeping through a hole in his sock. She spent the whole winter knitting woollen socks, a pile of them, which she could not present to the other party. When others wanted to wear them, she burned with shame and resentment.

She died in the end.

When the doctor, not giving it a thought, behaved indifferently towards her, she saw their relationship for what it was. She knew

远不可能抚摸她的乳房,就像朝圣者跋涉千里,被神一脚踢翻。她自杀了,留下一封信,欲言又止,欲止又言,终于越说越开,进入谵妄状态。在信里:医生和少女亲吻、拥抱、不穿衣服行走在雪地、交媾。医生绝情、背叛、伟大、冷漠、温和。

一个医生让一个姑娘喝了农药,同时还救不活她。因此村民处死医生。

填补医生空缺的会计的儿子,吊儿郎当,被县城卫校开除,连自己的感冒也治不好。人们在他身上建立不起崇拜、迷信,不能拜倒在他的权威之下,得到他的保佑。从此,村里人看病要去几十里外的县里。有些人宁死不去。

医生是在一个大风之夜来到村庄的。他说他能治疗他们肚子里的虫,以此换取到定居的资格,由此也背负起由无尽期望带来的风险。村庄一直没死过人,但在医生死掉一个儿子后,死亡像阴影笼着它。

他不能责怪那些一起游泳的小孩。他搬走的消息传出来,但一直没走。直到他的第二个儿子长大可以读书了,他还是背着医疗箱像知识分子走在田野。他就像一块冰拒绝了少女的诱惑,灿烂而遥远地走在南方暖和的村庄。有一天这个儿子也死掉了,应该是疯子掐死的。没什么能解除这种悲伤。因此当疯子被放回来后,就死在水泥桥上。因为洪水冲刷,桥是歪斜的。疯子吊在桥板

that his generous hands would never stroke her breasts; it was as if she had trekked a thousand *li* to see a holy man and the spirit had booted her aside. She took her own life, leaving behind a letter that was both guarded and rambling. She eventually became more open as she wrote, whipping herself into a state of delirium. The letter said that the doctor and the young girl had kissed, embraced, strolled naked through the snow, and had intercourse. The doctor had broken off the affair, forsaken her, great, indifferent, gentle.

A doctor had made a young lady take pesticide and at the same time was unable to save her life. And so the villagers had executed the doctor.

The accountant's son who filled the doctor's vacancy was a slob who had been expelled from medical school in a county town; he couldn't even treat his own cold. Nothing about him could inspire adulation or blind faith, and people would not prostrate themselves before his authority to receive his blessing. From then on, villagers had to travel tens of *li* within the county to see a doctor, and some of them simply preferred to die.

The doctor had come into the village on a night when the wind howled. He said that he could cure their intestinal parasites; it gave him in exchange the right to reside there permanently, and it endowed him with the risk of meeting their boundless expectations. No one in the village died but when one of the doctor's sons died, the death cast a pall over the village.

He couldn't blame the youngsters who had been swimming with his son. Word got around that he was moving away but he never left. Right up to the time that his second son was of school age, he still walked around the fields carrying his medical kit like an intellectual. He spurned the seductions of young women like a block of ice. Resplendent yet remote, he walked into this warm village of the south. One day, the second son died as well, most likely throttled to death by the lunatic. There was nothing that could dispel this kind of sadness. And so, after the lunatic had been released and returned to the village he was put to death on the cement bridge. As

上,赤身裸体。村庄没有任何反应,那只是一个疯子,由阎王爷寄托在这里的虱子。

两个月后,在少女喝农药死掉后,人们谋杀了医生。医生的房子开始长出青苔,青蛙在里边跳跃。没有人给他和他两个儿子上香。

医生第一次出现在村庄时,背上背着一个孩儿,手里牵着一个孩儿。一个睡熟了,一个困死了。这个鳏夫找到这个距最近的卫生所有四十里的地方。他冷峻而理性地走进村长家。这是冷峻和理性这两个词,第一次出现在村庄。

flood waters had washed over it, the bridge sloped at an angle. The lunatic was hung off the bridge, stark naked. There was no reaction in the village as this was just a lunatic, a louse placed in their care by the King of Hell.

Two months later, after the young girl had died from drinking the pesticide, the doctor was murdered. Moss began to grow over the doctor's house and frogs hopped around inside. No one burned incense in memory of him and his two sons.

When the doctor first appeared in the village, he carried a child on his back and led another by the hand. One was sound asleep, the other about to nod off. This widower had found this place that was forty *li* from the nearest clinic. He strode sober and rational into the home of the village head. It was the first time that the words "sober" and "rational" had ever turned up in the village.

Rong Rong's 圓規 in English Translation

CONNIE GUANG PAN
Central Queensland University

A poem is not merely a sequence of words, carefully structured and cleverly ordered. It has a personality; it feels as we do. Each poem has a distinctive character, temperament and outlook. Some poems are candid and open, others more reticent. Some are impulsive and reckless, others more evenly tempered.

Rong Rong's poems have been likened to those by the "Misty Poets" (朦胧诗人), a group of 20th century Chinese poets renowned for embracing realism and intentionally obscure writing styles. However, I find Rong Rong's work more animated, teeming with a child-like vivacity that interweaves through and enlivens the melancholic undertones. Rong Rong has an uncanny ability to capture the essence of everyday experiences and encounters.

Translating Rong Rong's poem was not merely an exercise of converting one set of words into an equivalent one. It required new words that would produce an equivalent personality, mood and aura, complete with the same slippery idiosyncrasies that only the most intimate of friends see. The translator must therefore not merely read and ponder the poem, but befriend it, listen to its stories, build trust in it and wait for it to confide in him or her. And, like the development of any friendship, the process is an unpredictable and potentially protracted one, often emotionally draining but invariably rewarding. It took ten minutes to read through Rong Rong's poem, but more than ten days to get to know it.

The best of friends celebrate your triumphs and share your disappointments – they laugh and cry with you. To convey the feelings contained in Rong Rong's poem, I had to first feel them myself; to truly feel them in all their ardency and anguish. I revelled in weightless bliss with my floral skirt floating in the wind. With that once-upon-a-time sentiment in mind, "有一天突然回到]从前" inspired the opening of a fairy tale, so I chose "the beginning", although it might have been literally closer to "the past". Later on, my forehead crumpled in silent frustration, cajoled into circling in perpetual incarceration. In this angst-ridden predicament, I chose the more active and damaging word, "turbulent" for "紊乱[的梦成了暗伤]", although it might be more commonly understood as "disordered".

In the end, did they find happiness, or at least some form of contented compromise? Did she convince him that commitment was both necessary and desirable, or merely entrap him by the unbearable weight of her affections? Only a few words divide forbearance from helplessness, devotion from defeated submission.

People remain enigmas; we cherish them all the same. So too, do poems, and we cherish them more for it.

圓規
作者榮榮

依赖 就是他是她的左脚而
她是他的右脚
就是一个围着另一个

就是想一直前行
有一天突然回到从前
呵 多么奢侈的从前

——两只恩爱的走兽
她的被风掀开的碎花裙
他细腻而微凉的指尖

但现实绝不会那么规则
当他们尽可能地圆满
当两个人好得像一个人

——夜晚开始变得冷清
紊乱的梦 成了暗伤
他想走得更远 而她在坚守

“我仿佛在原地打转……”
“难道开始就意味着结束？……”
一个句号在行程里被无数次藏匿

Compass
By Rong Rong
Translated by Connie Guang Pan

Dependency, as if he was her left foot
And she his right foot
As if one revolved around the other

As if moving forward
Then one day, all of a sudden, returning to the beginning
Oh, what a lush beginning

– two tender creatures
Her wind-blown ruffled floral skirt
His elegant cool fingertips

But the reality is rarely so harmonious
When they try to achieve unison
When the two are as if one

– the nights begin to dull
Turbulent dreams produce invisible injuries
He walks a little farther and she stays still

“I seem to be circling in the same spot,
Could the start really equate to the endpoint?”
A full stop obscured by countless orbits

Rong Rong's 圓規 in English Translation

ANNIE LUMAN REN
Australian National University

This poem by Rong Rong was not difficult to render into English, given that the imagery evoked here – the compass, an instrument used for drawing circles, representing two lovers in unison – is not unfamiliar to readers of Western poetry. The Italian poet Giovanni Battista Guarini (1538–1612) for instance, wrote the following lines:

> I am ever with you,
> agitated, but fixed,
> and if I steal my lesser part from you, I leave my greater.
> I am like the compass,
> Fixing one foot in you as in my center:
> the other endures the circlings of fortune
> but can by no means fail to circle around you
>
> (Guss 74)

A better-known example comes from John Donne's (1573-1631) *A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning*. In this poem, the English poet declares that since the lovers' two souls are of one, like two legs of a compass, their temporary separation is simply an expansion of their love, where one foot will eventually come home:

> Our two souls therefore, which are one,
> Though I must go, endure not yet
> A breach, but an expansion,
> Like gold to airy thinness beat.
> If they be two, they are two so
> As stiff twin compasses are two;
> Thy soul, the fixed root, makes no show
> To move, but doth, if thí other do.
> And though it in the center sit,
> Yet when the other far doth roam,
> It leans and hearkens after it,
> And grows erect, as that comes home
>
> (Gardner 187-8, lines 25-32)

Here, Donne ends his poem without imagining a real afterlife for his lovers. For him, as long as one leg stays firm, the lover's reunion is as natural as the innocent movements of the heavenly spheres: "Thy firmness makes my circle just/ And makes me end, where I begun" (Gardner 187-8, lines 35-6).

The last two stanzas of Rong Rong's poem breaks away from Donne's idealism by drawing a realistic and painful closure to the compass metaphor. When love has faded, the balanced, symmetrical, and natural movements of a compass become nothing but a symbol of boundaries, rules, conformity, and repetition. Liberation can only be won if one dares to break away from the circular movement of a compass and starts anew.

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圓規
作者榮榮

依賴 就是他是她的左腳而
她是他的右腳
就是一個圍著另一個

就是想一直前行
有一天突然回到從前
呵 多麼奢侈的從前

——兩隻恩愛的走獸
她的被風掀開的碎花裙
他細膩而微涼的指尖

但現實絕不會那麼規則
當他們盡可能地圓滿
當兩個人好得像一個人

——夜晚開始變得冷清
紊亂的夢 成了暗傷
他想走得更遠 而她在堅守

"我仿佛在原地打轉……"
"難道開始就意味著結束？……"
一個句號在行程裡被無數次藏匿

Compass
By Rong Rong
Translated by Annie Luman Ren

Dependence is when he becomes her left foot and she his right foot,
It is when one encompasses another

Wishing to travel forward like this until one day, suddenly returning to the past
Oh How excessive the past was

—Two creatures in love
Her floral skirt uplifted by the wind
His soft and slightly cold finger tips

Yet reality never obeys any rules
When they formed a complete circle
When two people appeared to be one

—The night becomes desolate
Tangled dreams
turn into secret wounds,
He wants to venture farther
while she holds fast

"It is as if I am moving in a circle…"
"Is it true that the starting point also signifies the end?..."
A full stop obscured within the journey over and over again

Phillip Damon has just competed combined Honours in Spanish and Latin American Studies and Literary Studies at Monash University in 2017. He is originally from Melbourne.

Kylie Doust is a PhD candidate at La Trobe University (LTU) in Melbourne, Australia studying the 'Translator's Habitus' in translation of fiction from Italian into English. She also works as an Italian language tutor at LTU and has translated two novels by Niccolò Ammaniti from Italian into English. In a past life she was a literary agent in Italy, advocating for the translation of Italian fiction into foreign languages.

Andrew Endrey teaches in the Master of Translation Studies program at the University of Western Australia in Perth. Andrew's research interests include literary translation; and modern Chinese literature post-1949. His translations have appeared in books and refereed journals including *Renditions* of the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Kate Garrett is a Melbourne based freelance translator, editor and writer. She has a particular interest in modern German history and enjoys translating German language memoirs and literature in her free time. She has an MA in translation studies from Monash University in Melbourne, Australia, and also reads and translates from Russian, Mandarin and Spanish.

Stathis Gauntlett is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities and currently a Senior Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Melbourne, Australia, where he was first appointed to the foundation lectureship in Modern Greek in 1973. He retired from the Dardalis Chair of Hellenic Studies at La Trobe University in 2006. His publications include books and articles on Greek literature and oral traditions and annotated literary translations.

Steven Langsford translates freelance and for South Australia's Interpreting and Translating Center. He has also taught translation courses at TAFE SA and Adelaide University. He studied Chinese in Beijing, Taipei, Changchun, and Adelaide, but can't stick to any one of those accents consistently. When not obsessing about translation and literature, he likes to obsess about cognitive science, which he studied as a PhD student at Adelaide University.

Thea Lendich completed a Bachelor of Philosophy with First Class Honours in French in 2015 at the University of Western Australia. For her Honours studies, she was awarded the JA Wood Memorial Prize for most outstanding graduand of the University and the Sir Harold Bailey Memorial Award for most outstanding graduand of the Faculty of Arts. In 2016, she was the inaugural recipient of the Istituto Italiano di Cultura Prize for Italian Literary Translation.

Carrie Middleditch recently finished her MA in the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London, Korean Literature. Before that, she completed a two-year fellowship at the Korea Literature Translation Institute in Seoul, South Korea. She received her bachelor's degree in Fine Arts at the Columbus College of Art and Design in Ohio, USA. Her interests include literature translation and theory, colonial studies, and creative writing. She currently resides in Melbourne, Australia.

Connie Guang Pan has enjoyed reading since she was a child, especially classics and thrillers. Unsurprisingly, she became a librarian and is thrilled to have spent every day of the past 30

years surrounded by books. Being bilingual is an additional blessing, giving Connie the key to two distinct (though increasingly entwined) literary universes.

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