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AALITRA

The AALITRA Review

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– book reviews of translations and texts about translation
– original translations of poetry and prose accompanied by a translator's commentary

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Dr Brigid Maher
b.maher@latrobe.edu.au

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Translations with commentary

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Embracing Difference
Challenges and Strategies in Translating Two 1920s Yiddish Poems by Women

HINDE ENA BURSTIN
Monash University

Abstract
This essay explores the transmission of historical, cultural and sexual differences in two 1920s Yiddish poems by women, and their translations into English. The poems were originally published during the Yiddish literary heyday, and a time of significant social change in Jewish communal and cultural practice, and in the roles and status of women. Both poems reflect and confront the impact of inequitable power dynamics on Jewish women's lives – one focusing on the theme of women's education, and the other on domestic violence. The power relations that underlie and frame the source texts are therefore examined in this article, along with an exploration of the ways that power intercedes in the translation of these texts. The divergent ways that women's resistance is depicted in the two poems is noted. Drawing on feminist translation strategies, this article applies a self-reflective lens that articulates translation processes and underlying theoretical approaches. Moreover, it highlights power dynamics, cultural assumptions and contextually-embedded meanings, and draws attention to critical historical, social and gendered differences. Strategies for conveying these differences in translation are identified. These include retaining key culturally-specific terms from the source language, replicating stylistic elements of the source text, and prefacing and supplementing translations with critical analyses that clarify and embrace the differential cultural contexts. Doing so makes historical, cultural and sexual differences visible in translation.

Introduction

Language plays a fundamental role in the development of individual and collective cultural identities (Simon *Gender in Translation* 134, 193). It directs perceptions of reality, and the ways that people see themselves, thereby shaping individuals' and groups' beliefs and worldviews (Mazid 7). Furthermore, language describes and prescribes cultural practices, enabling individuals to identify, express and sustain their cultural heritage.

The interrelationship between language and culture is powerful. As such, it is valuable to consider texts within their broader socio-cultural environments. Examining these contexts highlights the ways that cultural conventions can contain and constrain the text (Bassnett and Lefevere "Proust's Grandmother" 4-11). This essay therefore explores two texts and translations within their historical and socio-cultural contexts, and analyses ways that these translations interact with culture.

Feminist translation scholars and practitioners advocate a self-reflective approach in examining the intersections of gender, culture, language, power and translation (Godard, Palacios). This essay reflects on the translation process, by identifying the principles underpinning the translations, articulating dilemmas confronted, and clarifying decisions made in crafting these translations. Elaborating on these matters demonstrates the interconnectedness of theory and praxis and contextualizes the translations within their specific circumstances. Moreover, this approach makes the translator's mediation public. Doing so "defies expectations regarding both gender and genre", in particular that a woman "should not draw

attention to herself and that her intervention in the translation process should be invisible" (Palacios 88). Disrupting the imperative to remain invisible subverts the prevailing power dynamics that privilege men and source texts respectively. It thereby adds a significant, and at times overlooked, dimension – gender – to longstanding critical discourse on the translator's invisibility.

This self-reflective analysis focuses on the translation of two Yiddish poems by women published in the 1920s, during the Yiddish literary heyday, and a time of growing agency for women. These two poems and their translations form part of a broader study by the author on agency and power in 1920s Yiddish women's poetry. Like other poems in the study, these two poems question social constructs of power and subvert socially sanctioned power dynamics.

Power differentials intersect on many levels in these poems, most notably in relation to gender, language and culture. A key concern of feminist translation theorists has been to ask "How are social, sexual and historical differences expressed in language and how can these differences be transferred across languages?" (Simon *Gender in Translation* 8-9). These are critical questions to examine. This essay therefore identifies socio-cultural differences conveyed in the two poems, and explores problems and possibilities in transmitting these differences when translating these poems into English almost a century after they were published in Yiddish.

Literature is a form of cultural representation that reflects the values and mores of the time. Analysis of 1920s Yiddish poetry by women offers invaluable insights into Jewish culture and the role of women within that culture. These poems capture a transformational time in Jewish cultural life and in the social status of women. They present authentic voices articulating some issues of concern to women at that time. It is therefore instructive to outline the contexts in which these poems were published. Thus, some contextual information about Yiddish language and literature follows.

A survey of Yiddish language and literature

Yiddish was the predominant Jewish language at the time that these poems were published. In Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, where the largest proportion of Jewish population lived, 98% of Jews spoke Yiddish (Margolis 4; Fishman 50). Yiddish was also the primary Jewish language in large, dispersed Jewish communities around the globe, including in the Americas, Africa and Australia. Eleven million Jews world-wide, or 75% of all Jews, spoke Yiddish prior to the Holocaust (Margolis 4).

The linguistic functions of Yiddish have been complemented by considerable cultural functions, as historically, the culture and meaning systems of Jews have been more bound to language than to place. Yiddish has always been itinerant, a language of wandering in response to geographical shifts of Jews. Yiddish has provided a portable identity for a dispersed people, taking the place of a native land and filling the gaps left by the decline in religious and geographic connection. The cultural politics of Yiddish are distinct from most modern languages because Yiddish has continued to nurture vibrant cultural expression despite never having had its own homeland, and never having been the primary language of a country. Yiddish has maintained considerable, diverse and comprehensive educational and literary systems, including an array of publishing houses covering the full spectrum of political and cultural perspectives, and school systems of every social, cultural and political persuasion (Norich 17-19). Moreover, Yiddish has defined and supported Jewish identity and fostered a sense of belonging, particularly among secular Jews (Klepfisz 31; Howe and Greenberg 14-15). Yiddish was, and continues to be a cornerstone of Jewish cultural identity for many Jews.

Colloquially referred to as *mame-loshn* [mother-tongue], Yiddish is particularly associated with women, and for centuries, was the language in which most Jewish women lived

their daily lives. Yiddish was the language of their homes, their communities, their cultural connections, and the language in which religious Jewish women prayed (Klepfisz, Seidman). As formal education became increasingly available to Jewish women, the predominant language in which they were taught was Yiddish (Parush 68).

Yiddish literature is unique in that, since its inception, it has been aimed primarily at a female audience (Niger 35-109; Kope 19). The earliest known Yiddish writing by a woman is a *tkhine* [supplicatory poem] by Royzl Fishls, dating back to 1586 (Korman 5). Yiddish literature has retained its connection with women throughout the centuries. While early texts were religious, the parameters of Yiddish literature expanded to a secular, communal arena as a result of the modernization that developed from the mid-nineteenth century. During this time, the number of women readers and writers grew exponentially as women's literacy rates rose. Thus, women's participation as authors and audiences has been decisive in the development of Yiddish literature.

Yiddish was the foremost literary language of *Ashkenaz* Jews in the early twentieth century, and the principal language of publication (Probst; Fishman 29). Until 1939, Yiddish literature was among the fastest growing, most published literatures in Europe. It also flourished across the Atlantic at this time. Yiddish writing therefore provides invaluable insights into the evolution of *Ashkenaz* Jewish life and culture.

Research into Yiddish writing by women is essential in ensuring a balanced, comprehensive perspective on Yiddish life and literature. Yet, balance has not been a primary consideration of literary stakeholders, including editors and publishers. Despite women's pivotal role in the development of Yiddish literature, women have been grossly under-represented in Yiddish publishing. This gender disparity corresponds to similar under-representation of published writing by women across other languages. Writer and academic Joanna Russ consistently found "restrictions on the quantity of visibility allowed women writers: that 5 to 8 percent representation" (85). Furthermore, women's writing is often restricted to more ephemeral publications. In the 1920s, Yiddish writing by women was dispersed in journals, newspapers and other regional periodicals, with very few women being published in book form, and even fewer being anthologized in collections (Korman vii). As a result, retrieval and recovery of Yiddish women's writing is particularly challenging.

Feminist translation scholars, many of whom are translators themselves, recognize that what is translated is as important as how it is translated. As scholar and editor Esther Allen argues, "the invisible hand of the cultural marketplace" does not always ensure that important literary works are translated well, or even translated at all (82). Publishing decisions are made on commercial and political grounds and often reflect the status quo, favouring powerful stakeholders over marginalized groups. The general under-representation of women writers in translation reflects and sustains inequitable social structures.

Yiddish women poets have been substantially under-represented in translation, with only a small number included in collections of Yiddish poetry in English translation (Klepfisz 58; Glasser), as Table 1 shows. Notably, the only two collections to feature more than 15% contributions by women were compiled and edited by women.

This gross under-representation highlights an urgent need for retrieval and translation of Yiddish women's poetry. Women have been influential actors in Yiddish culture and writing. Recognition of their cultural contributions can be reinstated by unsilencing Yiddish women's voices and rescuing their work from obscurity. Furthermore, gendered inequality is both replicated and confronted in Yiddish poetry. Many Yiddish poems by women depict inequitable power dynamics, challenge inequitable practices, and fight to reclaim power. It is vital that these poems be recovered and brought to broader audiences.

Table 1: Proportion of male and female poets in collections of Yiddish poetry in English translation

Title	male	female	unknown
Betsky-Zweig, *Onions and Cucumbers and Plums* (1958)	92.9	7.1	
Leftwich, *The Golden Peacock: Worldwide Treasury of Yiddish Poetry* (1961)	91.5	8.5	
Howe and Greenberg, *A Treasury of Yiddish Poetry* (1969)	89.7	10.3	
Whitman, *An Anthology of Modern Yiddish Poetry* (1979)	78.6	21.4	
Harshav and Harshav, *American Yiddish Poetry: A Bilingual Anthology* (1986)	85.7	14.3	
Howe, Wisse and Shmeruk, *The Penguin Book of Modern Yiddish Verse* (1987)	87.2	12.8	
Glasser and Weintraub, *Proletpen: America's Rebel Yiddish Poets* (2005)	76.3	18.4	5.3

Translational approaches

The exercise of power in society has significant impact on the creation and the translation of literature. Power relations influence the conditions of writing, publishing and promoting source texts. Moreover, issues of power impact on every aspect of the translation process, including the selection of texts to translate, and translational approaches adopted (Bassnett and Lefevere "Proust's Grandmother" 5). A self-reflective approach therefore examines the power relations that underlie and frame source texts, and the ways that power intercedes in the translation of these texts.

Distortions and reductions may be manifested when translating a minoritized language into a dominant language without regard to power differentials and social, cultural and linguistic differences. This impacts on the stylistics, as well as on the content. Feminist postcolonialist Gayatri Spivak cautions against a form of distortion that occurs when writing is translated with little regard for the aesthetic or rhetorical elements employed (371-2). This is particularly an issue when translating poetry. Replicating or retaining the stylistic features of the source text has therefore been an important objective in the translation of the two poems presented in this article. Both poems are *folkstimlekh*, that is written in the folksong-like genre of Yiddish poetry. Like folksong, *folkstimlekhe poezie* [*folkstimlekh* poetry] is of and for the common people. Both folksong and *folkstimlekhe poezie* typically employ a traditional rhythm and rhyme sequence in order to deliver a social or political message. The original poems presented here both utilize simple, accessible language and have a highly structured meter, musicality and rhyme scheme. While the 1920s was a time of substantial experimentation in Yiddish poetry, the *folkstimlekh* poetic form was still widespread at that time, and warrants replication in current-day translation, particularly because the original patterns of rhythm and rhyme are so integral to the delivery of the poems' messages. Moreover, maintaining the *folkstimlekh* tone of these poems situates them in historical and cultural contexts. As this is not a popular poetic form in English today, these translations do not mimic the current dominant poetics in English, seeking instead to maintain the cultural expression of the source language. It can be challenging to reproduce rhythm and rhyme sequences in translation, and "A *Shabbes*-Terror", my translation of "A Shabbes-groyl*"* can be read as a work in progress.

Cultural differences impact on substance as well as on style. All writing takes place within a cultural context, and this may not readily translate for a readership from another culture. Translation can reflect and reinforce long-standing cultural assumptions, some of which may be outmoded or specific to particular circumstances. Source texts may contain words of cultural significance that are untranslatable, or that can only be translated using many

words, thereby impacting on the rhythm of the poem. In some instances, providing an English synonym could negate cultural connotations. Thus, the translator may choose to retain culturally specific terms from the source text. These may need to be clarified for readers.

Source texts may contain significant cultural information, necessitating a range of strategies to replicate and clarify this information in translation. One such strategy is to wrap the text in an "instructive embrace" – a term coined by Gayatri Spivak – with explanatory notes prefacing the translation, and further clarification provided in footnotes and an afterword (Simon "de Stael and Spivak" 135). This supplementing of information is a beneficial accompaniment to the translation of the culture-bound poem "A Vaybele" by Shoshana Tshenstokhovska (Korman 114-115).

"A Vaybele"

The poem "A Vaybele" is set in the early twentieth century. At that time, Jewish women had greater access to secular education than Jewish men did, particularly in religious families, where men often devoted themselves to study of Talmud or religious texts, while women were taught reading, writing, arithmetic and other skills that enabled them to earn an income to support their families. As Parush states, "Marriage customs were influenced by the need to balance the demands of religion and livelihood" (64). These demands were divided along gender lines, with men occupied with religion while women were responsible for the family's livelihood. Ironically, Jewish men's devotion to religious study, and the concurrent burden on Jewish women to financially support their families, led to a secularization of Jewish life (Parush 101-2). Secular education opened doors for women, exposing them to new languages, literatures and ideas, and inspiring them to challenge the religious confines they experienced. Furthermore, this education empowered women to access radical philosophies, resulting in the high proportion of Jewish women in leading roles in revolutionary movements of the day.

While Jewish women often bore the burden of financially supporting their families, many couples also had some support from their families, particularly in the early years of their marriage. It was common for young newly-married couples to live with their in-laws for several years, so that the husband could continue to study free from financial concerns. This custom is known in Yiddish as *kest*. Tshenstokhovska's poem makes reference to *kest*, along with a number of other culturally specific terms that have been retained in translation, and hence, require clarification: *Shabbes*, the Jewish day of rest; *kidesh*, the custom of proclaiming the holiness of *Shabbes* by making a communal blessing over the wine; and the *Shmoyneh-esre* prayer, a long prayer that is recited silently, and that concludes with taking three steps back. These words are all also included in the glossary at the end of this article.

The poem "A Vaybele" is presented here in Yiddish, transliteration and translation, followed by reflection on challenges, strategies and the rationale behind translational choices.

אַ ווײַבעלע
פֿון שושנה טשענסטאָכאָווסקאַ

געלעבט האָט זיך אַ ווײַבעלע
אויף שווער און שוויגערס קעסט,
אַ גאַנצן טאָג אין שטיבעלע,
געהיטן פֿרום איר נעסט.

אַ גאנצן טאָג אין שטיבעלע
(געווען אַ סוד דערבײַ) —
געלייענט, געלייענט אַ ביכעלע,
יעטוועדעס מאָל אויפֿסנײַ.

צווישן אירע קליידעלעך,
צום חופּה-טאָג געמאַכט,
אַ קליינטשיק גוויִש ביכעלע
אויף קעסט זיך מיטגעבראַכט...

אין רעכטן בוזעם-טעשעלע,
אין שכניות מיטן האַרץ,
פֿאַרבאָרגן ליגט דאָס ביכעלע,
אַ ביכל קליינטשיק, שוואַרץ...

און טרעפֿט אַ מאָל צו קידוש-צײַט —
פֿאַרזעסן זיך בײַם בוך,
פֿאַרחידושט וואַרט דער שבת-טיש —
די שנור פֿאַרשפּעטיקט זיך...

פֿאַרבאָרגן אין איר שטיבעלע,
אַרײַנגעטאָן דעם קאָפּ
אין ביכל, לעזט זיך ס׳ווײַבעלע
און שפּרײַזט אַרויף, אַראָפּ.

דער שווער,ער קלאַפּט אין פֿענצטערל:
„קום, טאָכטערשי אַרויס!״
זי ווינקט אַנטקעגן: „כ׳גיי שוין, כ׳גיי,
כ׳גיי שמונה-עשׂרה אויס״...

A Vaybele Shoshana Tshenstokhovska	**A Young Wife** Shoshana Tshenstokhovska Translation by Hinde Ena Burstin
Gelebt hot zikh a vaybele Oyf shver un shvigers kest, A gantsn tog in shtibele, Gehitn frum ir nest.	A young wife once boarded With her in-laws during *kest*. All day long, piously, She tended to her nest.
A gantsn tog in shtibele (Geven a sod derbay) — Geleyent, geleyent a bikhele, Yetvedes mol oyfsnay.	All day long in that little house, (Just between me and you) — She read a book in secret, Read it each day anew.
Tsvishn ire kleydelekh, Tsum khupe-tog gemakht, A kleyntshik, goyish bikhele Oyf kest zikh mitgebrakht…	In amongst the dresses Made for her wedding day, She hid a secular book, In secret, stashed away...
In rekhtn buzem-teshele, In shkheynes mitn harts, Farborgn ligt dos bikhele, A bikhl kleyntshik, shvarts …	It sits next to her heart in The breast pocket on her right. She keeps that book concealed, A small book in black and white…
Un treft a mol tsu kidesh-tsayt — Farzesn zikh baym bukh, Farkhidesht vart der Shabbes-tish — Di shnur farshpetikt zikh…	And when it's *kidesh*-time — Her in-laws sit and wait, While she's lost in her book — Not noticing she's late…
Farborgn in ir shtibele, Arayngeton dem kop In bikhl, leyzt zikh s'vaybele Un shprayzt aroyf, arop.	Far away from prying eyes, Ignoring her in-laws and groom Absorbed in that little book She paces round her room.
Der shver, er klapt in fentsterl: "Kum, tokhtershi aroys!" Zi vinkt antkegn: "Kh'gey shoyn, kh'gey, Kh'gey Shmoyneh-esre oys"…	Father-in-law raps at the door: "Daughter, come on out of there!" "I'm just on the last steps," she winks, Of the *Shmoyneh-esre* prayer."

This poem contains a great deal of cultural coding about Jewish women's (and men's) education, expected gender roles, empowerment, access to literacy and literature, religious and cultural practices and secularization. Retaining the Yiddish terms *kest, Shabbes, kidesh* and *Shmoyneh-esre* prayer signposts this coding and preserves the poem's cultural specificity.

It is important to note that the translation presented here is a revised translation. Reflection on the translation process and the differences between the two translations reveals some strategies for situating translations within their cultural contexts. I initially translated and published the poem in 2006 (Burstin 108-113). My translation at that time was motivated in part by my recognition that the poem highlights the social construction of gender in education and employment in Yiddish cultural life. Yet the initial translation inadvertently dimmed some

of the spotlight on this significant aspect of the poem. While the original translation retained the Yiddish terms for *Shabbes* and *Shmoyneh-esre* prayer, it did not retain the term *kest*. Instead, the line was translated as "A little wife once boarded with her in-laws as a guest". This rendered the cultural context invisible, and made little sense, for in Jewish culture, a family member would not be considered to be "a guest". The cultural norms for guests differ markedly from the norms for family members. The use of "as a guest" could therefore have implied a distance, formality or lack of familiarity that did not appear in the source text. Moreover, in the earlier translation, the Yiddish cultural practice of *kest* was obscured. As has been noted, the education of Jewish women was, at that time, vastly different from the education of both Jewish men, and non-Jewish women. The use of the untranslated term *kest* signposts this difference, while also highlighting the newly-weds' youth and financial position and the young wife's access to secular books.

The subversive way that the young wife gains power is also less recognizable in my original translation, where I domesticated the text, in contrast with my more foreignizing revision. This surreptitious gaining of agency by the newly-wed wife is a significant aspect of the poem, drawing attention to the interrelationship between education and power. Furthermore, women's acquisition of knowledge and hence status was often a source of tension for their husbands, causing considerable conflict in relationships between the spouses, and in their relationships with their in-laws. Retaining the Yiddish term enables these features to be foregrounded.

Mingling Yiddish words in the translation draws attention to cultural differences. Differentiation is a significant aspect of Yiddish language and culture (Weinreich 193). For religious Jews, there is an imperative to maintain a difference between the sacred *Shabbes* (Saturday) and the regular weekdays (Weinreich 194). Jewish cultural practices also differ markedly from those of non-Jews. Hence, a body of vocabulary distinguishing Jewish and non-Jewish customs has evolved. Known in Yiddish as *lehavdl loshn* [differentiation language], this vocabulary includes words for parallel activities (such as slaughter of meat) and words that reflect inequitable and often intimidating experiences of Jews as a minoritized or marginalized culture living among a dominant culture of non-Jews. Furthermore, Yiddish writing contains many euphemisms and deliberately ambiguous expressions that developed as a survival strategy in hostile climates where the Jewish press was subjected to surveillance, such as in imperial Russia. These veiled references would be understood by Jews, but not by outsiders. This "coded phraseology", often drawn from religious or folkloric sources, creates a secret language that is challenging to translate (Marten-Finnis 340).

Differentiation is at play in the poem "A Vaybele", in the use of the term *goyish bikhl*, which, literally translated, means "a gentile book". Yet it is clear from the text that this literal translation is not in keeping with the poet's intention. Rather, the poet has used the term *goyish* to distinguish the book from a specifically Jewish book (i.e. a book pertaining to Jewish religion or culture). In doing so, the word *goy* draws on its original meaning as "nation", applicable to Jews and non-Jews alike – a meaning that has changed over time. *Goy* has therefore been translated as "secular", reflecting the historical and contextually embedded meaning of the word, as opposed to current-day usage of the word *goy* as "gentile".

Language and culture are dynamic, while meaning is bound by both time and context. As Palmary advises, "language does not simply mirror the world but constructs and negotiates it in a contextually bounded way" (577). Cultural meanings evolve, as do the meanings of individual words in both source and target languages. Translating from the past requires attention to the historical dimensions of source texts, and to linguistic, cultural and socio-historical changes over time.

Attention to individual words is critical because words have the power to determine, create, reinforce or subvert cultural knowledge and meanings. Retaining culturally-specific words from the source text – such as *kest*, *Shabbes* and *Shmoyneh-esre* – invites the reader of the target text to enter, albeit briefly, the world of the source language. It differentiates the source culture from the culture of the target text, ensuring that the translation does not cede to the dominant culture by homogenizing the source text or obscuring cultural elements through domestication.

Lawrence Venuti defines domestication of texts in English translation as "fluent translations that invisibly inscribe foreign texts with English-language values" thereby providing readers with "the narcissistic experience of recognizing their own culture in a cultural other" (15). Domestication imposes the dominant culture on the translated culture. It brings the writer to the reader, keeping the translation and translator invisible (1). Domesticating a text relinquishes power to the dominant culture, and can be regarded as an act of cultural destruction. In contrast, foreignization attempts to "restrain the ethnocentric violence of translation" (Venuti 20), making the translator visible through "highlighting the foreign identity of the source text and protecting it from the ideological dominance of the target culture" (Munday 147).

Foreignizing a text may have a disruptive effect for the reader. Yet, this disruption is considered desirable, for it reminds the reader that they are reading a translation. When a translation reads fluently, it can appear to be the original text. Conversely, a strong emphasis on the foreign aspects of a text may unintentionally exaggerate otherness, or exoticize the source culture. Moreover, maintaining unfamiliar elements may make the text inaccessible, thereby defeating the purpose of the translation. As Jaivin argues, "if a translation reads too strangely to its target audience, it risks not being read" (33). Thus, many translations – including the two presented here – include elements of both domestication and foreignization. At times, a translational choice may mediate between the source and target culture. While my translation retains the term *Shmoyneh-esre* to describe the prayer, I did not replicate the entire phrase "ikh gey Shmoyneh-esre oys", which literally means "I am walking the *Shmoyneh-esre*", an idiom for "I am taking the three steps of the *Shmoyneh-esre*". This would have been confusing, and would have disrupted the poetry. Instead, I sought to capture the essence with the words "I'm just on the last steps". In doing so, I hoped to convey the socio-cultural context without making the text too unfamiliar for a non-Jewish readership.

"A Shabbes-groyl"

Translators who fail to understand the socio-cultural contexts of the texts that they translate risk producing translations that are linguistically correct but culturally inaccurate. While the words themselves may be appropriate synonyms, the meaning may miss the mark due to cultural differences. One example of this is Miriam Ulinover's poem, "A Shabbes-groyl" ["A *Shabbes*-Terror"] (34). This poem is set on *Shabbes*, the weekly Jewish day of rest that falls from sundown on Friday night to starlight on Saturday night. A translator who is not cognizant with the cultural meanings of *Shabbes* would substitute the term Saturday or Sabbath. But Saturday and Sabbath are different from *Shabbes*. In Jewish culture, *Shabbes* is a peaceful day of reflection. The daily grind and day-to-day pressures are set aside on *Shabbes*. It is important to capture this essence in the translation, so I have retained the word *Shabbes*. I have also retained the term "*Shabbes-moytse*-knife", which refers to the knife traditionally used to cut the *khale* [challah, the plaited bread eaten on *Shabbes*] when reciting the *moytse* blessing over bread.

אַ שבת-גרויל
מרים אולינאָוער

שטום געלעגן איז אַ מידער
שבת-פֿרידן אומעטום,
אין דער לופֿט אַ שבת-ניגון
איז געגאַנגען ציטריק אום.

פֿלוצלינג בלאָזט אַווינט אַ קאַלטער,
ס'וואַקסט אַ יאָמער גרויס, אַלץ גרעסער:
ס'האָט אַ ייִד געקוילעט ס'וויַבל
מיט דעם שבת-מוציא-מעסער!

A Shabbes-groyl
Miriam Ulinover

Shtum gelegn iz a mider
Shabbes-friden umetum,
In der luft a Shabbes-nign
Iz gegangen tsitrik um.

Plutsling blozt a vint a kalter,
S'vakst a yomer, groys, alts greser:
S'hot a Yid gekoylet s'vaybl
Mit dem Shabbes-moytse-meser!

A *Shabbes*-Terror
Miriam Ulinover
Translation by Hinde Ena Burstin

Drowsy *Shabbes*-peace lay resting
Still and soundless everywhere.
As tender *Shabbes*-melodies
Wafted gently through the air.

Suddenly, a cold wind blows,
A howl grows loud with news of strife:
A man has just butchered his bride
With the *Shabbes-moytse*-knife!

Miriam Ulinover's poem "A *Shabbes*-groyl" is one of a number of Yiddish poems by women published in the 1920s on the theme of family violence. "A Shabbes-groyl" is significant because it depicts domestic violence from a distinctly Jewish perspective. It is clear that both the victim and the perpetrator of the violence represented in this poem are Jewish. Moreover, the *Shabbes* scene that Ulinover paints establishes the couple as religious Jews, who keep *Shabbes* and say prayers before cutting and eating *khale*. Thus, Ulinover highlights the existence of domestic violence within religious Jewish families, and demonstrates that extremes of violence against women are as much a feature of Jewish life as of any other community.

This poem, which portrays the ultimate expression of men's power over women, is shocking in its unexpected conclusion. The juxtaposition of the peaceful *Shabbes* and the violent slaying of the young wife is powerful. The centrality of *Shabbes* in the poem is exemplified by the use of a hyphen, binding *Shabbes* with *fridn* [peace] and *groyl* [horror, terror]. In choosing to hyphenate these words, the poet creates a specific and indissoluble connection that visibly links *Shabbes* with the expected peace and with the unexpected terror. The butchering of the bride on the peaceful *Shabbes* intensifies the violation, linking the

murder with the desecration of *Shabbes.* Using a sacred object (the *Shabbes-moytse khale* knife) to commit murder highlights religious hypocrisy – a theme in many of Ulinover's poems. Ulinover's ironic tone is palpable in her inference that the most horrifying aspect of the *Shabbes* terror is that a sacred knife was used to commit the murder, implying that the violation of Sabbath is more shocking than the violation of women. The title of the poem – "A *Shabbes*-Terror" and not "A Domestic-Terror" or "A Family-Terror" – further emphasizes this implication, giving primacy to the violation of the S*habbes*, over the violation of the young bride. These crucial aspects of the poem may have been obscured if the poem had seemed to be about Saturday or a generic Sabbath, and the type of knife had not been specified in the translation.

Similarly, the bride is described as having been "gekoylet", meaning "butchered" or "slaughtered". The use of this term alludes to the objectification of woman as a piece of meat – an important and long-standing feminist concern. This objectification is reinforced in that the woman is only described in terms of what is done to her. She is an object of the poem, rather than the subject. The cultural connotations underlying the term "gekoylet" are also significant. "Gekoylet" is generally used when describing non-kosher slaughter, in contrast with "geshokhtn" which is used in reference to slaughter according to *kashres* or *kashrut* dietary laws of religious Jews. This is another example of differentiation language. Ulinover's use of "gekoylet" is again an ironic inference to religious hypocrisy, portraying a preparedness to break religious decrees in order to overpower women. In drawing on the laws of animal slaughter, rather than the commandment against killing people, Ulinover highlights religious Jewish women's lower status, resonating again with the implication that the violation of religious laws surrounding killing of animals (*kashres* or *kashrut*) is considered more shocking than the violation the young bride's life.

The nuances of the term "gekoylet" are difficult to convey within the confines of a poem, as there is no equivalent or parallel term in English. To some extent, the underlying message is articulated through retaining the culturally-specific terms *Shabbes* and *Shabbes-moytse*-knife. Translation is a delicate balancing act. Any further explanation within the poem would distort the poetry. Yet, too little explanation would distort the cultural contexts of the text. Thus, this translation too benefits from the "instructive embrace" of supplementary clarification.

The conscious translational choice to follow the stylistics of the source text impacts on word choice and may result in new nuances or elements being introduced in translation. The original Yiddish "S'vakst a yomer, groys, alts greser" [literally, "A lament grows big and even bigger"] has been translated as "A howl grows loud with news of strife" in an attempt to replicate the rhythm and rhyme of the source text. The insertion of the word "news" may suggest the broadcasting of a bulletin through the community. This is not present in the original, and is therefore important to note as part of the "instructive embrace" accompanying the translation. Furthermore, in the original, it is not clear who is wailing. The lament is the subject of the sentence – and hence, more significant than the (unknown) person/s doing the howling. The translation consciously preserves the passive tone of the original. While the passive voice is more common in Yiddish than in English, it is used very deliberately in this poem to depict a disembodied voice. The growing howl remains nameless and faceless. The anonymity of the cry reflects the all-too common, impersonal and indirect response to family violence.

Notably, the murderer is referred to as a "Yid", which literally translates as a Jew. Yet this is not the sense in which the word is used in the poem. "Yid" can also be used to mean "person". This usage was more customary at the time that the poem was published, as Jewish lives were then, of necessity, more clearly differentiated from those of non-Jews. The context

determines whether the term is meant as “Jew” or “person”. In this instance, it is not necessary to name the murderer as a Jew, as the poet has provided other cultural markers to signify his Jewishness. Furthermore, translating “Yid” as “Jew” could introduce pejorative nuances that were not applied to the term “Yid” at the time that the poem was published. Because Yiddish signifies gender of all nouns, it is clear in the original that the murderer is a man. Gender is an important variable to transmit, because the violence depicted is gendered violence. Hence “Yid” has been translated as “man”. The term “man” captures the meaning, colloquial usage and rhythm that best corresponds to the original “Yid”, and is thus the most appropriate translation. It is noteworthy that the victim is described as a “vaybl”, a young bride – a term also used in the previous poem. Both women are therefore described in terms of their relationships to their husbands, rather than as individuals.

While this poem utilizes a *folkstimlekh* rhythm, it includes Gothic elements, in the unanticipated and macabre conclusion of the poem. The unexpectedness heightens the powerful message, raising interesting dilemmas in the translation of the word “groyl” which appears in the poem’s title. “Groyl” can mean shock, horror or terror. Using the milder term “shock” supports the surprise element of the poem, as opposed to the unambiguous term “terror”. Yet, “terror” links the poem to present-day discourse around family violence, emphasizing the unbroken chain of violence against women over the past century, and has therefore been the translational choice.

Conclusion

The two translated poems highlight women’s resistance in divergent ways. “A Vaybele” illustrates a subversive form of resistance against limits imposed on women’s education and reading material. It signifies a substantial path of social change in the struggle for women breaking free from oppression. Translating this poem into English also functions as a form of resistance by dispelling stereotypes, and by highlighting this historical moment. “A Shabbes-groyl”, on the other hand, depicts the brutal oppression of women through domestic murder. In and of itself, it does not appear to be a poem about empowerment, but rather, of the ultimate loss of power and agency. Yet, the poet calls out violence against women, and draws attention to the coexistence of religion and domestic murder – the most extreme expression of violence against women. Naming the violence is a significant act of agency. The poet makes a daring and powerful statement highlighting religious hypocrisy, and resisting the pressures brought to bear by those in power to maintain the silence and pretend these problems don’t exist, or don’t occur in Jewish families. Because the poem is explicitly Jewish, translation signals a broad message that violence is perpetrated in Jewish homes, in the same way as it is perpetrated in homes of every culture. Violence against women is thereby recognized as a crosscultural form of oppression. Translation also highlights the courage of the poet in speaking out, bringing her powerful images and words to a new audience. Just as Ulinover breaks the silence through depicting domestic murder, translation of her poem breaks the silence by reproducing an important representation and bringing it into new realms.

Social, sexual and historical differences are significant in the publishing and translation of literature. It is therefore critical to examine texts within their historical and socio-cultural contexts, and to transmit historical, social and sexual differences in translation. Distortions or reductions may occur where translations disregard these differences.

A number of strategies are available for conveying these differences. Prefacing and supplementary notes can provide an “instructive embrace” that clarifies and contextualizes critical components of the text. Retaining culturally specific terms from the source language and replicating elements of the stylistics of the source text can situate translations within their social, cultural and historical settings. Close attention to contextually embedded meanings of

words can reveal critical differences that warrant reproduction in translation. These strategies fulfil an important task in making gender and culture more visible. They are supported by a self-reflective approach to translation that acknowledges the specificity of time, space and culture, identifies principles underpinning the translations, articulates dilemmas confronted, and illuminates decisions made in crafting translations.

Yiddish literature is being increasingly translated in response to a decline in the number of Yiddish speakers, as a direct result of the Holocaust and its aftermath. While women have been pivotal in the development of Yiddish literature, women writers, and particularly, Yiddish women poets, have been grossly underrepresented in translation. There is thus an urgent need for retrieval and translation of Yiddish women's poetry. It is crucial that these translations highlight historical, cultural and gender differences. Making these differences visible is a vital aspect of the corrective process that seeks to reinstate Yiddish women's voices in translation.

Glossary

Ashkenaz	Jews of European descent
khale	challah, plaited bread eaten on *Shabbes*
folkstimlekh	a folk-song-like genre of Yiddish poetry
folkstimlekhe poezie	folksong-like poetry, poetry of the *folkstimlekh* genre
gekoylet	non-kosher slaughter of animals for food (past tense)
geshokhtn	kosher slaughter of animals for food (past tense)
kest	a Jewish custom whereby newly-married couples live with their in-laws for several years, so that the husband can continue to study free from financial concerns.
kashres or *kashrut*	dietary laws of religious Jews, determining which foods are kosher
kidesh	the custom of proclaiming the holiness of *Shabbes* by making a communal blessing over the wine
mame-loshn	colloquial name for Yiddish [lit. mother-tongue]
moytse	the blessing made over bread
Shabbes	the Jewish day of rest and reflection, from Friday evening to Saturday night
Shabbes-moytse-knife	the knife traditionally used to cut the *khale*
Shmoyneh-esre	a long prayer that is recited silently, and that concludes with taking three steps back.
tkhine	a supplicatory prayer poem

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Breaking Images, Widening Perceptions
Reflections on Horacio Quiroga in Translation

AMANDA ZAMUNER
National University of La Plata, Argentina

Abstract
Horacio Quiroga (1878-1937) is one of the most accomplished and critically acclaimed short story writers in the Spanish-speaking world, and his works have attained canonical status in the South American literary tradition. Some of his most renowned stories circulate for a global audience, published in various collections and anthologies made possible by their translation into English. The most widely available English version was translated by Margaret Sayers Peden (1976/2004); Quiroga speaks through her translation choices. However, one must ask the question: is this the Horacio Quiroga previous generations have known, appreciated and praised? Have his exquisite prose and photographic narrative skill managed to live on for readers in English? This article aims to address core issues in literary translation as they pertain to Quiroga and Sayers Peden's texts. It also discusses domestication strategies, how manipulation of the original may hinder readability, the importance of getting socio-political and geographic features right, and the professional responsibility implicit in the translator's role as cultural mediator when selecting, editing and publishing non-mainstream literature.

Translation is undoubtedly the most privileged medium through which many authors writing in languages other than English are able to gain recognition in a predominantly Anglophone publishing and academic environment. However, cases exist in which crosscultural misunderstandings result from the works offered to the wider public. These may go largely undetected even by experienced literary translators and scholars. This paper analyses the ways in which cultures "talk past each other" by offering an example of how certain translation choices made at one time – and reprinted almost three decades later without further comment or revision – can actually affect, over time, both the reception of literature from peripheral countries as well as peripheral literary cultures themselves, rewriting through this process the very traits that make an author and his production belong to a certain place, time and community.

This article examines English translations of a selection of short stories by renowned Uruguayan author Horacio Quiroga (1878-1937), and seeks to reconstruct the extent to which certain translation strategies and publishing criteria may have contributed to, enhanced, or indeed interfered with his literary reputation and his identity as an outstanding example of short story writing in Latin America.

The exploration of any selection of translated texts, in this case from Spanish into English, may offer valuable guidance for justifying its incorporation into the Anglo-American canon. This is also the case when it comes to compiling an anthology of short stories: why these authors (and not others)?; why these particular stories (and not others)? My own attempt to justify the selection of such representative texts – those through which Latin American literature in particular is read – began in Brazil while attending an international conference on translation over a decade ago. As I was browsing an anthology of Latin American short stories, Lawrence Venuti's words came to mind: "The study of translations is truly a form of historical

scholarship because it forces the scholar to confront the issue of historical difference in the changing reception of a foreign text" (*Scandals* 46).

The book that sparked the quest was Thomas Colchie's *A Hammock Beneath the Mangoes: Stories from Latin America* published in 1992 by Plume Fiction. After the Introduction, the first section of the collection (entitled "The River Plate") included a short story by Horacio Quiroga, a household name in the Argentinean literary tradition.[1] The story that first caught my attention was "El hombre muerto" [The Dead Man] in which Quiroga, a craftsman of short fiction during the first half of the twentieth century, succinctly conveys his mastery of the genre. Quiroga spent a significant part of his life in the rainforests of northeastern Argentina, where he nurtured his mind and craft with stories that still resonate with readers today. So much so that, for Quiroga, this particular region serves as both a symbolic and geographical setting for his literary production (Canfield 1362).[2] This fact may account for his inclusion in the section entitled "The River Plate", together with Argentinean writers such as Julio Cortázar, Jorge Luis Borges, Adolfo Bioy Casares and Manuel Puig, as well as Uruguayan authors like Juan Carlos Onetti and Armonía Sommers.

A distinguished writer within the River Plate literary tradition, Quiroga is considered to be "the founder of the modern short story in Latin America" (Lafforgue in Quiroga *Cuentos* I 9, my translation) with more than two hundred published short stories, eleven books, and a number of articles and scripts for both theatre and cinema. His work started circulating in the English-speaking literary world with Arthur Livingstone's 1922 translation of *Cuentos de la selva* (1918) as *South American Jungle Tales.*

After my initial drive to find a motive for the translation of Quiroga's stories, a more practical and urgent need emerged. Some lexical details in the translated text of "The Dead Man", included in Colchie's anthology, pointed to important differences in – indeed, departures from – the source text. Aware of Venuti's warning that translation "inevitably domesticates foreign texts" (*Scandals* 67), my search for the English version in this collection began. The English version included in Colchie's anthology had been taken from *The Decapitated Chicken and Other Stories*, translated by Margaret Sayers Peden; a collection published in 1976 by The University of Texas (Austin).

Sayers Peden's 1976 collection soon fell out of print and it was not until 2004 that it was made available again, this time published by The University of Wisconsin Press as part of a series dedicated to the Americas. In the meantime, Sayers Peden had consolidated her name as a translator, making available in English the works of other important Spanish and Latin American writers such as Isabel Allende, Arturo Pérez Reverte, Pablo Neruda and Mario Vargas Llosa, to name just a few. With her revised 2004 translation of Quiroga's stories, I suspected that my research would acquire another layer, a temporal perspective that would allow me to investigate how part of Quiroga's work had been re-presented to English-speaking audiences, almost thirty years later, as a result of the translator's (and publisher's) mediation.

However, upon comparing all three publications (Colchie, 1922 and Sayers Peden, 1976 and 2004), it became evident that, despite these versions offering slightly different information beyond the translated text itself, very little was offered in the paratexts of the anthologies analysed (i.e. prologue, presentation, maps, footnotes, glossaries, etc.). After examining the three versions of "The Dead Man" for differences, printing mistakes, modifications or alterations, I came to the conclusion that the three target texts were identical.

[1] Although Horacio Quiroga was born in Salto, Uruguay, he spent most of his adult life in Argentina, alternating between the northeastern province of Misiones and the capital city, Buenos Aires. Most of his work was written and published in Argentinean newspapers, magazines and publishing houses.

[2] See, for instance, the short stories included in two of his most accomplished works, *Cuentos de la selva* [Jungle Tales] (1918), and *Los desterrados* [The Exiles] (1926).

A closer analysis of Sayers Peden's 1976 and 2004 translations unveiled a number of further issues relating to the role of translators as cultural mediators; this paper is the result of that work.

The translator as cultural mediator

The role of the translator as cultural mediator – what Steiner has called a "bilingual mediating agent"– has long been acknowledged (cf. Venuti, *Scandals*; Katan; Bassnett; Baker). It is in this capacity that the translator should be able to negotiate understanding between cultures, mediating diachronically and in multiple historical traditions, thus making him/her also accountable for succeeding or failing to do so.

In the translation of literary works, where one finds not only linguistic but also contextual intricacies, the degree of success becomes all the more evident as particular stretches of language can only be fully understood when situation and culture are implicitly or explicitly clear to the interlocutors or hearers; in Simms's words, when translators manage to get "the 'feel' for a language", for "there is no such thing as pure lexical equivalence between languages" (6). Thus, translation reshapes our perception of the world as it allows audiences to reinvent the Other. As Harjo and Bird have argued regarding the inclusion of the Native American literary tradition within mainstream American literature "in English for an English-speaking audience", the mere act of being translated (i.e. included) or not may determine a work's survival (25).

That is why, if reduced to a linguistic level that merely points out mistakes and/or phrases that could have been more accurately transferred, translation criticism would be narrow in scope. Analyses of translations acquire a more significant dimension when they entail reflection on wider issues, such as the impact a translation may have (had) on a certain readership, or the effects the act of translating a particular writer might have (had) in the reception, acceptance and recognition of an established literary tradition (in this case, Quiroga and the Latin American tradition). Indeed, literary traditions do not just arise; rather, in André Lefevere's words, they are "consciously shaped by a number of people who share the same or at least analogous goals over a number of years" (xi). The process resulting in the acceptance or rejection – that is, the canonization or non-canonization – of a literary text is dominated by discernable factors: the manipulation of power, ideology, and the manner in which institutions, publishing and translation policies combine to place texts in or out of a national canon. As a mode of crosscultural contact between languages and cultures, an act of translation cannot therefore be "understood in isolation from the power relation between the cultures involved" (Schwab 12). This article represents a small contribution to this field.

Setting the context for reception

The 1970s witnessed the "literary boom" of Latin American fiction in the English-speaking world, a process that had begun in the 1960s. Tracing the context for the emergence of Latino literature, de Zavalía acknowledges the "presence, impact and influence of Spanish-American literature and culture in the United States" (187). The influence of that literature in translation in the US at that time accounts not only for the translation boom and the ensuing international dissemination many writers acquired, but also for a discovery and appraisal of Latin American culture, which began to enrich the Anglo-American literary scene both within and outside academia. However, de Zavalía notes that publishers tended to prefer readability, so much so "that an author's style [was] many times sacrificed" for something deemed more "appropriate" in English (194), a practice that had profound implications for both source text writers and target text readers.

It is within this specific context of the boom that Sayers Peden's translations of Quiroga's short stories were published, in 1976. Their publication met with favourable reviews, such as that of George Schade, one of the pioneers in the field of Latin American literary studies, who provided the introduction to the book by briefly outlining Quiroga's life and work. It is interesting that he states: "the round dozen stories which make up this volume can speak for themselves, and many translations appear unescorted by an introduction" (ix). In fact, the translator says nothing about her choices for selecting the stories, nor does she comment on the translation process itself. Sayers Peden's only paratextual contribution in the 1976 edition is a note at the end of the book in which she indicates which Spanish editions she used as source texts (195). Later on in his introduction, Schade offers other words of praise: "Our translator […] has made an excellent selection of Quiroga's stories that few would quarrel with" (xi). This surely implies that he approves of the corpus, although it would be difficult to argue against the selection since there is no justification or explanation as to why some stories were chosen and not others.

The book's positive reception by scholars is evidenced, for example, by Robert Brody's review in the *Latin American Literary Review*, which begins by affirming that "This is a particularly welcome book of stories […] Up till now it has been difficult for readers of English to fully appreciate Quiroga's preeminent role in the development of the short narrative in Latin America" (107). The inclusion of Sayers Peden's English short story translations in several other anthologies (for example, in Clifton Fadiman's comprehensive anthology of twentieth-century writers, *The World of the Short Story* (1986), and in Colchie's above-mentioned 1992 anthology) also supports the observation that her English versions had begun circulating in a number of different ways, and that, thanks to her work, Quiroga's writing could become better known and available to a wider English-speaking readership.

After the 1984 paperback reprint – further proof of Sayers Peden's success in the publication world – the anthology was again out of print for a number of years, until a new paperback edition was released in 2004, this time by The University of Wisconsin Press. The back cover and contents page announce the main change in the anthology: a foreword by Jean Franco, a renowned scholar of Latin American literature. Apart from that, the only other change this new edition presents is the position of the Note of the Translator, from the back of the book in the 1976 edition to the end of the introductory section, now expanded to include Franco's introduction. Surprisingly enough, the prologue by Franco is devoted mainly to the literary qualities of Quiroga's work, remaining silent as to the selection, translation or impact of the anthology. Nor does Franco comment on whether Sayers Peden's 1976 translation might benefit from any revision. In short, the new book differs little from its predecessor.

A closer look at the way in which Quiroga has been introduced to the English-speaking readership suggests his work has been domesticated from the outset. Most of the comments introducing English translations of his work tend to assimilate his writing to the Anglo-American literary tradition. This strategy might have been employed in an effort to attract larger audiences, to promote a literature coming from a minor, if rich and complex, Latin American background. Arguably, it might also have been used to justify this work's translation into English in the first place.

In any case, Quiroga has been repeatedly presented with reference to well-known models and paradigms which, in a way, seek to validate his translation into English and at the same time give him the necessary credentials to be positioned within the target literary tradition. Schade, for instance, describes his 1907 "El almohadón de plumas" [The Feather Pillow], as "a magnificent example of his successful handling of the Gothic tale, reminiscent of Poe, *whom he revered as master*" (xi, my emphasis). González Echeverría describes Quiroga's world as one "ruled by tragedy" and sees "The Decapitated Chicken"

"as anticipat[ing] some of William Faulkner's obsessions and themes […] perhaps Quiroga's most representative story" (118). Franco has no shortage of English references, writing that, "Like Rudyard Kipling, Quiroga also recognized the appeal of animal stories and the collection *Cuentos de la selva* [Jungle Tales] was written for children" (xv). However, the examples quoted risk having an unintended impact on the stories' potential readership. Such justification, Venuti notes, could "provoke the fear that the foreign author is not original, but derivative, fundamentally dependent on pre-existing materials" (*Scandals* 31).

Quiroga's "El hombre muerto"

Reputedly one of the best short stories included in the collection, "El hombre muerto" [The Dead Man], originally appeared in 1920 in *La Nación* – a prestigious Argentine newspaper regularly featuring some of the most famous Spanish-speaking writers – and was later included in the 1926 collection entitled *Los Desterrados* [*The Exiles*] (Quiroga *Cuentos* 745).[3] The story offers a concise and well-crafted narrative of a man facing the might of nature, revealing his fragile, powerless condition as well as the cruel process of becoming aware of human insignificance within that powerful landscape.

Comparing "El hombre muerto" (687-690) with Sayers Peden's translation, one notes certain lexical choices made by the translator. For example, I began to wonder why Sayers Peden chose "mare" instead of "male horse", as in the original (*malacara*), thus misidentifying a valuable element in the narrative (Baker 122). For a man at that time in Argentina, owning a male horse held considerable symbolic importance, as a reinforcement of a man's virility and a statement of male strength in the countryside, yet this symbolic implication is lost when the protagonist owns a mare.

On another level, was the translator really familiar with the geography of Misiones, where this short story (as well as most of the others included in the anthology) takes place? Central to this story is the context of the Misiones rainforest against which the protagonist is actively battling in order to establish a homestead. For example, the Paraná river, normally a powerful current – as portrayed in other stories such as "En la noche" [In the Middle of the Night] and "A la deriva" [Drifting] – is described by Quiroga here as "dormido como un lago" [asleep like a lake] (my translation). The translator renders the phrase "allá abajo yace en el fondo del valle el Paraná dormido como un lago" as "down below, the Paraná, wide as a lake, lies sleeping in the valley". Even though both texts mention the important fact that the river is asleep (i.e. quiet) the source text equates this momentary calm with the normal state of a lake (quiet waters) whereas the translation seems to focus more on the size of the river. Some other lexical choices for describing the landscape of Misiones have been diluted in several different ways. For example, *monte*, an uncultivated area covered with trees, shrubs and thickets (a crucial part of the Misiones environment) is rendered as "scrub trees", "bushland" and "live thicket fence", while *potrero*, meaning playground, mainly a place where children play football, is rendered as "pasture", "cleared land" and "clearing".

Other choices at discourse level refer to the repositioning of key participants. For example, despite its Brutus-like role in the murder of a friend, the machete is "downgraded" in the English version from a main character to a mere tool. The terrible living conditions of a man living in the Misiones *monte* make his machete an indispensable tool of survival, as he is often forced to cut his way through the thick vegetation. The ensuing trail, called a *picada*, may only last a few days, as the dense vegetation will grow back over it again (a phenomenon still

[3] All references to Quiroga's stories will be to *Cuentos completos* (Vols. I & II) edited by Jorge Lafforgue and Pablo Rocca (Buenos Aires: Losada, 2002).

experienced today). Thus, in the original, both machete and man work side by side, with the verb conjugated in the third person plural: "El hombre y su machete *acababan* de limpiar" (Quiroga 2002 687, my emphasis), whereas the English translation is "*With* his machete *the man* had just finished clearing the fifth lane of the banana grove" (Quiroga 1976 121, my emphasis). This represents a significant "simplification" as the next line explains that both man and his machete were about to finish their day's work and were very pleased with their efforts.

More specific translation problems emerge later on: the key event, the instant that signals the fate of the man, is narrated by Quiroga (himself a keen photographer) in an almost cinematographic slow-motion sequence, whereas in the translated text the impression is quite different. Compare the following:

> Mas al bajar el alambre de púa y pasar el cuerpo, su pie izquierdo resbaló sobre un trozo de corteza desprendida del poste, *a tiempo que el machete se le escapaba de la mano.*
>
> (Quiroga 2002 689, my emphasis)

> But as he lowered the barbed wire to cross through, his foot slipped on a strip of bark hanging loose from the fence post, and in the same instant he dropped his machete.
>
> (Quiroga 1976, 121)

In Quiroga's original the description of the man slipping on to the machete, which is only two lines after we read that man and machete have been working side by side, anticipates the fact that his daily-grind companion will be the one to betray him, in a way, and end his life.

The omission of a line in a paragraph that renders it rather incoherent in English is also significant.

> El hombre, muy fatigado y tendido en la gramilla sobre el costado derecho, se resiste siempre a admitir un fenómeno de esa trascendencia, ante el aspecto normal y monótono *de cuanto mira. Sabe bien la hora: las once y media…* El muchacho de todos los días acaba de pasar sobre el puente.
>
> (Quiroga 2002 I 689, my emphasis)

> The man, very weary, lying on his right side in the grama grass, still resists admitting a phenomenon of such transcendency *in the face of the normal, and monotonous, aspect of the boy who has just crossed the bridge as he does every day*.
>
> (Quiroga 1976 124; 2004 105, my emphasis)

What is monotonous and normal is not the aspect of the boy who has just crossed the bridge, but the way in which the injured man's surroundings have not changed; everything looks as it should at that time of day, and he knows this. Everything is the same but he lies still and aware of the fact that, slowly and hopelessly, he is bleeding to death.

A subtle change in punctuation also transforms a rather ontological reflection into an anguished question:

> Es éste el consuelo, el placer y la razón de nuestras divagaciones mortuorias. ¡Tan lejos está la muerte, y tan imprevisto lo que debemos vivir aún!
>
> (Quiroga 2002 I 688)

> Is this our consolation, the pleasure and reason of our musings on death? Death is so distant, and so unpredictable is that life we still must live.
>
> (Quiroga 1976 124)

Where the Spanish text reaffirms the state of philosophical pondering over one's own death while safe in the knowledge that one is alive (albeit, in this case, barely alive and hopelessly dying) the English translation reveals another state of the soul, one closer to that of a troubled, distressed person, which does not quite match the other traits exhibited in this text about a man in the process of dying.

As we can gather from these examples, the choices made by the translator involve more than linguistic inaccuracy. As Susan Bassnett has noted regarding translations into English:

> If the translator then, handles sentences for their specific content alone, the outcome will involve a loss of dimension. In the case of the English translation [...] sentences appear to have been translated at face value, rather than as component units in a complex overall structure. Using Popovič's terminology, the English versions show several types of *negative shift*.
>
> (Bassnett 119)

All of the examples analysed so far pave the way for the assertion that, when appreciating culture-bound beliefs and values that affect the meaning we assign to language and behaviour, cultural misunderstanding is almost inevitable. In a collection of twelve short stories, three take place in an urban setting, but the remaining nine take place in a very specific regional context: the rainforests of northeastern Argentina. The importance of the geographical context, and specifically the subtropical environment associated with the flow of the Paraná River, needs to be taken into consideration when dealing with Quiroga's work, because it is not merely an exotic background against which events take place. Likewise, the human factor – a context of domination signalled by foreign individuals who own the land and exploit the local labourers (together with the region's rich soil) – should be accounted for, as it too represents an "eccentric frontier" in the author's writing, in perpetual contrast with the "civilized" setting of Buenos Aires (Canfield 1368). This is why a lighter-handed domestication strategy would almost certainly have contributed to a better and fuller understanding of Quiroga's work and Argentina's socio-political circumstances at that time.

From other stories in the anthology

It is worth mentioning a few excerpts and reflections from other stories included in the collection translated by Sayers Peden. At the beginning of "A la deriva" [Drifting], as with many other of Quiroga's stories,[4] the name of the specific animal that triggers the narrative action (a venomous viper by the Tupí-Guaraní name of *yararacusú*, typical of the northern region of Argentina) has not been translated or explained. The use of italics signals the word's foreignness, but not the dangerous nature of the creature it denotes. In a short piece first published as a newspaper article (and subsequently included in the 1967 collection *De la vida de nuestros animales*), Quiroga in fact calls the *yararacusú* "la reina de nuestras víboras" [the queen of Argentinean vipers] (Quiroga 2002 II 185, my translation)

[4] Apart from the collections mentioned earlier, *Anaconda* (1921) is another example epitomizing the importance of local names in Quiroga's tales.

Likewise, other inaccuracies in the geographical and natural world presented in the English text stand out, as with the recurrence of *monte*, which is misinterpreted as referring to mountains (1976 123). The imprecision here is all the more salient as mountains are a geological feature absent in that northern region of the country. For a writer who is considered to be the most important exponent of *realismo misionero* [Misiones realism], the presence of geographic, linguistic and cultural features of the province of Misiones is, far from a mere background to some of his tales, quite crucial to understanding his work (Garet 16).

In "La insolación" [Sunstroke], set in Chaco, a hot and sparsely populated area in the northeastern region shared by Argentina and Paraguay, a couple of ideological interventions on the part of the translator are worth pointing out. First, the English courtesy title "Míster" (to refer to Mister Jones, the accented vowel showing the process of transliteration and appropriation) – serves the purpose of singling out an English-speaking alien among the countrymen. A possible rendering of this respectful appropriation on the part of the Spanish-speaking peons might have been to include the word with its diacritical mark as an exoticism, in order to reproduce the sense of strangeness. However, the English text fails to evoke this, and in doing so it washes away the expressive and evoked meaning of the original (Baker 15). Paired with this is the decision to retain the Spanish word *patrón* [master], uttered by the equally out-of-place fox terriers, the sole direct voices in the narration. The dogs' names, predominantly English, are duly italicized in the original, except for one with an indigenous name, seemingly highlighting ownership and imposition. Moreover, fox terriers were traditionally associated with British fox hunting (not a breed that would be chosen by the locals). These characteristics add to the portrayal of the colonizer's attempt at domination. The word *patrón* in Spanish acknowledges Mr Jones's position as the head of the household, as the employer; a translation such as "master" would not have been out of place, as it is uttered by the dogs. Then, there is a paragraph that further illustrates this ideological bias in the construction of the master-labourer relationship:

> A pesar de su orden, tenía que haber galopado para volver a esa hora. Apenas libre y concluida su misión el pobre caballo, en cuyos ijares era imposible contar los latidos, tembló agachando la cabeza y cayó de costado.
>
> (Quiroga 2002 75)

> To get back soon he must have galloped – in spite of his orders. *He reproached the peon, with all the logic typical of his nationality, reproaches to which the peon responded evasively*. Once free, his mission concluded, the poor horse – across whose ribs lay countless lash marks – trembled, lowered his head, and fell on his side.
>
> (Quiroga 2004 15-16, my emphasis)

As can be seen here, an element of reproach has been added, in which "all the logic" is considered to be "typical of his [the *patrón*, Mr. Jones's] nationality."

In a manner inconsistent with other stories, in "Una bofetada" [A slap in the face] Sayers Peden decides to italicize the word *caña*, a noun referring to a typical South American alcoholic beverage deriving from molasses. Because it was cheap and locally produced, it was commonly consumed by labourers. Elsewhere Sayers Peden uses the words "rum" (as in the story "Drifting") and "brandy" (as in "In The Middle of the Night"). The socio-economic implications of finding rum or brandy in the hands of labourers at that time are manifold. They would not have been able to afford either rum or brandy; if they were drinking it, that might even imply they had stolen it from their master.

Conclusion

What started out as mere curiosity to compare translations became an inquisitive search and, eventually, a reflection on how translations are produced. The translation process can, and does, affect the way in which audiences receive and appreciate writers from peripheral contexts such as Argentina or Uruguay. Historical and individual circumstances, to a certain extent, have a bearing on the way a translator is able to carry out his/her task. While one must acknowledge the translator's contribution to literary traditions, the fact that Sayers Peden's translation of Quiroga's short stories has, for some time, been the standard representation of a particular writer/period/style has meant that Quiroga and his work have been portrayed rather unfavourably, failing to do justice to his singular writing style and all its local colour.

The new/old translated texts presented in 2004 represent a visible effort on the part of the publishers to re-introduce Quiroga's anthology to a new, wider English-speaking audience. The fact that the publishers wanted to infuse the reprint with some degree of scholarly authority can be inferred from the addition of Jean Franco's foreword. Venuti's comment that "errors do not diminish a translation's readability, its power to communicate and to give pleasure" (*Scandals* 32) remains true, for the text can be read in English, though it is not a recreation that does full justice to Quiroga's writing. In what seems a lost opportunity, no revision or editing of the main body of translated stories was carried out, explanatory notes were not included, and mistakes and omissions were not amended. Nor was a standardization of the lexicon throughout the anthology made. Therefore, despite the redesigning of its cover, no substantial difference distinguishes the 2004 version from those printed before it (in 1976 and 1984), and the established Anglo-American image of Quiroga remains that produced almost thirty years prior. However, individual readers continue to recreate Quiroga and his work in different ways; creatively, as Jonathan Tittler does, for example in a recently published work on ecocriticism in Spanish American fiction:

> Thanks to Quiroga – whose experiences homesteading in the jungle of northern Argentina anticipate those of the modern green movement by some fifty years – we can access these precious glimpses of eco-wisdom.
>
> (Tittler, quoted in Kane 16)

Consequently, while offering new generations the possibility of reading Horacio Quiroga in English, the editorial decisions, policies and choices made thus far have perhaps contributed to a skewed perception of his work. However, that has not prevented Quiroga's literary mastery from speaking to a wider audience.

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Decolonizing the Dreaming: Reframing "Translation" as "Retelling"

ROSANNE MENACHO and MURRUNDINDI
Monash University (RM)

Abstract
This article explores the exercise of translating an oral Dreamtime story from English to Spanish, without the use of transcription. "The Tale of Gwonowah and Wattarang", is from the audio CD *Platypus Dreaming*, recorded and published by an Indigenous Australian, Wurundjeri elder Murrundindi. The translation and analysis have been undertaken with his permission. The motivation behind the exercise was a desire to find out how one could retell Murrundindi's Dreamtime stories to the next (multicultural) generation of Australians in an ethical way, respecting his stated desire to educate all Victorian children about his people's oral storytelling traditions. Foundational concepts are: "translation as retelling" and "translation as relationship", in the context of post- or neo-colonial Australia. The case study includes an analysis of relevant extratextual, paratextual and textual elements of the task.

1. Introduction

This paper aims to begin a discussion about what might constitute "best practice" in the sourcing, translation and dissemination of oral Indigenous tales in twenty-first-century Australia. It focuses on a case study of crosscultural collaboration in translating Wurundjeri elder Murrundindi's audio recording of the Dreamtime story "The Tale of Gwonowah and Wattarang" (*Platypus Dreaming*), from English into Spanish. Although there is much that could be said about the current state of relations between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Australians, it is not within the scope of the present study to explore this. Acknowledging that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been the traditional owners and custodians of Australia for tens of thousands of years, and British settlers colonized Australia from the year 1788 (my British ancestors arrived in the early 1900s), this study aims to explore the possibility of translating oral stories without the use of transcription, this tool having purportedly been used throughout the centuries for the personal gain of literate researchers (Do Rozario; McConnell) and for "colonising the minds" of First Nations peoples (Ngugi). The terms that will be used to refer to twenty-first-century Australia in this paper are "postcolonial", in the sense of Young's definition: "in the aftermath of the colonial" (13) and "neo-colonial": "value[ing] economic growth over indigenous rights".

Previous research into orality and translation in post- or neo-colonial settings has included analyses of strategies used to represent "hybridity" when translating "postcolonial texts". The latter refers to autobiographical or other works of self-expression written by colonized peoples *in colonizer languages*, in Africa (Bandia), Egypt and Morocco (Ettobi), and India (Manfredi), to give some examples. The aforementioned "hybridity" of these texts refers to patterns of writing that bear significant resemblance to oral storytelling, and the use of vocabulary from a third language: the writer's native or ancestral tongue. These postcolonial translation scholars recommend that hybrid features of "orality in writing" and the use of local terms be carried over into translated versions of these works, to avoid smoothing over the writers' distinctive expressions of a hybrid identity. However, little research has been done on the process of translating oral Indigenous stories *without transcription*, where the maintenance of an oral format is requested by the story's custodian(s) for reasons of cultural continuity.

"The Tale of Gwonowah and Wattarang" was selected for this study due to its significance in my childhood. I grew up close to the Healesville region where the story takes place, and was introduced to Wurundjeri stories by Murrundindi at the age of nine, as part of his work in schools. Murrundindi was the first Aboriginal person I had ever met, and he generously shared stories from his culture with us, along with hundreds of children across Victoria, to promote crosscultural understanding and reconciliation. Not feeling greatly connected to my ancestral roots in England, the opportunity for me to be included in hearing stories about local places and animals from an elder of the Yarra Valley contributed to a greater sense of belonging, and a greater feeling of connection to the people and the land where I lived. To date, no other research about this tale has been carried out. The reason for selecting Spanish as the target language is that my husband is Peruvian, and I wanted to explore the way in which my family and other migrant or mixed families might tell these Indigenous Australian stories to our bilingual and bicultural children. As an academic study, the aim was to develop a model for translating orality *orally*, departing from historical patterns in which story "collectors" transcribed oral tales and converted them into text, often for personal gain. The project draws on literature from anthropology, Aboriginal Studies and Translation Studies, and reveals a need for further research in the areas of "translation as retelling" and "translation as relationship".

2. Methodology and literature review

The qualitative data in this study focuses on an interview and subsequent conversations with storyteller Murrundindi, regarding what he would consider to be an appropriate and respectful way to translate his recordings, and seeking his permission to do so. These conversations were considered alongside a review of existing literature about oral cultures, crosscultural research and collaboration, audio books, postcolonial translation, and post-European-settlement history of the Wurundjeri people. The strategies and recommendations from Murrundindi and academic literature were then applied to the process of translating "The Tale of Gwonowah and Wattarang" into verbal Spanish, detailed as a reflective account of events in Section 3. First of all, it was necessary to consider past interactions between literate and oral peoples, to learn from history and seek out a way forward that would contribute to a mutually empowering collaboration between storyteller and translator.

2.1 "Literates" in an oral world

Walter Ong, in his book *Orality and Literacy* (1-2), differentiates between "primary orality", a culture that has never known writing, and "secondary orality" in "literate" cultures: oral expressions that depend on writing for their production and dissemination, such as television and radio. Ong asserts that it is impossible to imagine what a primary oral culture is like without having experienced it (12), and that knowledge of writing permanently alters the way a person thinks, interacts and conceptualizes words and ideas (12-14).

As researchers of oral communication have historically been literate before stepping into oral-communication-based communities, many of the attempts to describe the oral paradigm scientifically have relied on terms associated with writing, such as "oral text", "oral literature", and "pre-literate" (13). Ong likens this phenomenon to describing a horse anachronistically as a "car without wheels" (ibid.) and recommends the avoidance of such labels, preferring such descriptions as "verbal performance" (14), which will be used in this case study.

Two contrasting approaches to literate research in New Mexico American Indian communities are detailed in missionary Taylor McConnell's essay, "Oral Cultures and Literate Research". McConnell recognizes that a fundamental difference between the worldviews of nineteenth-century anthropologists and the locals was the concept of "documentation". Whereas the Western researchers documented stories, songs and other cultural forms for fear

that they would be "lost", members of the Tlingbit people felt that once culture needed to be "recorded", it was now confirmed *dead* (350). While writing externalizes knowledge, oral stories internalize it. Oral stories were used by the Pueblo communities of New Mexico to pass on knowledge and wisdom (349, 353). However, the power of this information lay in its restriction (341-2), and when anthropologists wrote down the Pueblo people's stories and rituals, and disseminated this information back home without their consent, it was as if the anthropologists had destroyed the stories' power (ibid.). McConnell contrasts this example with that of Frank Waters, a twentieth-century anthropologist in the same region, who submitted all of his research papers and stories to Taos Pueblo elders to verify the accuracy and representation of what he had written (347-8). Many Taos Pueblo people later chose to use these stories as a resource to teach their children about their identity (348); a testament to Waters' respectful relationship with the community. This practice of submitting all research to the custodians of knowledge would be essential in building a relationship of mutual respect with Murrundindi.

2.2 A meeting of oral and literate worlds in post-invasion Australia

In the Australian context, Indigenous people have also been telling stories for millennia, to pass on local knowledge and identity to each successive generation. But when British colonizers and settlers later arrived to Australia's shores, they had a dilemma. Which stories would they tell their children? They found that the stories from Britain were not useful for their children in the formation of an Australian identity, as children could not relate what they read to the reality that surrounded them.

Rebecca-Anne Do Rozario in her article, "Australia's Fairy Tales Illustrated in Print", documents the quest of non-Indigenous Australians to find and develop "Australian" children's stories and fairy tales. After several attempts to create an "Australian" equivalent to European fairy tales during the early and mid-nineteenth century, a woman called Katie Parker decided to collect and write down Indigenous Australian stories. She considered that these stories would be more "genuine" than invented "Australian fairy tales", as they were "the product of hundreds of years of story-telling" (Wall 5) in the Australian landscape.

Do Rozario notes that the Aboriginal storytellers who collaborated with Parker were keen to have their stories written down, but differences in communication between the two cultures (oral versus literate) complicated the relationship between them. As the storytellers did not write, Parker had the responsibility of representing their "voice" in writing, and also of describing her own perceptions of the cultures mentioned in the introductions to each story. Clare Bradford in "Centres and Edges" explains that when (white) collectors are given the responsibility of representing "pure Aboriginality" and the said Aborigines are "assumed not to be able to speak for themselves", this constitutes an "appropriating move" (104). Furthermore, these newly-written stories were then sent to Britain, labelled as being "Australian" narratives, whites claiming Aboriginal stories as their own (103). In my collaboration with Murrundindi to translate "The Tale of Gwonowah and Wattarang", I would need to avoid all practices of "appropriation", given that this has historically been a key pattern of practices associated with colonization (Wallerstein 13-4).

2.3 "Orality" translated into writing in a (now presumed) literate world

Michèle Grossman, in her thesis *Entangled Subjects*, writes specifically about the crosscultural collaboration evidenced in Indigenous life-writing from the 1970s, where a white editor or researcher would write down and edit life stories told orally by an Indigenous person (into a tape recorder). In a sense, these editors were acting as "intersemiotic" translators (Jakobson 114), "translating" verbal stories into the language of writing. Grossman recognizes that this process was used by anthropologists and ethnographers in the previous century, collecting oral

"native" knowledge and stories for research purposes and converting the "raw material" of "talk" into the "cooked" form of written "text" (Grossman 111). Written stories were not immune from ideological intervention on the part of editors and publishers as speech was *translated* into the language of written Standard Australian English for a wider audience.

When it came to the later context of the Indigenous life-writer and white editor, Grossman notes that both parties still often had their own agenda: the life-writers to express themselves and the editors to undertake research (161). However, she asks this question: in a post-invasion society where Indigenous Australians have repeatedly been treated according to a "deficit and dependency" paradigm (4), "do the practices of these editors serve to increase Aboriginal visibility and agency?" (161). She urges non-Indigenous people firstly to take a non-essentialist view on Indigenous authors' preferences regarding the use of "talk" versus the use of "text", and to honour these differences (12). Secondly, she highlights the importance of examining *who has the control* over publications that represent Aboriginal peoples, and "whose subjectivities and agency they affirm" (199). These two recommendations would form the core of my approach when seeking to collaborate with Murrundindi in the retelling of his tale in Spanish.

2.4 The Wurundjeri context and Murrundindi's mission

Murrundindi's people, the Wurundjeri, experienced many challenges to their agency and self-determination since Melbourne was claimed for Britain by Governor Bourke in 1835. After mass decimation of Kulin Nation peoples by shooting, poisoning and disease, the remaining Wurundjeri were gathered up along with other survivors at Coranderrk Station in Healesville in 1863. They were not allowed to speak their own languages or tell their stories, instead being forced to speak in English and learn European ways of life (Gardiner 23-4). Much of their language (Woiwurrung) and many of their stories were lost (Murrundindi, personal communication, 25 September 2015; van Toorn 333).

However, Murrundindi, the Ngurungaeta (head man) of the Wurundjeri people, *was* taught a number of oral Wurundjeri stories by his mother and grandmother, verbally translated into English with some traditional Woiwurrung terms woven into the tales (Murrundindi, personal communication, 25 September 2015). While many of his generation were trying to downplay their Aboriginality in the face of "assimilation" policies (van Toorn), Murrundindi took it upon himself to keep his culture and the oral tradition alive through cultural presentations in primary schools and at the Healesville Sanctuary (*Murrundindi Dreaming*). In 1999, he came to my school, Wandin Yallock Primary School, and announced a special competition. We were to design a front cover for his new audio CD of Wurundjeri Dreamtime stories, *Platypus Dreaming*, and the winner would have their design on the cover when the CD was released. He explained that he did not write the stories down, rather recording them on an audio CD, because his people told these stories verbally. They were to be listened to and learnt by heart – not read. When I approached him for an interview in 2015, Murrundindi further explained to me that his mission was to reach every child in the state of Victoria with his stories, to teach them about his culture's value of oral storytelling.

Desiring to tell these stories to my own future (bilingual English-Spanish) children as part of passing on my educational heritage, it occurred to me that there would be a number of recently arrived migrant children in Victoria that would not yet have learnt English, but who would still love to hear Murrundindi's stories. I asked myself how an oral story could be "translated", having only ever worked with written text. My first thought was to transcribe the story in English, translate this text into Spanish, and then record my reading of the translation onto audio. However, as it was Murrundindi's story, this was not my decision to make. Asking permission to translate, and seeking his guidance on how to go about this, would need to be the first step toward retelling "The Tale of Gwonowah and Wattarang" in Spanish. What follows

is a reflective account of the process from beginning to end. As a proficient "literate", it would have been "the norm" for me to analyse the translation process in a hierarchical manner. However, in the interest of learning to tell stories, I will relate the process of translating Murrundindi's tale as episodes, in the order that they happened.

3. Translating "The Tale of Gwonowah and Wattarang"

3.1 Stage 1: Request to translate

As soon as I became inspired to take on the task of translating an Aboriginal audio story that did not come with a book, I realized that I was entering an unknown world about which I had very little knowledge. If I had learnt anything from my studies in Aboriginal Education as an undergraduate student, it was i) to build relationships with people from a position of humility, rather than making assumptions, and ii) to honour cultural gatekeepers through asking permission, always giving something in return.

As custodian of the story and as the Ngurungaeta (head man) of his people, Murrundindi had the authority to determine how his people's stories and knowledge were used, to control and restrict their dissemination and to receive full rights and recognition for this cultural and intellectual property (cf. Langford; Lydon). If I wanted to translate a Wurundjeri story from *Platypus Dreaming*, I would need to begin by building a relationship with Murrundindi, honouring him as a cultural gatekeeper through permission-seeking, and considering how I could reciprocate this sharing of culture.

Acutely aware that my ancestors came from the same country that colonized Victoria and shattered the Wurundjeri's way of life, I felt an enormous debt to Murrundindi. If colonization had created unequal power relationships with colonizers claiming Indigenous land and stories as their own, then our relationship would have to be one of equal agency, of the *mutual* and *voluntary* sharing of stories and resources.

After a number of attempts to contact Murrundindi, I was ecstatic to receive a return call one morning.[1] I shared with Murrundindi that I had been a student at Wandin Yallock Primary School when he produced the CD *Platypus Dreaming*, and was now hoping to translate one of the tales into Spanish as part of a research project. I was hoping to gain an understanding of the story's origin and Murrundindi's main purpose in recording the CD, as well as ask his permission to translate "The Tale of Gwonowah and Wattarang".

Murrundindi explained that he learnt the story from his mother and grandmother, in English. He had obtained permission from his mother to record the stories in audio format, as she had previously been their custodian as a Wurundjeri elder. Murrundindi's purpose in recording the CD was primarily educative and secondly expressive – for all pre-school and primary school students in Victoria to hear and enjoy the audio stories, learning his people's way of telling them orally from generation to generation.

Owing to this mission, Murrundindi was adamant that the stories remain oral and not be transcribed in any way. He agreed that the most appropriate translation strategy would be to learn the stories by heart and then retell them in Spanish without transcription in either language. This method of oral/aural learning would challenge my reliance on being able to refer to written text as a memory aid, also pushing the boundaries of my understanding of "translation", which usually refers to the written mode of communication (Munday 8).

The second condition was that no money was to be made from the translation, as for too long, Aboriginal stories have been collected or "stolen" from their custodians and sold for profit, exploiting differing cultural notions of "authorship" and "copyright" (as mentioned in Section 2: cf. Do Rozario; Lydon). At this point, I imagined that I would simply record the retelling for my own use, perhaps telling the story in person to my own children in the future.

[1] See Appendix 1 for a paraphrased version of the interview, which took place on 25 September 2015.

3.2 Stage 2: Reforming my concept of translation

Now that I had permission to translate the tale, I needed to justify this transfer as being an act of "translation", as it did not involve writing. I found two theoretical precedents for this – Pimentel's concept of translation as "retelling" (9) and Spivak's explanation of the Hindi term for translation, *anuvad*, meaning "speaking after" (247). Munday (8) points out that there are overlaps between "translation" and "interpreting", with "interpreting" usually being the spoken expression and "translation" the written one. However, in this case, the oral story would be "consumed" (Polsky and Takemoto) in its entirety before being retold in a different space, time and language. For this reason, I have used the terms "translation" and "interlingual retelling" in this study, with "interlingual" referring to the transfer between languages (Jakobson 114).

Having justified "translation as retelling", I then turned to the notion of "translation as relationship". Since discovering relationship as being a key in Aboriginal education and cultural affairs, I had more recently noticed that "translation as relationship" is also a concept in Translation Studies. Since the "cultural turn" of the (inter)discipline in the 1980s and 90s, there had been a greater focus on the *actors* in the translation process, especially by Christiane Nord. In her "functionality plus loyalty" principle, she highlights the role of "loyalty" in the interpersonal relationships and negotiation of the translation process as being equally, if not more important than the previously-held notion of a target *text's* "faithfulness" to a source *text*. The loyalty principle was offered as an addition to the functionally-oriented *Skopos* theory (Reiss and Vermeer), which focuses on producing translations that are "fit for purpose". In *Skopos* theory, the purpose of a translation is specified in a "translation commission" (234) and is the overriding factor to be considered when making textual decisions in translation.

In my translation of "The Tale of Gwonowah and Wattarang", I was both the "commissioner" (with Murrundindi's consent) and "translator", and the "translation commission" was negotiated with the Murrundindi as the "source-culture sender". The "target text receivers" were similar to those of *Platypus Dreaming*, still being primary students in Victoria, except that these would be Spanish-speaking students who would likely hear the story either in a live retelling or on an audio recording, from a Spanish-speaking narrator rather than from Murrundindi himself.

The function and purpose would remain the same: to teach children in Victoria about Wurundjeri culture and oral storytelling. I would tell the story with the same characters and the same events in order to explain how the platypus was created according to Wurundjeri culture. I would also use the same Woiwurrung terms as Murrundindi to make the Spanish-speaking audience equally familiar with them, accompanied by the terms' Spanish counterparts to ensure understanding, as Murrundindi had done in English. But to remain loyal to Murrundindi and the conditions of the negotiated translation commission, I would make sure that my translation gave him full acknowledgement for the story and that no financial gain was involved.

Having established this theoretical framework for translating orality *orally*, I read some research articles about oral storytelling and proceeded to listen to the audio performance over and over again, considering the way in which I would approach the retelling.

3.3 Stage 3: Listening to the "source performance"

As an audio file, "The Tale of Gwonowah and Wattarang" might be better described as a "source performance" rather than a "source text". The story, described by Murrundindi as a "Dreamtime story", follows the journey of Gwonowah, the little black swan, down the Yarra River. There, she is kidnapped by Old Nargoo, the ugly water rat, who tries to force her to marry him. However, Gwonowah outsmarts Old Nargoo and escapes back up the mountain to the Badger Creek, where she lays two eggs, resulting in two little babies that resemble what

we now know as the platypus. As an explanation of how the platypus was created, it is an example of an "etiological story" (Beardsley 526).

Woiwurrung terms are used for animal character names and selected features in the landscape, as enduring evidence that this story, too, is the product of an "interlingual retelling" from the previous Woiwurrung version. This recording expresses a "hybridity" between Indigenous (Woiwurrung) and colonial (English) languages and storytelling conventions, which I would need to carry over into the Spanish version to maintain its distinctiveness.

Beardsley describes some typical features of oral cultures and oral storytelling that are relevant here. He explains that in this tradition generally, oral pieces are *performed* as a new composition each time, varying according to the needs of the audience (522). I had observed this in Murrundindi's storytelling in schools and at Healesville Sanctuary. Shorter and longer versions of "The Tale of Gwonowah and Wattarang" maintained the same characters and ending (the creation of the platypus), but the descriptions and events varied in the amount of detail given, depending on how long the story needed to be. Beardsley indicates that rather than there being a fixed "type" ("original") and additional "transformation" ("variants") of oral stories, there can be many retellings and interpretations of the main point of the story (526). Every version of this story that I heard from Murrundindi explained the platypus as the product of a water rat and a swan, but only the longer version on *Platypus Dreaming* emphasized Gwonowah's father's warning not to swim around the big bend in the river, which could be interpreted as an additional warning to children not to disobey their parents.

In *Siting Translation*, Niranjana observes that it is only in logocentric (writing-based) cultures that the "standardization" and "memorization" of stories made possible by writing is so highly prized. Strate describes this act of recording or writing down stories as "freezing" them, and thus "binding time", as previously live events can be stored for later use, and an official version "canonized" (240). However, Murrundindi asserts that the act of recording *Platypus Dreaming* was solely for the purpose of reaching a greater number of children with understanding and enjoyment of his culture and oral traditions (Murrundindi, personal communication, 25 September 2015). As a result, the need for the story to be preserved through *continuing the tradition* of intergenerational *retelling* (in any language) would be more important for achieving Murrundindi's desired "function" (*Skopos*) for the story than would obsessing over strict adherence to written-text notions of linguistic "equivalence" and "fidelity" for each and every phrase. This was a comforting realization as I set about learning to tell a ten-minute story from memory for the very first time.

3.4 Stage 4: Internalizing the story and making decisions for the transfer to Spanish

Compared to translating written words on a page, learning a complete story by heart, remembering it and retelling it in recorded form in my second language was a challenge. I listened over and over, writing down key words that I didn't know how to say in Spanish so that I could look them up at the end. I ended up with a list of words in English, such as "reeds", "webbed feet", "flat bill", "flutter" and "paddle around", next to their Spanish translations. As concepts that exist in most cultures, these terms already had "natural equivalents" (Pym 7), making this step relatively straightforward. I also noted Woiwurrung terms (including character names) and place names, to consider how I would express these in the Spanish version. My need to record and visualize key terms and phrases in writing supported the truth of Walter Ong's assertion that literacy alters a person's thought processes forever – my aural memory had suffered greatly in the process of becoming proficient in "literacy".

The translation strategies used for the Woiwurrung terms may be of interest to translators in the readership (although not essential to the main focus of crosscultural collaboration), so I will present these here with a short commentary.

3.4.1 Multilingualism

To maintain the hybrid feature of "multilingualism" (Ettobi 235; Platt et al. 183) in this tale, I have used the same Woiwurrung terms present in Murrundindi's recording. These include greetings and some key nouns (animate and inanimate), presented in the table below:

Table 1: Woiwurrung terms in Murrundindi's version and in the Spanish retelling

	Definite article	Woiwurrung	English	Spanish (with back translations for phrases)
Greetings		Wominjeka	Welcome	Bienvenido/a(s)
		Neganga kundewa	Come and listen	Vengan y escuchen (come and listen)
		Twiginin	Until the next time	Hasta la próxima (until the next time)
Nouns (inanimate)	el (m)	gunnugilli	sky	el cielo (m)
	la (f)	yeta	water	el agua[2] (f)
Nouns (animate)	la (f)	bullum bullum	butterfly	la mariposa (f)
	el (m)	wattarang	platypus	el ornitorrinco (m)
	el (m)	gwonowah	swan	el cisne (m)
	la (f)	nargoo	water rat	la rata de agua (f)
	los (m.pl.)	gooligah	water spirits	los espíritus del agua (m.pl.) (the spirits of the water)

I have needed to add gendered articles to the Woiwurrung words to follow Spanish grammatical conventions, and have used the same article genders as the equivalent terms in Spanish. In the recordings (Murrundindi's and also mine), every Woiwurrung word is said without any additional vocal emphasis, followed immediately by the English / Spanish, for example, "Entró a la yeta, al agua" [She jumped into the yeta, the water]. In written text, this lack of verbal emphasis would suggest the use of roman typeface rather than italics for these terms, normalizing the foreign terms' presence.

3.4.2 Character names

Regarding names for animals, the Woiwurrung is used in the source text as the character's name in the story: "*Gwonowah* [swan], the little black swan", "Old *Nargoo* [water rat], the ugly water rat" and so on. Interestingly, the character names in this Dreamtime story follow the English fairy tale pattern of "two adjectives followed by the animal name", for example "**three little** pigs", "**big bad** wolf" etc., here "**little black** swan" and "**ugly water** rat". This suggests "interference" between the fairy tale and Dreamtime story genres (Bandia 132). The norm when translating fairy tales from English into Spanish is to combine two of these words into one (for example "tres **cerditos**" [three **little-pigs**] and "lobo **feroz**" [**ferocious** wolf]), so I used the diminutive "-cillo" on the end of Gwonowah's name, (which can denote both "little" and "dear"), and combined "old" and "ugly" into "vejete", meaning "old codger" for the water rat.

3.4.3 Geographic references

The place names in the tale (Healesville Sanctuary, Badger Creek, Yarra River, Melbourne, Watts River and Marysville) not only situate the native Australian animals in the story, but also

[2] "Agua" is a feminine noun in Spanish, but takes the masculine article "el" because it begins with a stressed vowel.

express the Wurundjeri people's custodianship of the area and their right to tell the Dreaming stories of this region. As the target audience is a Spanish-speaking or bilingual child who lives near or visits the places mentioned, no additional explanation regarding places mentioned would be required. The choice, however, lay in either keeping the English terms for "creek" and "river", or translating these into Spanish, with "Arroyo Badger" [Badger Creek] and "Río Yarra" [Yarra River]. I have chosen to translate these terms into Spanish to provide additional cohesion through the repetition of the terms "creek" and "river" when used generically in the story.

Table 2: Geographical references in Murrundindi's version and in the Spanish retelling

English	Spanish	Back translation into English
Badger Creek	Arroyo Badger	Badger Creek
Healesville	Healesville	Healesville
Yarra River	Río Yarra	Yarra River
Melbourne	Melbourne	Melbourne
Watts River	Río Watts	Watts River
Marysville	Marysville	Marysville

3.5 Stage 5: Recording, checking and publishing

After establishing key terms for the Spanish version, I recorded the entire story a number of times as a voice memo on my iPhone, listening back to check the story details and my use of grammar. Before and after the recorded performance in English, Murrundindi had addressed an audience of "boys and girls, mums and dads" and introduced it as a Dreamtime story, placing the recording within the genre of "narrative performance" (Beardsley 524-5). I needed to adapt these peritexts[3] (Genette) to reflect the change in the person telling the story, mentioning in the foreword where I learnt the story and who gave me permission to retell it (Murrundindi). The afterword in the recording involved listeners in a guessing game about which animal the "wattarang" was in the story, revealing the answer: "the platypus". I kept this part of the afterword as well as the explanation relating to Murrundindi's purpose in making the CD, namely, teaching children about oral tradition and stories being "passed down from generation to generation".

Needing some form of visual support, I had the bilingual list of key terms, and the adjusted foreword and afterword in front of me while I recorded. To copy the nature soundtrack in the source recording, I recorded my performance outdoors with the sounds of birds and wind in the background, although clapping sticks were not used. I tried to imitate Murrundindi's soothing and calm intonation, placing emphasis on character names and enunciating each word clearly. The even intonation and slow pace differentiated the tale from "audio books", which are professional, dramatic readings of print books with distinct voices for characters (cf. Haag; Irwin; Kozloff).

Murrundindi's recorded performance in English avoided the use of Australian jargon, such as "tucker", but employed informal devices typical of speech, such as contractions ("gonna get you"). As contractions do not exist in Spanish, I compensated with another marker of informality used widely in the spoken register of Latin American Spanish, which is the use of the diminutive form: for example, "water" ("aguita" [little water]) and "babies" ("bebitos" [little babies]). I did, however, avoid Peru-specific oral markers such as the addition of the suffix "-pe" to an informally spoken "sí" [yes] and "no" [no]. If being used for general distribution in the Spanish-speaking world, the use of internationally understood "standardized" vocabulary would enable the story to then be retold in localized Spanish variants, in live retellings between friends or family members.

[3] See Appendix 2 for a transcription, translation and back translation of the foreword and afterword.

I edited the best take of the Spanish retelling using Audacity, removing hesitations, repetitions, and re-recording obvious grammatical slips. I then published this as a free YouTube video with an image of the CD cover as the background. I set the privacy to "private" and shared the link with Murrundindi, and when he had listened to it and given permission, I changed the privacy settings to public and shared the link with family in Peru for their feedback. My husband's cousin enjoyed the story and kindly found the exact places in minutes and seconds where I had made unintentional grammatical mistakes in Spanish, so that I could re-record these parts and edit them back in to the file. The final version of the story is available on YouTube, which seemed to be an appropriate platform for the story, being both free of charge for users, and giving opportunity for feedback, updates and ongoing interaction.[4] This bears greater resemblance to a live performance when compared with print books, which do not provide these dialogic features.

3.6 Stage 6: Publication of the research paper

The final stage of my collaboration with Murrundindi was to write about the process. Smith and Ward assert that in the context of post- or neo-colonial Australia, collaboration is the antithesis to power relations (5-6), and that the objective should be a "shared future […] built on the needs and agendas of both Indigenous peoples and the people who study them" (5). My "needs and agendas" in desiring to publish a research paper about the interlingual retelling process were i) to broaden the concept of "translation" to be more inclusive of orality as cultural practice, and thus invite readers to join me in reversing (colonial) patterns of compulsively converting oral stories into text for non-Indigenous profit, and ii) to provide an example of crosscultural collaboration where both parties benefit and have equal agency to achieve their purposes. Through my access to academic writing and the Spanish language, I have been able to extend Murrundindi's call for keeping oral storytelling alive. Through Murrundindi's agency as a Wurundjeri elder, he has used his cultural authority to offer stories, perspectives, advice, and permission to enable me to undertake research in this area and further explore my identity as a third-generation British-Australian.

To avoid repeating the mistakes of researchers in the past, I submitted all of my writing to Murrundindi for his feedback and approval before submission, and made sure to acknowledge all of his contributions in full. I look forward to being able to reciprocate the sharing of stories and cultures when I chat again with Murrundindi in the near future, and value the opportunity to continue to listen and learn from the wisdom of this inspiring elder.

4. Results and recommendations for practice

Through this process of crosscultural collaboration, I have come to realise that *my story* is the base of my identity. While I do not have my own ancestral-land stories, I do have ancestor stories: stories of migration, stories of starting life again in a new land, and stories of settler life in Melbourne, Gippsland and the Yarra Valley. While I now know that I do not need to look for Aboriginal stories in order to have an identity in this beautiful land, Murrundindi kindly entered my story and those of many children in Victoria, reaching out a hand of friendship and reconciliation through storytelling, and opening the door to a shared future of understanding between migrants and the Wurundjeri. I hope to return the favour by spreading his message further in my languages of Spanish and academic writing.

When it comes to the question of how this study can benefit translation practice, here are some things to consider:

[4] The Spanish performance of the tale, "El Cuento de Gwonowah y Wattarang, historia aborigen australiana" can be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SGmzv5sN0X0

A transparent agenda: Question the motivation for "collecting" an Indigenous story. Is there a personal connection to the storyteller or story?
Respecting custodianship: Ask how Indigenous agency will benefit from the translation into writing or another language. Any use of culture by outsiders must, firstly, be approved, and secondly, control, rights and royalties must stay with the custodians.
Respecting publication guidelines: Seek permission and guidance in terms of process, product and publication, and respect these conditions.
Translating oral stories orally: If a story is to remain oral, one strategy is to listen to the story repeatedly from live or audio retellings and practise until all episodes of the story can be remembered. The characters, key events and moral are the most important elements to retain, depending on the type of story and its function.
Avoiding non-Indigenous profit: Consider publishing for free or for shared rights and profit. Asking the storyteller their preferred arrangement regarding publishing and royalties is the best way to ensure an appropriate solution.
Checking and approval: Submit all material for checking and approval prior to publication. This must include any later changes to the content. All Indigenous contributions should receive full and accurate acknowledgement.
Continuing the relationship: Reconciliation begins with a connection characterized by equal agency and mutual respect. Beyond this, listening deeply and valuing each other for who each one *is* over one's *economic potential* is a step towards deeper healing as a nation (cf. Al Jazeera America).
Getting involved: Find out about what local Indigenous elders are doing and how their "voice" (whether "talk" or "text") could be extended through translation to significant groups of new arrivals who are starting to build a new story and identity in Australia.

5. Conclusion

This study aimed to develop a model for sourcing and translating oral Indigenous stories ethically. Through an interview, literature review and a process of listening and learning, I have been able to share a Spanish retelling of "The Tale of Gwonowah and Wattarang" as a free video on YouTube. Central concerns to this endeavour included mutual benefit, control of knowledge, respecting guidelines, and learning another way of knowing and communicating through a type of apprenticeship.

Furthermore, the notion of translation as "retelling" opens up an area of Translation Studies that seems to have been neglected, namely that of translation in purely oral traditions, without transcription. It challenges the field to look outside Western epistemology to acknowledge and include other ways of knowing, doing and being. Additional work is still needed to explore models for the translation of non-literacy-based modes of performance. It is time to decolonize the assumption that translation necessarily constitutes "putting into writing", and explore the possibilities for "translation as retelling" and "translation as relationship".

Appendix 1. Interview with Murrundindi (paraphrased and summarized)

Rosanne: Hi Murrundindi.

Murrundindi: How can I help you?

Rosanne: I am studying translation and would like to write an essay about the ethics of translating an oral story from your CD into Spanish.

Murrundindi: Ok. What do you want to know?

Rosanne: Where did you learn the story of Gwonowah and Wattarang and in which language?

Murrundindi: I learnt it from my grandmother, in English. It would be hard to tell it in Language because our language was taken from us. There are no more speakers living.

Rosanne: What was the main purpose of producing the CD?

Murrundindi: I want all kinder and primary school children to hear it and learn how we told our stories orally.

Rosanne: Would it be ok for someone to translate the story into another language, like Spanish?

Murrundindi: I guess that would be alright, as long as they weren't making money off it. People have been making money off Aboriginal peoples' culture and that has to stop.

Rosanne: What would be the most appropriate way for someone to translate the story?

Murrundindi: Learn the story by heart, then tell it in the other language. Don't write it down. These stories are not written stories, they are oral stories.

Rosanne: Would it be ok for me to write an essay about translating the story and publish it in an academic journal, if I didn't make any money from it?

Murrundindi: That should be ok. Mention Murrundindi, that it's my story and that I've given you permission, otherwise people will get their backs up. And I'll want to read it first. Good luck.

Rosanne: Thank you very much.

Appendix 2. The foreword and afterword in English and Spanish

Below I have transcribed and translated the foreword and afterword within the specific context of the commission being "to tell the story orally to my own (future) children".

	Woiwurrung/English	Woiwurrung/Spanish	Backtranslation into Woiwurrung/English
Foreword	Wominjeka, neganga kundewa Murrundindi. *Wominjeka* means "welcome". *Neganga kundewa* means "come and listen, to Murrundindi". *Murrundindi* means "home in the mountain". My mother, senior elder of the Wurundjeri tribe, she gave me that name. This story, is about Gwonowah, the little black swan…	Wominjeka, neganga kundewa. *Wominjeka* significa "bienvenido(s)(as)". *Neganga kundewa* significa "vengan y escuchen". Esta historia es del pueblo Wurundjeri, del valle Yarra en Victoria. Yo lo aprendí de Murrundindi, el jefe de su pueblo. Él me ha dado permiso para contárselo, para que sepan cómo su pueblo contaba las historias orales. Esta historia es acerca de Gwonowah, el cisnecillo negro…	Wominjeka, neganga kundewa. *Wominjeka* means "welcome (masc. plural/fem. plural)". *Neganga kundewa* means "come and listen". This story is from the Wurundjeri people, from the Yarra Valley in Victoria. I learnt it from Murrundindi, the head of his people. He has given me permission to tell it to you, so that you may know how his people told oral stories. This story is about Gwonowah, the little black swan…
Afterword	That story was passed down through generation to generation boys and girls, mums and dads and brothers and sisters, but what sort of little animals do you think they were? Have a guess. Yes, that's right. They were… the platypus. That's the Dreamtime story how the platypus was created. It was taught to me by my mother. It's been passed down through generation to generation. We do not say "goodbye". We say *twiginin*: "until the next time".	Esa historia ha sido transmitida de generación en generación, mis niños/as. ¿Pero qué clase de animal crees que fueron ellos? Adivina… Sí, es cierto. Fueron ellos los ornitorrincos. Esa es la historia de soñar de cómo el ornitorrinco fue creado. Me la enseñó Murrundindi que lo aprendió de su mamá. Ha sido transmitida de generación en generación. Los Wurundjeris no dicen "adiós". Más bien, dicen *twiginin*: "hasta la próxima". Entonces, yo también les diré "hasta la próxima".	This story has been passed down from generation to generation, my children. But what sort of animal do you believe they were? Guess… Yes, that's right. They were the platypus. That is the Dreamtime story about how the platypus was created. Murrundindi taught it to me, and he learnt it from his mother. It has been passed down from generation to generation. Wurundjeri people do not say "goodbye". Instead, they say *twiginin*: "until the next time". And so I will also say to you "see you next time".

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The Application of Berman's Theory as a Basis for Target Text Evaluation

PETER HODGES

Abstract

Broadly speaking, this article demonstrates the advantage of theoretical knowledge in the practical aspect of the translation process. Antoine Berman's criteria for the linguistic evaluation of a target text provide a valuable model that can be applied to almost any literary text. In this instance, the short stories of the renowned non-conformist French author, Boris Vian, have been used as a case study. The stories have been taken from two collections, *Le Loup-garou* and *Le Ratichon baigneur*, that were written during the 1940s and 1950s. Many contain elements of surrealism and the unique humour, partially based on word plays, for which Vian is famous. By applying Berman's linguistically structured theory to an author who is rarely able to be discussed in terms of structure, this article will show how very little, if any, divergence has occurred between the original stories and those that appear in the 2014 University of Adelaide publication *If I Say If*.

The aim of this article is to show how the criteria for target text evaluation proposed by Antoine Berman, which were designed to uncover variations between source and target texts, can be appropriately applied to the short stories found in the collection *If I Say If: The Poems and Short Stories of Boris Vian*.

Boris Vian was an engineer, jazz musician in post-World War II Paris, composer of anti-establishment songs that helped to define the '60s, contemporary of Sartre and de Beauvoir, pseudotranslator, poet and writer of autofiction. His style poses many translation problems that are seldom encountered in the works of a single author. I translated the twenty-eight short stories taken from the Bourgois editions of *Le Loup-garou* and *Le Ratichon baigneur*, collected in the Pleiade edition, that are found in *If I Say If*. This collection also contains a number of Vian's poems, translated by Maria Freij, along with several scholarly articles on translation methodology and the short story genre, authored by myself and others. The *skopos*, or purpose, of my short story translations was to recreate an era-specific English version, which subsequently served as the basis for my PhD research at the University of Newcastle in Australia.[1] The present article serves as a means of self-evaluation within Berman's parameters, undertaken after the translations had been completed. It should be noted that the application of Berman's criteria as a frame of reference is not necessarily limited to post-translation, nor to these particular texts.

Approaches to source and target text comparison

Several models have been proposed for the comparison of source text and target text pairs, including those by Lambert and van Gorp, Nord, van Leuven-Zwart, House, Vinay and Darbelnet, Chuquet and Paillard, and Berman. Lambert and van Gorp propose a systematic comparison of the whole translation process that incorporates preliminary data, macro-level textual structure, micro-level linguistic features and systemic relationships. Nord's approach focuses on the comparison of preliminary data, which proposes an examination of source text and target text profiles in a process called "translation-oriented text analysis" to see whether

[1] The thesis is entitled *Boris Vian (Non)conformist: The Translation of Two Collections of Short Stories in a Theoretical Context*.

the stipulations stated in the commission (i.e. intended text functions, addressees, motive or reasons for the existence of each text, and time and place of text reception) have been met and where variations have occurred. This process can be applied to all text types and may also include an examination of the product itself to detail the addition or removal of footnotes, endnotes, introductions and illustrations. Van Leuven-Zwart offers two models for textual comparison: the descriptive model, which focuses on the systemic context involving intertextual relations of translated literature in general; and the comparative model, which is the one of primary interest here insofar as it details and classifies micro-level semantic transfer within sentences, clauses and phrases, involving transemes and shifts. Other micro-level theoretical options include House's model of quality assessment, a comparative source and target analysis that leads to an evaluation of the quality of the translation through an examination of register and detailed linguistic comparisons for signs of Venuti's foreignization and domestication strategies. Other theoreticians working in the area of product-oriented Descriptive Translation Studies have also suggested the analysis of single source text and target text pairs as the basis for comparison. The detailed study of linguistic trends between French and English undertaken by Vinay and Darbelnet and Chuquet and Paillard has identified common transpositions that can be used as a means of comparison in translation practice.

Berman's criteria

Despite efforts by some of these theoreticians to broaden the spectrum of comparative descriptive studies, in this instance it is the criteria set out by Berman that provide the most relevant linguistic overview to see where there is divergence between the source and target texts. Berman favours the retention of foreign elements in translation. His assessment criteria are therefore based on a system that incorporates some of the approaches suggested by the abovementioned theorists while simultaneously identifying a number of "deforming" tendencies that can be used to measure how close the target text is to the original. The most notable "deforming" characteristics listed by Berman include expansion, loss of source text poetics, rationalization, clarification, loss of source text idioms and expressions, qualitative impoverishment, quantitative impoverishment, destruction of vernacular networks, effacement of the superimposition of languages, ennoblement, and destruction of underlying networks of signification, all of which will be applied to the short stories evaluated here. A brief examination of each of these characteristics in relation to the translation of Vian's texts will reveal if any discrepancies have occurred.

Expansion

Difference in length between the source text and target text is an area in which textual deformation is most likely to happen. There is a tendency for text to expand or contract when transferred between languages, with the rate depending on language pairs and subject matter; some texts, especially legal texts, might expand by as much as 30% (Epstein). Cited rates of expansion between language combinations include: English into Arabic at 25%; Finnish into English at 25-30%; Swedish into English at 10%; English into Italian at 15%; and Korean into English between at 10-15%.[2] These figures could partially explain why some agencies often prefer to use the lower source-text word count to calculate translators' pay. There is some discrepancy as to the accepted French into English expansion and contraction rates, however. According to Omnilingua, [3] an international translation agency, a typical increase is in the range of 10-15%, a figure supported by Epstein, while another such agency cited above, Kwintessential, offers the diametrically opposed view that contraction in the same range

[2] Data taken from http://kwintessential.co.uk/translation/expansion (accessed February 2013).
[3] Data taken from http://omnilingua.com/resourcecenter/textexpansion.aspx (accessed 10 March 2013).

occurs. For Berman, expansion of the target text is the predominant trend, which often happens when there is over-translation of the source text, regardless of language pairs and text type.

Table 1. Comparison of source text and target text word counts for the stories in *Le Loup-garou* and *Le Ratichon baigneur* (ST), and in *If I Say If* (TT).

Title	ST Count	TT Count	+/- (%)
Le Loup-garou	3790	4015	+5.9
Un cœur d'or	1222	1298	+6.2
Les Remparts du sud	6911	7558	+9.4
L'amour est aveugle	2723	2966	+8.9
Martin m'a téléphoné	6290	6330	+0.6
Marseille commençait à s'éveiller	1696	1984	+17.0
Les Chiens, le désir et la mort	3350	3376	+0.8
Les Pas vernis	1440	1653	+14.8
Une pénible histoire	3033	3302	+8.9
Le Penseur	1026	1097	+6.9
Surprise-partie chez Léobille	3212	3391	+5.6
Le Bonhomme de neige	2720	2803	+3.1
Le Danger des classiques	3752	3789	+1.0
Un métier de chien	1051	1065	+1.3
Divertissements culturels	1167	1120	-4.0
Une grande vedette	1218	1251	+2.7
Le Ratichon baigneur	890	905	+1.7
Méfie-toi de l'orchestre	789	860	+9.0
Francfort-sous-la-Main	1783	1856	+4.1
Un test	1424	1424	0
Les Filles d'avril	1086	1126	+3.7
L'Assassin	1190	1208	+1.5
Un drôle de sport	852	878	+3.1
Le Motif	762	791	+3.8
Un seul permis pour leur amour	2314	2342	+1.2
La Valse	1077	1087	+0.9
Maternité	2582	2583	0
L'Impuissant	2827	2806	-0.7

Table 1 compares the word counts – in the original version and in translation – for the stories that appear in the collections *Le Loup-garou* and *Le Ratichon baigneur*. The values are approximate because, as Nogueira notes, "[t]here is no satisfactory definition of 'word', as any linguist will tell you. In addition, different word versions and word-counting utilities use different definitions". The end result is expressed as an expansion or contraction percentage.[4] The information in Table 1 is summarized in Table 2 below:

[4] Percentage differential has been calculated according to the methodology proposed by Professor Brian Orr, based on word difference / ST [source text] word count x 100, since ST is a constant, not a variable. ST word count has been calculated both manually and from Word documents (where available). Target text word count

Table 2. Summary of word count variations

Contraction (-) / Expansion (+)	Number of Stories
-5 to 0	4
0 to +5	14
+5 to 10	8
+10 to +15	1
> +15	1

These figures reveal the dominance of expansion over contraction of the target text, thereby supporting Berman's theory. The reasons for target text expansion and contraction are many and varied, and the temptation to be prescriptive should be avoided. Ultimately, however, this trend relates to the fundamental differences between languages, to the replication of style and to the re-wording of cultural differences proposed by individual translators. Furthermore, the concept of equivalence can assume another dimension if there is little discrepancy in length between a translated text and the original, as evidenced here when fourteen stories expand between 0 and 5% and only four stories contract between 0 and 5%. These figures indicate that a message can be transmitted with little embellishment and no omissions, and show that little textual deformation has taken place with regards to comparative length.

Loss of source text poetics

Vian's prose can be rather poetic in nature, endowed with a particular rhyme and rhythm that should be replicated in translation for stylistic purposes. There is an "alternation of long and short sentences in many places, which creates a dynamic rhythm" (de Nodrest 10). This, in part, is what Munday refers to as the "voice" of the text (152). It is particularly evident in "La Valse", where the alternation of long sentences and short staccato-like phrases helps to convey the difference between the rhythm of waltz and jazz.[5]

> He could see the big hall with the polished floor stretching off into the distance, the mirrors reflecting the soft lights and the light material billowing in the gentle breeze. He could hear the waltz. He could feel the soft abandon of another being's body against his own [...] and his eyes were open. However, all around, it was smoke and noise and laughter, and cold hard jazz that you could not escape.
>
> (*If I Say If* 260)

Another example of rhythm and rhyme can be found in the title of the tune the butcher's boy is whistling in "Marseille commençait à s'éveiller". The tune is called "La Valse de Palavas n'est pas la lavasse de l'agence Havas", which, when translated literally, renders the nonsensical "The Palavas Waltz is not the dishwater of the office of Havas". In the source text there is consistent rhyme between "a" and "ass", as well as alliteration involving the letters "a" and "v". Since I considered the rhythm and rhyme patterns to be the predominant features of

has been retrieved from Word documents. Count includes titles but excludes annotation. Percentage differential is expressed to one decimal place, with a small margin for error. It should be noted that "Le Bonhomme de neige" and "Un seul permis pour leur amour" in the Pleiade edition appear respectively as "Le Voyeur" and "Marthe et Jean" in the Bourgois editions from which the word count has been calculated.

[5] The musicality of some of Vian's prose has also been noted by Marc Roger, a professional reader, who believes that the words on the page sing to him, leading to his philosophy that what has control over the story is not the voice, but the ear (personal communication, 19 November 2007).

the song title, somewhat lost in the literal version, I attempted to replicate them in the target text, which has led to the equally nonsensical title, "The Palavas Palace is not the Office of the House of Havas", involving an obvious shift in meaning. However, musicality as the primary feature is retained with the rhyme captured by "Palavas", "Palace" and "Havas", and alliteration through the repetition of the letters "p" and "h".

There are many examples of less obvious rhythm and rhyme patterns that frequently occur in the texts, which are more detectable when read aloud. For example, when I translated "Il tendit un verre à Folubert" as "He handed a glass to Folubert" (in the story "Surprise-partie chez Léobille"), there is loss of the "-er" assonance between *verre* and *Folubert*, as well as a difference between the underlying rhythm of the two structures. Other readily available examples of loss of rhyme include "gros dos" as "arching its back" (in "Francfort sous-la-Main"), and "un bon ami à lui" as "his good friend" (in "Un drôle de sport"). Other stylistic deformations can occur through the loss of alliteration. However, there is no loss when "une femme frigide" is translated as "a frigid female" instead of a "frigid woman" ("L'Impuissant"). This decision, however, is influenced by the quest for register equivalence, when register takes precedence over alliteration.

Since certain aspects of Vian's prose tend to be poetic in nature, compensation through the replication of these patterns elsewhere in the target text (not necessarily at the relevant point) can help to overcome perceived stylistic loss. This compensation does not necessarily have to happen after the loss; it can happen beforehand, meaning that multiple readings of the source and target texts are required to determine where compensation can take place. Compensation at a different point in the text due to the loss of alliteration and rhyme mainly occurs through optional lexical decisions, such as in "Méfie-toi de l'orchestre" when "chaussures épaisses", translated as "big boots" instead of "big shoes", helps to compensate for loss when "homme horrible, rougeaud repu" is translated as "a horrible man, a red-faced over-indulger"; similarly, in "L'Impuissant", the translation of "pauvre renégat" as "poor pretender" helps to compensate for loss of alliteration in the translation of "vraie voix de la volupté" as "true path to sensual gratification". The replication of rhyme at a particular point in the text can be difficult to achieve because it sometimes leads to syntactical variations, as in "La Valse" when "Lise et Gisèle" is slightly expanded and translated as "Lise and Gisèle as well", producing rhyme between "Gisèle" and "well" to compensate for loss of rhyme in the sentence that immediately precedes it between "force" and "écorce" in the phrase "traîné de force, emmaillotés dans de l'écorce". On the other hand, some phrases do not require any manipulation; their translations seem to be almost naturally poetic, as in "Maternité", when "gentils petits ménages de pédérastes" is translated as "happy little homosexual households", and in "Les remparts du sud", when "Sent bon, votre bois" is translated as "Smells good, your wood". These examples show that wherever equivalence of poetics has not been met at the precise point in the text, appropriate compensation can and has been applied elsewhere. Therefore, it can be considered that loss of source text poetics involving rhythm, rhyme and alliteration is one feature of these translations in which textual deformation does not take place.

Rationalization

According to Berman, rationalization is where the alteration of syntax, punctuation and sentence structures is linked to transposition (288). Transposition involves the shift of grammatical structures and the interchange of parts of speech, which are sometimes necessary, and indeed often compulsory, between languages. Noun and verb transposition is a fairly common feature between French and English, along with the interchange of adjectives and nouns, and nouns and adverbs. Vian's syntax has been the subject of numerous studies, but essentially – aside from a number of isolated constructions – there tends to be minimal syntactical variation from standard French, which forms the bulk of the prose content.

Syntactical variation involving positional and grammatical shift does occur in those constructions where it is necessary to unlock semantic difficulties, which is in keeping with Bassnett's system of the prioritized ranking of semantics over syntax (34). In other words, in the search for textual equivalence, translation should be considered to be composed of a syntactic, semiotic and pragmatic component arranged in a hierarchical relationship.

The following example, taken from "Les Filles d'avril", suggests that some interpretation and subsequent rewording might be necessary when semantic difficulties arise in a particular comprehensible textual unit or transeme.[6] As Gouzin is preparing to go out on the town, he feels that he is about to strike it lucky with the ladies:

> Il avait mis ce jour-là son joli complet à carreaux ovales et bruns, sa cravate de fil d'Écosse, et ses souliers pointus qui faisaient bien sur le trottoir.
>
> (*Le Ratichon baigneur* 81)

Little syntactical difficulty arises in the first part of this sentence; it is only the final words "qui faisaient bien sur le trottoir" that are problematic because interpretation is required to determine their meaning. A literal translation "that made him feel good on the footpath" helps unravel the semantics of the unit but stylistically it does not work in the overall context of the structure because of the possibility of ambiguity. These final words refer to his shoes and not to the totality of his attire, which is the impression given by a literal translation. Therefore, an alternative may need to be sourced. The proposed solution involves the use of the adjective "sharp" positioned before the translation of "souliers pointus", which provides a link to the inference of looking good. This therefore leads to the following translation containing syntactical variation:

> That day he had put on his nice suit with brown and oval checks, his Tartan tie and his sharp-looking pointy shoes.
>
> (*If I Say If* 159)

Similarly, the implementation of punctuation equivalence, as noted by Chuquet and Paillard, can help in the facilitation of reception (418-421). This can involve the more frequent use of commas in French than in English, and the French comma corresponding to a semi-colon, colon or full stop in English. This therefore applies primarily to the translation of pause markers, most of which occur in "Martin m'a téléphoné...". Because of the frenetic nature of the events in this story, there is a slight degree of ambiguity at times in the source text that should be transferred to the target text. This is achieved through the implementation of punctuation equivalence, which manages to convey the same level of comprehension, as in the following example:

> – *Thanks!* dit Martin, et on y va, on retraverse le hall, on tourne à gauche, petit salon, moquettes, entièrement tendu d'Aubusson, à boiseries de chêne; sur le divan, il y a le colonel et sa femelle frotteuse, elle a un tailleur noir, des bas un peu trop roses mais fins
>
> (*Le Loup-garou* 81)

> "Thanks!" Martin says. And off we go. We go back across the foyer. We turn left. A small sitting room. Wall-to-wall Aubusson carpet. Hung with Aubusson tapestries.

[6] Individual sense units may vary from one translator to another depending on the perception of the relationship that exists between all of the other units combined.

> Oak panelling. On the couch are the colonel and his fondling female. She is wearing a black suit and sheer stockings that are a little too pink
>
> (*If I Say If* 75)

With only a small number of examples of major syntactical difficulties being located across twenty-eight stories, and with punctuation issues being largely confined to "Martin m'a téléphoné...", it can be seen that there is minimal textual divergence in terms of rationalization.

Clarification

Clarification in the target text of things that are not necessarily clear in the source text is another "deforming" feature noted by Berman. This is often achieved through explanation and, in Vian's case, it particularly applies to the presupposition contained in the extensive number of proper nouns found in the source texts. In fact, over six hundred proper nouns are spread across the twenty-eight short stories, providing an extensive database from which examples can readily be drawn. The translation of these proper nouns involves a number of non-clarification and clarification techniques; the former when it is deemed that there is sufficient familiarity between the target audience and the references in the source text, and the latter when the opposite view is prevalent. Methods of clarification found in the translations include: the creation of a target-language equivalent (*La Mondaine* – Vice Squad); expansion through the addition of a short phrase, a descriptor or an attributive adjective (*Saint-Jean-de-Luz* – Saint-Jean-de-Luz south of Bordeaux, *Houdan* – Houdan chicken, *l'Hôtel Presse-Purée d'Argent* – the posh Presse-Purée d'Argent Hotel); the substitution of a hyponym by a superordinate (*Sûreté* – police); or the addition of paratextual elements, such as a map or appendix. However, the majority of proper nouns found in the short stories involve real people and real places known to Vian personally, such as Claude Léon, Paul Boubal, Ville d'Avray and Club Saint-Germain, all of which need some form of explanation in order for the reader of the target text to achieve the same level of presupposition as the reader of the source text. As such, proper noun clarification has been primarily achieved through annotation, which does not impact directly on textual equivalence.

Berman has observed that clarification also occurs through paraphrasing, a technique that sometimes involves syntactical variation linked to interpretation. One example to which clarification might be applied occurs in the final line of "Martin m'a téléphoné..." where the narrator says "et juste avant de dormir, je me suis changé en canard". The literal translation of this phrase is "and just before falling asleep, I turned into a duck". Attempts at deciphering Vian's intended meaning with leading Vian scholars Christelle Gonzalo and François Roulmann[7] are based on conjecture and have proven to be inconclusive, so the translation found in *If I Say If* – "and just before I fell asleep, I turned over and let out an almighty quack" – is not an attempt at clarification. Since this is the only example in which paraphrasing involving non-clarification has been employed, and since the significance of proper nouns has been mainly dealt with outside the primary text, clarification does not emerge as a major issue in relation to textual divergence.

Loss of source text idioms and expressions

While Baker claims that recognition of source text idioms, the interpretation thereof, and the subsequent appropriate substitution in the target text is the sign of a translator's linguistic competence (64), interchange between source idiomatic expressions and target idiomatic expressions is, according to Berman, another measure of textual deformation because it can lead to the target text becoming removed from the source culture (Berman 294). The translation

[7] Personal communication, Paris, 11 October 2012.

of source language expressions and idioms has been dealt with in two ways. The first involves total idiomatic loss, as when a source text idiomatic expression is not replaced with a similar idiomatic expression in the target text. This has sometimes occurred throughout these translations, as when *mettre plein gaz* – "to step on the gas" is translated as "to accelerate" ("Le Loup-garou"); *ils tournent la manivelle* – "they turn the handle" is translated as "manipulative" ("Martin m'a téléphoné..."); and *on reste sur sa faim* – "I was still hungry" is translated as "there should have been more to it" ("Les chiens, le désir et la mort"). However, compensation has been applied on a number of occasions to help offset this imbalance. This means that an idiomatic expression has been used in the target text where there was none in the source text, such as when *menaçante* [threatening] is translated as "starting to get her back up" ("Les remparts du sud"). Likewise, the phrase *tu te permets des trucs comme ça?* [do you allow such things?] is translated as "how can you stoop so low?" ("Surprise-partie chez Léobille"), and *un système ordinaire* [an ordinary system] is translated as "a run-of-the-mill system" ("Le danger des classiques"). Although both of these strategies reveal linguistic deformation, Berman and Baker are both specifically referring to the substitution of a source text idiomatic expression with a target text idiomatic expression. These translations reveal a number of examples of this, including the substitution of *à vol d'oiseau* [as the bird flies] with "as the crow flies" ("Le bonhomme de neige") and *fort comme un Turc* [strong as a Turk] with "strong as an ox" ("Marseille commençait à s'éveiller"). Some textual deformation through cultural loss does occur when there is idiomatic substitution, especially in the particular reference to the Turks, who are perhaps more geographically relevant to the French than, say, to an Australian or American audience. Retention of the reference through calque ("strong as a Turk") succeeds in highlighting foreignness; however this particular case supports the conclusion that domestication through recognizable idiomatic substitution wherever possible can help to facilitate reception for a broader audience.

Qualitative impoverishment

Qualitative impoverishment is linked to clarification and refers to the replacement of terms, expressions and figures in the original with terms, expressions and figures of the target language (Berman 290-91). In the case of Vian's short stories, it refers primarily to the optional translation of proper nouns, especially in relation to socionyms (the name given to societies, businesses and brand names in a particular culture) and to the titles of literary and other works. Throughout these translations, proper nouns have been retained in source-language format and substituted with an English-language equivalent at approximately the same rate. The names of real places and people remain unaltered, along with culture-specific items and those publications where readership is limited to the source culture (as in *Les temps modernes* in "Love is Blind") in adherence to Venuti's strategy of foreignization. However, it is domestication that is especially susceptible to qualitative impoverishment. This mainly occurs with proper nouns that already have an established target-language equivalent and in the names of fictitious characters and geographical locations, as well as the titles of some publications and movies. Examples include the rendering of Geraldy's *Toi et Moi* as "You and Me" (in "Le danger des classiques"), "Dilettantes du Chevesne Rambolitain" as "Rambolitain Fresh Water Amateur Fishing Club" (in "Le Loup-garou"), and "Vallyeuse", "Saute de l'Elfe" and "Cirque des Trois-Sœurs" as "Happy Valley", "Deer's Leap" and "Three Sisters Ridge" respectively (in "Le Bonhomme de neige"). Although there is evidence of Berman's qualitative impoverishment in these examples, a hybrid approach is used, retaining the foreignness of some source culture references and translating others in the interest of maintaining a certain level of recognition for the reader.

Quantitative impoverishment

Quantitative impoverishment refers to the translation of a number of different source-text words and expressions by a single word or expression in the target language (Berman 291). It does not refer to target-language homonyms, like "coat" as the translation of both "poil" ("Le Loup-garou") and "manteau" ("Une grande vedette"), nor to decisions based on stylistics, such as "friends" from both "camarades" ("Les remparts du sud") and "public" ("Méfie-toi de l'orchestre"). Rather, it involves the loss of source text synonymity: as when "femme" and "épouse" are both translated as "wife" ("Les Remparts du sud"); when "casquette" ("Un cœur d'or"), "képi" and "une visière de cuir bouilli" ("Les remparts du sud") are all translated as "cap"; when "gendarme" ("Les Remparts du sud") and "agent" ("Le Loup-garou") are both translated as "policeman"; when "copain" ("Martin m'a téléphoné...") and "ami" ("Les pas vernis") are both translated as "friend"; and when "créchait" ("Les pas vernis") and "habitait" ("Le Loup-Garou") are translated as "lived". Although these examples reflect quantitative impoverishment, it does not emerge as a major feature in these translations. This is evident when "truck" and "camion", which are separated by two lines in "Martin m'a téléphoné...", are translated as both "truck" (which passes across three varieties of English: American, British and Australian) and "lorry" (British and Australian), respectively. This indicates that the recognition of synonyms by their proximity is a key factor in the avoidance of textual deformation by repetition.

Destruction of vernacular networks

The destruction of vernacular networks refers to the loss of local speech patterns (Berman 293). Since the main language system throughout Vian's short stories can be traced to the author's roots as an upper-middle class Parisian, if loss of vernacularism were to eventuate it would most likely occur through Americanization (in "Les chiens, le désir et la mort") and through deformation by non-native speakers (in "Martin m'a téléphoné..." and "Marseille commençait à s'éveiller"). Since the translations have managed to capture these differences through lexical choices and comparable deformation – as with "cab" instead of "taxi" in the former, and as deliberate misconstructions in the latter – it would have to be said that vernacularism has been widely respected. Slight deformation can be observed in relation to emphasis when "Ça, demanda Charlie, à quoi ça sert?" is translated as "'What's that thing for?' Charlie asked" (in "Un métier de chien"), and when "Mais vous aussi, vous l'êtes" is translated as "But you are too" (in "L'Assassin"). When linguistic equivalence cannot be achieved, Berman states that the attempt to retain emphasis is regularly made by italicizing the relevant word or words, which acts as a mechanism for differentiation from the rest of the text (293), although this technique is not visible here.

Effacement of the superimposition of languages

The effacement of the superimposition of languages refers to the subservience of sociolect and idiolect variations to the predominant language system of the text. Sociolect is best represented by the language of the police, the pimps and the prostitute in "Le Loup-garou", which appears in stark contrast to the refined speech patterns of the main character, Denis, and by the language of the police, the Major and Verge (who are posing as road workers) which contrasts with the language of the other characters in "Les remparts du sud". Idiolect is a little more difficult to isolate because it is closely related to the former, although a number of idiolects have been identified. These include the homophobic rant of Caïn in "L'Assassin" and Claude and René's expressions of homosexual endearment in "Maternité". In each case, sociolect and idiolect variations within the primary language system have been identified, and retained through lexical choice and textual adaptation, as in the story "Les remparts du sud", when "Ben oui! dit le Major en prenant l'accent charbonnier" (literally, "'Well, yes!' the Major said, adopting

the accent of the charcoal burner") is translated as "'To be sure!' the Major said, adopting the manner of speech of a charcoal burner". Since sociolect refers to the language of a particular social group and idiolect to the language of an individual, both of which are represented by differences in register, and since variations in register between the source text and target text have been respected, there is no textual deformation.

Ennoblement

Ennoblement, or attempts by translators to improve upon the style of the original, is another feature noted by Berman (290). This notion of "improving the original" refers to a lack of faithfulness to the stylistic features of the source text and to the failure to replicate any errors that might occur. There are three different views on this: those that argue a translation should reveal the flaws of the original; those that argue translator intervention should only remedy the misrepresentation of facts; and those that argue it is the duty of the translator to improve the original. Ennoblement sometimes occurs when short sentences are combined into longer sentences and when long sentences are broken down into shorter sentences. This particular issue has been addressed in relation to Vian's style and poetics, and has been shown not to emerge as a deformation feature.

In the case of the short stories, the term "ennoblement" needs to be discussed in relation to repetition, particularly of the verb *dire* ("to say"). The short stories reveal a plethora of *dire* constructions, mainly in relation to *dit* plus a noun or pronoun placed at the end of dialogue, whether it be a question, an exclamation or a response. In fact, over seven hundred instances of this feature can be found across the twenty-eight stories. Attempts to avoid repetition of the verb *dire* as "to say" might include the alternatives "to ask", "to answer", "to acknowledge", "to concede", "to agree", "to insist", or the verb could be omitted altogether depending on the circumstances. All of these constitute rewording or improvement of the text. However, with repetition being more common in English than in French, and with the repetition of the verb *dire* figuring prominently as a stylistic feature (although some critics might consider it to be flawed), the translation of *dire* as "to say" has been retained. Another example of repetition occurs with *ça* ("that" or "it"), which appears 350 times. Unlike *dire*, *ça* can retain a variable pronominal value depending on its context when translated, often appearing as "something", "everything" and "nothing", as well as "that". These two examples, along with the retention of sentence structure, therefore indicate that attempts at ennoblement have not taken place.

Destruction of underlying networks of signification

The destruction of underlying networks of signification, or the translation of certain words and phrases without consideration being given to their role in the macrostructure of the text, is another area that can lead to variation. It refers primarily to words that might not necessarily seem important in isolation but which assume special significance on a different level (Berman 291-92). Here, the term refers specifically to the retention of intertextuality, with the most notable example being nautical references. Such references occur frequently throughout the short stories, as when "starboard" and "port" are used to describe the intersection of a road in "Une pénible histoire". This particular feature takes into account the secondary meaning of homonyms, as when the preferred translation options of "démarra" and "fonça" are "cast off" and "set sail" instead of "started up" and "made a beeline" ("Les remparts du sud"). These two examples show that the underlying networks of signification in Vian's texts have been identified and addressed in the translations, thereby resulting in no loss.

Conclusion

The application of Berman's comparative criteria reveals two trends: minimal loss and no loss between the source and target texts. There is some loss involving rationalization linked to

semantics based on Bassnett's system of prioritized ranking, but no loss involving rationalization and punctuation. There is slight loss involving clarification, which was only applied after consideration was given to Venuti's theory of domestication to assist the target audience's reception. However, most clarification appears as annotation outside the primary text, thus minimizing deformation, and there is no clarification involving textual interpretation. Some qualitative impoverishment does occur, once again due to domestication that helps to retain equivalent levels of presupposition. There is some idiomatic substitution in line with Baker's observations, but since compensation has been applied, idiomatic loss is once again tied to domestication. Quantitative impoverishment is closely linked to proximity and context but does not emerge as a key factor, while the substitution of vernacular networks only applies to the representation of emphasis.

There is no loss with regards to comparative length because it falls within the typical trends of French into English translation. The superimposition of languages retains the socio- and idiolectal differences within the primary language system; there is no destruction of underlying networks of signification because intertextual references have been identified; and there is no loss of poetics. Perhaps most importantly, there have been no attempts at stylistic improvement involving ennoblement and no attempts at clarification through paraphrasing, both of which ultimately constitute a rewriting of the original text. The result is therefore an English-language version of the short stories contained in *If I Say If* that, according to Berman's criteria, is theoretically justifiable, revealing little if any stylistic and semantic deviation from the original.

This study therefore shows that Berman's criteria for target-text evaluation can be applied as a frame of reference by the translator, and indeed the critic, of a given translation to see where, if anywhere, divergence has occurred. Applied during the translation process (rather than afterwards, as has been the case here), any linguistic issues identified can, if necessary, be appropriately assessed and addressed within the stipulations of the commission, thereby incorporating elements of the broader spectrum of evaluation criteria proposed by other theorists.

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A Psycholinguistic Approach to Theatre Translation

ANGELA TIZIANA TARANTINI
Monash University

Abstract
Ever since the publication of the first edition of Venuti's *The Translator's Invisibility*, the dichotomy between the foreignizing and the domesticating approaches to translation has been an object of debate in translation studies. In this article I do not wish to discuss the political implications of this opposition, which have already been widely discussed (Robinson, Bassnett and Trivedi, Tymoczko, among others). Rather, I wish to demonstrate that when translating for the theatre, a higher degree of domestication might be necessary because of the medium involved. I show that the translator not only has to take into account the spoken nature of the dialogue, but also the aural nature of its reception. The aural nature of the reception of a theatre text also implies its impermanence and irreversibility. These features do not allow for re-examination of the linguistic input provided. Drawing from studies in psycholinguistics and cognitive psychology, I show how certain foreignizing strategies successfully applied to the translation of the written page might prove problematic when applied to stage translation. For that purpose, I use a single case study, an ongoing drama translation project: the translation of *Convincing Ground* (Mence) into Italian. My purpose is to demonstrate that a foreignizing strategy may not only hinder the audience's lexical decision response, or prevent it altogether within the given time of utterance, but may also result in failure to convey the characterization of the people depicted in the fictional world, as well as the relationship they have with one another, shaped and negotiated through language.

1. Translating for the listener

In this article I do not wish to discuss the political implications of the opposition foreignization vs domestication, where the two items should be considered extremes of a continuum rather than an actual dichotomy (as Baker has cautioned us). Rather, I wish to demonstrate that when translating for the theatre, a higher degree of domestication might be necessary, at least on the lexical and syntactic levels.

Many scholars have focused on the spoken nature of the theatrical discourse, and on how the translation has to be "speakable" or "performable" on stage (see, for example, Espasa; Morgan; Bassnett-McGuire, Nikolarea); others have drawn attention to the fact that the translation of texts meant to be spoken and/or performed can exploit the possibilities of expression of the human voice and body (Pavis, Serpieri, among others).[1] However, to date, no scholar has analysed the psycholinguistic and the cognitive implications of the mode of production of the translated text on the listener/viewer. Working across disciplines, I apply some of the findings of the vast body of research in psycholinguistics to translation for the

[1] The literature on theatre translation has flourished in recent years; from the mid 1990s onwards, an increasing number of practitioners have engaged in research on the translation for the stage (for a detailed overview, see Serón Ordóñez). Here I have cited only a few researchers who have specifically addressed the issue of speakability and performability.

stage.[2] I aim to show that some of the foreignizing strategies that may be successfully applied to translation for the page, in stage translation may hinder audience understanding altogether. I will focus in particular on foreignizing strategies such as maintaining the foreign syntax in the translated playtext, and retaining certain culture-specific items in the translation. I am aware that some translators and practitioners may not be familiar with psycholinguistics. I hope that this article will make some of the research in the field accessible to theatre translators, insofar as it could be relevant for a more effective translation for the stage, and for increased awareness on the translator's part. In section 1.1 I focus on aspects of spoken language such as prosody and segmentation, and how those influence the listener's process of word recognition. In section 1.2 I show how the complexity of the message impacts the time it takes for both the reader and the listener to decode a message. In section 2, I analyse the possible implications of some of these findings for the theatre translator. In section 3, I look at the "affective environment" (Johnston 18) of the audience by analysing the emotional impact of certain lexical items on the spectators. All the theory introduced in the first three sections comes together at the end of the article, and in section 4 I draw my conclusion.

1.1 Prosody, segmentation, and word recognition

If we ask a lay person if it is easier to process written or spoken language, the answer is very likely to be: spoken. As surprising as this may seem to most people, the opposite is true: the process of decoding written language is easier than that of decoding spoken discourse (Cacciari). Some data on language processing time are necessary in order to lay the groundwork for my advocacy of domestication in theatre translation.

One of the main differences between written and spoken language processing lies in the organ designated for such aim. The ear is a serial device, i.e. it processes information spread over time, while the eye is a parallel device, i.e. it can process much more information at the same time – information related to three-four words (Foss and Hakes). In this article, I will refer to experiments on both spoken and written language processing, to highlight how lexical frequency, ambiguity, and structural complexity affect language processing time.

As Dąbrowska states: "In informal conversation people produce, on average, about 150 words per minute" (13), whereas while reading, a person reads somewhere between 200 and 400 words per minute; that is the commonly accepted figure for newspaper reading (Gibson and Levin, cited in Foss and Hakes 327). Just to give a concrete example, a conference paper consists of anywhere between 2,500 and 3,000 words, and is read (and consequently listened to and decoded) in approximately 20 minutes. This means that the audience will process the linguistic information at a rate of 125-150 words per minute (this is in line with Cacciari's and Dąbrowska's data). For the same audience, the processing time for reading the same material would oscillate between two thirds and one third of the time, that is, between 12.5 and 6.25 minutes. So, even if spoken language is acquired while the ability to read and write is taught, the written input is processed faster than the spoken input. Moreover, there are factors which can make spoken language processing more challenging: firstly, "the conditions of noise in the environment where we often speak and hear people speak" (Cacciari 111).[3] That is even more the case in a public place like the theatre. If someone in the audience speaks or whispers during a performance, it might interfere with the listening process of the other people present. When a reader engages with a written text, instead, what usually happens is that s/he automatically shuts out other stimuli and focuses on the referential value of the information provided. Another difference, and a fundamental one, is the possibility of re-examining the linguistic

[2] This work is not meant to be experimental research, but rather an interdisciplinary approach to theatre translation.
[3] "le condizioni di rumore ambientale in cui spesso parliamo e sentiamo parlare" (all translations from Italian are mine unless otherwise indicated).

input. When reading, one can go back and re-read a sentence, if necessary, while "a listener instead has to elaborate the spoken discourse at the pace set by the speaker" (Cacciari 111-12).[4] Most of all, segmenting spoken discourse into the sound units it is made of is more difficult than isolating single words or sentences in written language. "Segmentation is almost absent in fluent spoken language, and is a by-product of the process of word recognition" (Cacciari 114).[5] Where single words are not isolated, the process of word recognition is a lot more difficult,
asAltmanndemonstratedinhisbooktheascentofBabelbywritingasentencewithoutsignallingtheendofthewordsandthusmakingacaseinpoint (Altmann). Linguist John L.M. Trim, with due acknowledgement to cartoonist Peter Kneebone, shows us that it is the identification of words that allows for segmentation of spoken discourse, which consequently enables the interlocutor to decode the message, as the examples in Figure 1 reveal.

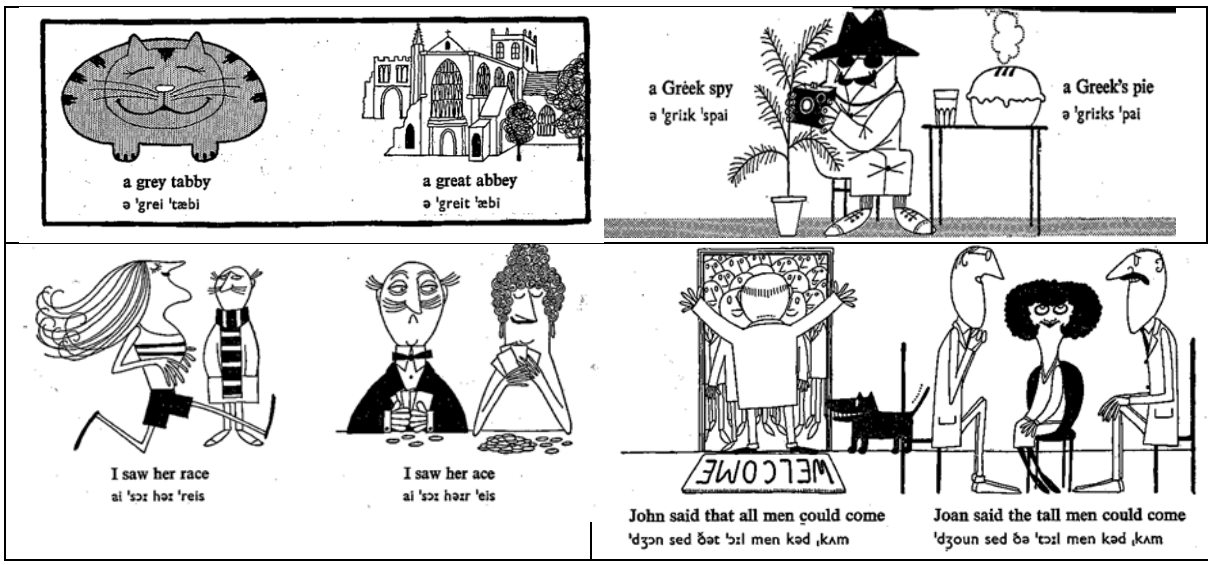

Figure 1. The role of segmentation in decoding (from Trim 76-77)

If we look at any spectrogram of spoken sentences, we will see how boundaries between words are not acoustically marked, and that the only interruption we can actually notice, is that of the air flux when certain consonants (such as stops) are articulated. Word division is the result of a cognitive,[6] not a phonological process.

An important feature of spoken language is prosody. Research carried out in the mid-1980s by Jacque Mehler showed that infants as young as four days old can distinguish the prosody of their own language from that of a foreign language; this ability wears off at about nine months of age (Altmann; see also the more recent research by Kuhl). Cacciari observes that it is reasonable to assume that "people develop implicit strategies of segmentation of their own language based on its typical rhythm" (Cacciari 115).[7] To put it in Cutler's words, "listening itself is language specific. It is always native listening" (Cutler 72). She maintains

[4] "chi ascolta qualcuno che parla deve elaborare, invece, il parlato alla velocità decisa dal parlante"
[5] "La segmentazione è quasi assente nel linguaggio parlato fluente ed è un prodotto collaterale del processo di riconoscimento delle parole."
[6] Here I use the word cognitive in the sense of intellectual, not as used in cognitive linguistics, where it takes on a completely different meaning.
[7] "che le persone sviluppino delle strategie implicite di segmentazione della propria lingua basate sul suo ritmo tipico […]"

that "listeners from different language backgrounds develop different ways of listening, propelled by differences in the native vocabulary structure" (Cutler 72). As a listener hears a sentence in his/her own native language, s/he automatically applies the segmentation strategy of that particular language. Therefore, recognizing a foreign word in a language which applies a different segmentation strategy from that of one's own native language within the context of the latter can be more challenging than it may appear, even if the person is a fluent speaker of the foreign language in question.

Applying Marslen-Wilson's revised Cohort Model, a model of recognition of spoken words ("Functional Parallelism"), to culture-specific items will enable me to demonstrate how some foreignizing translation strategies applied to the translation of the written page might not be suitable for the translation for the stage. The cohort model is based on the assumption that "when we hear a word we simultaneously build a cohort of possible items that share the initial part of the word (more or less the first syllable)" (Cacciari 122).[8] As the speaker progresses, such cohort will contain fewer and fewer items, until the word is finally recognized by the listener, as Table 1 shows.

Table 1. Illustration of the Cohort Model for the word <elegant>

/'e/	/'el /	/'elɪg/	/'elɪgənt/
elbow	elegant	elegant	elegant
elder	elegance	elegance	(1)
eldest	elegantly	elegantly	
eleemosynary	elephant	(3)	
elegiac	elephantine		
elegy	elevate		
element	…..		
elemental	(X)		
elephant			
elephantine			
elevate			
elevation			
elevator			
elocution			
eloquent			
elegant			
elegance			
elegantly			
….			
(X)			

It takes the listener somewhere between 30 and 300 milliseconds (ms) to identify words in isolation, and as little as 200ms when words are inserted in the context of a sentence (Dąbrowska 13); some even maintain that it can take as little as 125ms (Cacciari 107), which means before the speaker has finished uttering them, i.e. before their *acoustic offset*.[9] These data refer to optimal conditions, but there are some factors that can hinder understanding. Cacciari identifies five distinct factors that can influence the language processing time:

1. Structural complexity (i.e. syntax, but also word frequency);
2. Lexical (or syntactic) ambiguities;

[8] "quando sentiamo una parola, costruiamo contemporaneamente una coorte di possibili item che condividono una parte iniziale (grossomodo la prima sillaba)."

[9] Luce instead maintains that most words cannot be recognized until at or after their end (cited in Cutler).

3. Degree of cohesion;
4. Length;
5. Time pressure.

For the purpose of my study, I will only focus on structural complexity, lexical ambiguities and time pressure.

A series of experiments by means of the probe latency technique carried out by Caplan (1972), and Walker, Gough and Wall (1968) demonstrated that the listener's reaction time is indeed affected by the clausal structure of a sentence (cited in Foss and Hakes). In probe latency studies carried out by Caplan, listeners heard a sentence, and were asked immediately afterwards to decide as quickly as possible whether a probe word had been presented in a sentence. Caplan found that the average time to answer the yes/no question was longer in sentences where the structure was more complex. So, the more complex the sentence structure, the longer the listener's reaction time. Maintaining a foreign syntax for a spoken dialogue puts extra pressure on the listeners, who might not have enough time to work their way through a complex syntactical structure during a performance. This is not the case in novel reading, for example, when readers can take their time to work their way through a foreign or foreignizing syntax, putting in a little extra work (and time). Whereas in novels certain foreignizing strategies can be stylistic (or political) choices, and can be very effective and pleasant, in theatre translation they may impede understanding altogether.

1.2 Complexity of the message: written vs spoken

In an experiment on perception of spoken words carried out by Vitevitch and Luce (1998), subjects were asked to repeat either a word or a nonword (a sequence of consonants and vowels). Figure 2 shows the reaction times in milliseconds for the words and nonwords for each probability and density condition.[10]

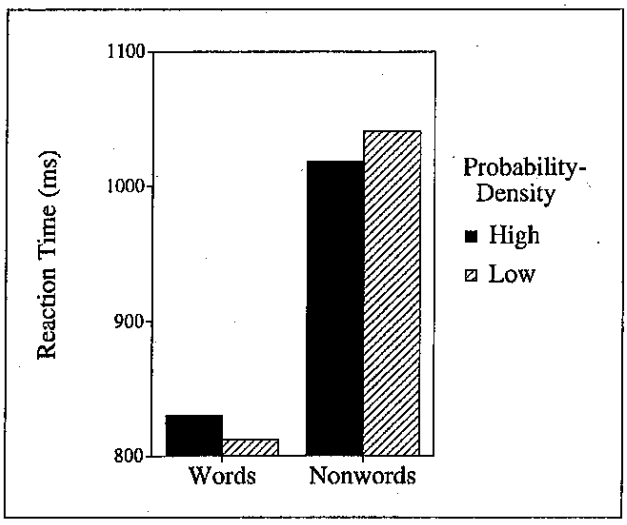

Figure 2. Reaction times for repetition of words and nonwords (from Vitevitch and Luce 327)

[10] The probability refers to the frequency of a phonotactic structure. For example, in English the vowel-consonant combination CCVCC is very common, while in Italian it is less common. Words in dense similarity neighbourhood, instead, are words that share with other words some phonological features (e.g. minimal pairs). It is important to point out that the experiment was carried out on single words in isolation, not words in the context of a sentence.

Experiments on eye fixation times in reading carried out by Just and Carpenter, and by Rayner and Duffy demonstrate how the complexity of the message influences the processing time of the message itself. Rayner and Duffy analysed the effects of word frequency, verb complexity and lexical ambiguity on written language processing time. For the purpose of my study, I will take into account only word frequency and lexical ambiguity.[11] The experiments carried out by both groups of researchers distinguish between *fixation* and *gaze*, gazes being the "[c]onsecutive fixations on the same word" (Just and Carpenter 329). Both experiments show that "longer fixations are attributed to longer processing time caused by the word's infrequency and its thematic importance" (Just and Carpenter 330). In their experiment, Rayner and Duffy measured the fixation and gaze durations on a target word, and on what they defined the "disambiguating region" (i.e. the word preceding the target word, and the one following). The experiment confirmed what was expected, which is that "subjects spent significantly longer on both the first fixation on the infrequent word […] and the gaze on the infrequent word"[12] (Rayner and Duffy 195). When a target word was infrequent, the mean gaze duration was also longer on the word immediately following. [13] A second experiment by Rayner and Duffy on equibiased and non-equibiased ambiguous words confirmed what was predicted, i.e. that "subjects spent extra time looking at the ambiguous word when two meanings for the ambiguous item were fairly equally likely. This was not the case for ambiguous words for which one meaning was highly likely" (Rayner and Duffy 197).

2. Implications for the translator

Translators of written texts can count on the readers to follow their own rate of information input. In the case of lexical ambiguity, for example, readers can spend time on the challenging word, and the words immediately preceding and following. This operation will take anywhere between 1,423 and 1,923 milliseconds (Rayner and Duffy), without considering the time to read a footnote or an entry in the glossary, if any. But during the disambiguation and/or interpretation process, readers will not be subjected to further inputs, whereas listeners will.

Another aspect to take into account is that in many theatrical performances the audience is not the main addressee of the utterance; to put it differently, the communication system differs from that of naturally occurring conversation (and from that of the novel as well). Since the communication between playwright and audience is "embedded" within that between characters (Short), the audience cannot interfere with the communication between the characters; so the audience cannot halt the speaker and ask him/her to clarify what s/he means. At a challenging point, the listener will apprehend listening in order to process the linguistic information. That is what happens when the reader fixates a word on the written page, spends time on the disambiguating region (the words preceding and following the challenging word); re-reads the information provided (i.e. gazes on the disambiguating region); or spends the time s/he needs in order to decipher the complexity of the foreign syntax. The reader will move on only once the linguistic information has been processed. The listener does not have the same possibility, because while s/he is trying to process the linguistic input provided the actors will keep speaking, since actors usually speak at natural speed (unless otherwise required for a specific dramatic effect). The consequence is that the listener will be able to process neither the challenging input, nor the next incoming input. This is consistent with Cacciari's hypothesis

[11] The results of the experiment on verb complexity for causative, factive, and negative verbs offer no evidence that verb complexity affects processing time.

[12] The mean first fixation duration on the target word was 557 milliseconds, while the mean gaze duration was 1,492 milliseconds (Rayner and Duffy 195).

[13] 1,443 milliseconds (Rayner and Duffy 195).

that time pressure is a crucial factor in the understanding process. As semiotician Cesare Segre points out, theatre is:

> a secondary modelling system totally different from the narrative text. It is a system which resorts to the physicality of actors, to their voices and gestures, to their costumes; to the physicality of the stage […]; to the physicality of the duration itself, because what the audience witnesses […] takes place in the very time of the utterances of which it is made up, a time which is irreversible, similar to lived time.
> (Segre 5)[14]

It is precisely this irreversibility of the time of the utterances that may prevent the audience from elaborating the complexity of a foreign syntax, the lexical ambiguity, and the decoding of infrequent words at their own rate of input, and may ultimately preclude the audience's understanding. As early as 1976, Italian linguist and lexicographer Giovanni Nencioni claimed that

> […] in theatre, and in every type of theatre, the recipient is more important than in any other type of literary communication. He [sic] is physically present and can count on two perceptual organs, sight and hearing, but applied to a passing and irreversible reality; the author, the director, the actors have to adapt the text and the acting to *the average perceptual and mnemonic abilities of the listeners*, and keep in mind the paraphrastic consequences, if they do not want to repulse them. The audience then influences all those who participate in the realization of the show.
> (Nencioni 45, my emphasis)[15]

Nencioni did not mention the theatre translator, since in the mid-70s very few scholars had addressed the issue of translating for the theatre.[16] However, Nencioni's vision most certainly applies to theatre translators.

A common foreignizing translation strategy consists in leaving culture-specific items unchanged in the translated text, adding a footnote, an entry in a glossary, or simply trusting that the reader will infer the meaning from the context. A footnote or a glossary is not applicable to theatre translation for obvious reasons. The only viable option would be to leave the culture-specific item untranslated in the target text. While that strategy could have a certain effect in the translation of the written page, in theatre translation it may result in the audience not understanding the spoken message, as the following example shows (for clarity I will provide the whole exchange):

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[14] "un sistema modellizzante secondario del tutto diverso dal testo narrativo. È un sistema che ricorre alla fisicità degli attori, delle loro voci e gesti, dei loro costumi; alla fisicità del palcoscenico [...]; alla fisicità stessa della durata, perché ciò a cui il pubblico assiste [...] si svolge nel tempo stesso degli enunciati che lo compongono, tempo non reversibile, analogo a quello vissuto."

[15] "[…] nel teatro, e in ogni tipo di teatro, il destinatario ha maggior peso che in qualsiasi altra comunicazione letteraria. Egli è presente fisicamente e può fare assegnamento su due organi di percezione, la vista e l'udito, ma applicati a una realtà trascorrente e irreversibile; l'autore, il regista, gli attori devono commisurare il testo e la recitazione alle medie capacità percettive e memorizzatrici degli ascoltatori, e interessarsi delle conseguenze parafrastiche, se proprio non voglioni ributtarli. Il pubblico dunque condiziona profondamente tutti coloro che concorrono a realizzare lo spettacolo [...]"

[16] Ibsen's translator Michael Meyer, and Jiří Levý were among the first to discuss theatre translation. The prolific author and researcher Susan Bassnett started writing on the topic in 1978.

S	RENANGHI	Who drank more do you reckon? Me or you?
	DUTTON	Me of course.
	RENANGHI	You reckon?
	DUTTON	Hands down.
	RENANGHI	You fucken didn't…!
	DUTTON	I'm telling you. You couldn't hold half a pint, **darkie**.
	RENANGHI	That's still half a pint more than you, old man!
T	RENANGHI	Tu che dici, chi beveva di più fra me e te?
	DUTTON	Io, sicuro.
	RENANGHI	Dici?
	DUTTON	Certo.
	RENANGHI	Sì, ciao!
	DUTTON	Ma se non reggevi nemmeno mezzo bicchiere, **negretta**.
	RENANGHI	È sempre mezzo bicchiere più di te, vecchiaccio!

The tone of the passage is playful, and the two characters here are sharing fond memories of their life together. The reason I did not translate Renanghi's swear word into Italian is precisely the frisky mood of the whole passage. My choice will become clearer in section 3, where I analyse the impact of taboo words on the listener.[17] For the scope of my argument, I wish to focus only on the word "darkie". In this passage, the word "darkie" is used by Dutton as a kind of endearment. In Italian, the English loanword "dark" is an entry in the dictionary, and is associated with Gothic music and fashion style. If we apply the Cohort Model to the word *darkie* for an Italian audience, the result would be as follows:

Table 2. Cohort Model for the word <darkie> in Italian

/'da /[18]	**/'dar /**	**/'dark/**	**/'darkɪ/**
da	dare	dark	**?**
danno	dargli	(1) = gothic-goth	(0)
data	darle		
dato	darmi		
davvero	darci		
	darti		
	dardo		
	dario		
	darsena		
	dardanelli		
	dardeggiare		
	darwin		
….	darwiniano		
(X)	(13)		

By applying the Cohort Model to the word "darkie", we can see that an Italian audience will end up with a nonword of low density (i.e. not many words have a similar sound in Italian) and high probability (i.e. the phonotactic sequence CVCCV is very common),[19] so the audience's processing time is likely to be over 1,000 milliseconds, but in the end the message

[17] Moreover, the connotations of marked female language are stronger (see Lakoff). Also, swearing in Australian culture is a lot more acceptable than in Italian culture, particularly for women (see also Berruto).

[18] I have chosen to transcribe phonetically the word *dark* in the way the average Italian speaker would pronounce it, i.e. with the rolling <r> and the Italian vowel /a/. BrE and AusE: /'dɑ:k/, AmE: /'dɑ:(r)k/

[19] I specifically refer to the phonotactic sequence; the graphemic sequence is CVCCVV, and in Italian it would be a low-probability sequence.

will probably not be decoded. Because of the average speaking rate, while the audience is still processing this linguistic input, the actor will have uttered other 2-2.5 words. The audience would be unable to decode the word *darkie* and would probably also miss those immediately after it, since during the utterance they would still be engaged with the target word. Retaining the word "darkie" in Italian, therefore, does not seem viable. In my translation I have opted for the word "negretta" which contains the root "negr-", which is politically incorrect and offensive, but also the suffix "-etta" which is a modification to express endearment (it could also be used to belittle and diminish someone, but that is not the case in the example provided). Elsewhere in the play, where Dutton uses the word "darkie" as a derogatory term, I translated it as "negra" (the feminine singular of "negro"). If I had to translate the same term in a novel, I would probably leave the word *darkie* and enter it in a glossary, or just let the reader infer the meaning from the context, given the possibility for readers to re-examine the linguistic unit and to process the linguistic input at their own pace. Different texts may require different translation strategies, as the following example shows:

S	DUTTON	I told Henty you were my wife.
	RENANGHI	Your **gin**.
	DUTTON	My wife.
T	DUTTON	Ho detto a Henty che eri mia moglie.
	RENANGHI	La tua **troia**. (lit. your slut)
	DUTTON	Mia moglie.

The word *gin* was used to signify an indigenous woman. It was common practice for sealers and whalers to keep an Aboriginal wife, a woman to satisfy their sexual urges, but also to help them survive on the harsh Australian frontier (Taylor). The term is derogatory and offensive. Consulting the Collins Dictionary online, we find (among others) the following definitions:

gin[20]
noun
1. an alcoholic drink obtained by distillation and rectification of the grain of malted barley, rye, or maize, flavoured with juniper berries
2. any of various grain spirits flavoured with other fruit or aromatic essences
⇒ *sloe gin*
3. an alcoholic drink made from any rectified spirit

noun
1. a primitive engine in which a vertical shaft is turned by horses driving a horizontal beam or yoke in a circle
2. *Also called*: **cotton gin** a machine of this type used for separating seeds from raw cotton
3. a trap for catching small mammals, consisting of a noose of thin strong wire
4. a hand-operated hoist that consists of a drum winder turned by a crank

noun
1. (*Australian*, *offensive*, *slang*) an Aboriginal woman

[20] http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/gin?showCookiePolicy=true (accessed January 2015)

When presented with the word *gin*, an Australian audience will have to decode a non-equibiased ambiguous word. However, as Marslen-Wilson demonstrated, "the frequency of an item and the frequency of its close competitors should interact to determine the timing of lexical choice" (Marslen-Wilson, "Activation" 150). This means that, since the word *gin* is more frequently used in relation to the alcoholic drink, the processing time for an Australian audience would be longer than for a high-frequency word. Here is the cohort model for the word *gin* for an Australian native speaking audience:

Table 3. Cohort Model for the word <gin> in Australian English

/'dʒɪ/	**/'dʒɪn/**
giant	gin → Gin
gibber	(1) ambiguous
gibberish	
gibbet	
gipsy	
….	
(X)	

An Australian audience will have to disambiguate the word, exclude the more or less frequent non-equibiased lexical items, and finally the process of recognition will take place. There are two distinct factors which will foster the lexical decision response of an Australian audience. Firstly, the recognition process will be facilitated by cross-modal priming: the visual presentation of a target word (the indigenous woman on stage) is presented concurrently with the auditory presentation of the related word in the context of a sentence (Zwitserlood 30). This facilitates the disambiguation of the term and the final lexical decision response. However, that is possible only for an Australian audience; it is the very presence of the lexical item "*gin = (Australian, offensive, slang)* an Aboriginal woman" in the mental lexicon of the Australian audience that allows for the activation of the lexical item in question, and for the final lexical decision response. The multimediality of the theatre allows for cross-modal priming, which could not take place on the written page (with the exclusion of illustrated books). Secondly, as Hill and Kemp-Wheeler note, "[c]ompared to neutral words, aversive words are easier to identify as words in a lexical decision task" (cited in Harris, Ayçiçeği and Gleason 562-63).

Let us now look at the cohort model for the same lexical item in Italian:

Table 4. Cohort Model for the word <gin> in Italian

/'dʒɪ/	**/'dʒɪn/**
già	gin → **?**
giallo	(1) non ambiguous
giovedì	
girare	
giro	
….	
(X)	

In Italian, the word *gin* only indicates the liquor; it is quite unlikely that an Italian audience would make the connection between the lexical item *gin* and an indigenous Australian woman.

3. The "affective environment" of the spectator

As theatre translator and practitioner David Johnston observes, "[t]ranslation, and especially translation for the theatre, is a process that in this way engineers two-way movement – a traffic

between the narratives, concepts and structures of life embodied in foreign texts, and the *affective and cognitive environment* of the spectator" (Johnston 18, my emphasis). So far I have dealt with the cognitive environment of the spectator; let us now look at the affective environment. As a theatre translator, I see myself as a translator of spectacle, performance. The immediate impact that the translated text will have on the audience is therefore of vital importance. To put it differently, the translator should not weaken "the *force* the text has in performance […] what counts is not the degree of distance from an ontological original but the *effect* that the reconfigured text (as performance) has on the receiving culture and its networks of transmission and reception" (Marinetti 311, my emphasis). The emphasis placed on reception involving "a reconceptualization of the role played by **spectators** as well as a rethinking of more general notions of reception" (Marinetti 311, original emphasis) opens the way to new research paradigms with the spectators at their centre. To some extent, the "performative force" of an utterance (Worthen 2003 9-13, cited in Marinetti 311) can be measured through the impact it has on the audience. The idea of impact (or effect) actually rests on psychological and physiological grounds. Cognitive psychologist Steven Pinker gives us insight into the way we use language to negotiate relationships, but also to impose negative emotions on our interlocutor, as when speakers use swear words, for example (Pinker "Stuff of Thought" lecture). According to Allan and Burridge, language is both "a shield and a weapon" (3). It is used as a shield to avoid being offensive (as in the case of euphemisms), but as a weapon when the speaker deliberately uses dysphemisms to be offensive or abusive. In fictional dialogue, swear words can be a good indicator of how the author characterizes the people inhabiting the world of the play, but also of what s/he wants the audience to feel during the performance. Indeed, the dialogue between the characters in a play has two functions: one in the fictional world of the performance, and one in the real world. In the fictional world, dramatic dialogue creates the fictional world and shapes the relationship between the characters. In the real world, it is a message from the playwright to the audience.[21] My analysis will focus on the translation of taboo words also because swear words are often culture-specific, and therefore belong to a debated category in translation studies. Some of the scholars in favour of a foreignizing strategy (first and foremost Venuti) may recommend preserving culture-specific items untranslated in the target text.

Swearing differs across cultures, but taboo words belong to the same five semantic areas in all cultures: religion and the supernatural; bodily secretions; death and illnesses; sexuality; race and minority (i.e. disfavoured) groups (Allan and Burridge; Pinker). Two generalizations need to be made at this point. First, that "taboo words activate brain areas associated with negative emotions" (Pinker *Stuff of Thought*), such as the right hemisphere of the brain, and the amygdala. Second, that taboo words are processed involuntarily; this means that when someone reads or hears a taboo word, not only can s/he not ignore its meaning, but s/he can also not help perceiving the negative emotion associated with it.[22] In order to prove that something is processed involuntarily by the brain, psychologists use the stroop test: people are asked to name the colour in which a word is printed, and ignore what the word spells out.[23] When the font colour does not match what the word spells out (e.g. the word "black" is written in red ink), subjects take longer to perform the task (Pinker *Stuff of Thought*). That is because as literate people we simply cannot treat a word as a cluster of sounds, or scribbles on a page;

[21] See Short's and Segre's theatrical communication models.

[22] In the light of the research on taboo words, and the negative feelings that they impose on the listener, I have chosen not to translate the word "fucken" in the example in section 2. The playfulness of the exchange did not seem to suggest the intention on Renanghi's part to inflict negative emotions on Dutton. Additional factors, such as rhythm, influenced my translation choice.

[23] The stroop test got its name from John Ridley Stroop, who first published on the stroop effect in 1935.

we automatically process the written or spoken word. The same thing happens cross-modally: if people have to name colour patches, but a voice recites a different sequence of colours unrelated to the patches shown, the people involved in the experiment get confused. Psychologist Don MacKay introduced a variant of this test, where he asked subjects to just name the font colour and to ignore what the word spelt out, but this time swear words were among the words presented. Not only did MacKay find that subjects were slowed down almost as much as in the standard stroop test; he found that "presenting taboo words enhances skin conductance, an unconscious index of sympathetic nervous system activity and emotional arousal" (Mackay et al. 475). Harris et al. refer to experiments carried out by means of electromodal monitoring[24] to measure the autonomic arousal when subjects hear a taboo word in their first or in their second language. These experiments have proven that words in one's native language have "greater emotional resonance" than words in a second language (Harris, Ayçiçeği and Gleason 563). If a theatre translator wishes not to weaken the "performative force" of an utterance, awareness of this neurophysiological aspect of language processing could be of help. The impact of a written utterance and that of a spoken utterance differs also on an emotional level. As Harris et al. state

> [s]poken language is acquired before visual language (for L1 acquisition). To the extent that linguistic representations that are learned early become connected with emotional regulation systems (Bloom & Beckwith, 1989), auditory language may be more closely tied to emotional arousal than visual language.
>
> (Harris, Ayçiçeği and Gleason 565)

As theatre translator, I feel that failure to engender a strong psychophysiological reaction in my audience would be the worst form of "betrayal" of the source text, when such reaction was originally envisaged by the author (and such intention is evident in the use of a certain kind of language).

Let us look at the implications of the taboo stroop effect on the translation of the culture specific item *gin* examined above. As we have seen, the word *gin* is both misogynist and racist, and therefore belongs to one of the five semantic areas that activate the areas of the brain associated with negative emotions. As Pinker observes, "[t]hanks to the automatic nature of speech perception, a taboo word kidnaps our attention and forces us to consider its unpleasant connotations" (Pinker *Stuff of Thought* 339). The use of taboo words fulfils two functions in the playtext: on the level of the fictional world, it characterizes the protagonist uttering the swear word as someone willing to impose negative emotions on the other character/s. On the level of the communication between the playwright and the audience, by using a taboo word the playwright imposes that same negative emotion on the audience. When hearing the word *gin*, the right hemisphere and the amygdala of an Australian audience will activate. Failure to create the same effect on the target audience in the name of a politically correct foreignizing approach would have two negative consequences. Firstly, the characterization of the protagonist uttering the sentence may not be the one originally envisaged by the author. Secondly, keeping the foreign word within the text will not cause that emotionally charged response from the audience. The third, obvious consequence – that is, the impossibility for the audience to process the foreign word – has already been dealt with from a psycholinguistic point of view (section 2).

Let us now look at the socio-anthropological implications of the same exchange. Anthropologist Alan Fiske maintains that there are three types of relationships throughout all

[24] A psychophysiological technique that records skin conductance responses.

human cultures, namely Communal Sharing, or communality, Authority Ranking, or dominance, and Equality Matching, or reciprocity (Fiske; see also Pinker, *Stuff of Thought*).[25] Communality relationships are based on the assumption of equality between the members. Usually kin relationships, or the relationship with one's spouse, are based on communality. Authority Ranking relationships are based on the dominance of one subject over the other(s). That is usually the case of relationships within a working environment, or in colonial situations. Equality Matching relationships are business-like relationships, where there is an exchange between the parties, for the benefit of both groups/members involved. What is appropriate in one type of relationship might not be appropriate in another. If we apply Fiske's relationship grid to the exchange examined above, we could "translate" the dialogue as follows:

S	DUTTON	I told Henty you were my wife.
	RENANGHI	Your **gin**.
	DUTTON	My wife.
T	DUTTON	I told Henty that we had a communality relationship.
	RENANGHI	A **dominance** one.
	DUTTON	A communality one.

This crucial aspect of the different perception that the characters have about their relationship would get lost if I chose to leave the culture-specific item unchanged.

Elsewhere I translated the same word differently, as in the following example:

S	DUTTON	The Velvet Coast they called it. A bloke could get himself a **gin** at any time of the year.
T	DUTTON	La chiamano la Costa di Velluto. Un uomo può trovarsi un'**aborigena** a qualsiasi ora.

Here I translated the word "gin" as "aborigena" (lit. Aboriginal woman); as already mentioned, it was common practice for the settlers to have intercourse with indigenous women (Taylor), and here Dutton describes a place where it was easy for a man to find an indigenous woman to sleep with. Here I have chosen to favour the racial elements for two reasons: firstly, because of the negative emotions attached to words referring to disfavoured groups,[26] and secondly, because I wanted to underline the dominance relationship between the "blokes" and indigenous women, treated as sexual objects. I made a more radical choice to underline Dutton's racist language earlier in the play, when translating "blackfella", an Aboriginal English word. It is used by the indigenous population to refer to the people in their own community. However, if used by white people it takes on a pejorative connotation (Arthur) and is considered offensive,[27] as in the following example:

[25] There is a fourth relationship type, called Market Pricing, which applies to the whole system of modern market economies and therefore is far from universal, not applicable to the present study, and not relevant to this discussion.

[26] In today's English, the most offensive word is the word "nigger" (Pinker *Stuff of Thought*).

[27] Farzad Sharifian, personal communication, 22 June 2015.

S	DUTTON You love playing games, don't you? Little **blackfella** games.
T	DUTTON Ti piace fare giochetti, vero? Giochetti da **negri**.[28] (lit. niggers' games)

This exchange takes place at the beginning of the play, and I wanted to render Dutton's use of offensive language from the start. Elsewhere, I translated the word differently, also according to its use and the user, as in the following example:

S	RENANGHI You come over with them Mills brothers. Real nasty bastards they was. But you weren't like them. You was different. Had a **blackfella** sort of look about you.
T	RENANGHI Sei arrivato con i fratelli Mills. Che luridi bastardi che erano. Ma tu non eri come loro. Eri diverso. C'era qualcosa di **aborigeno** in te (lit. there was something Aboriginal/indigenous in you).

Here it is Renanghi, the indigenous young woman, who uses the term *blackfella*, and uses it with a positive connotation, hence my translation choice.

If I were translating a different type of fiction, such as a novel, I would not translate the same culture-specific item in different ways in different parts of the text, as I did with the words *gin* and *blackfella*. Rather, I would apply the same translation strategy consistently throughout the novel (most likely by adding a glossary and preserving the lexical item in the source text). Given the difference between reading, and watching a play, it is not surprising that in theatre the stress is often placed on the immediate impact of the dialogue on the audience.

4. Conclusion

Venuti claims that "[f]luency assumes a theory of language as communication that, in practice, manifests itself as a stress on immediate intelligibility […]" (60). But, as we have seen, this can be central to theatre translation. As already mentioned, the different communication model could influence the audience's processing time; it is my belief that a theatre translator who is aware of such mental processing is more likely to produce an effective translation that will work on stage. The question remains the same: what is the effect the translator strives for? If the translator wants to enable the audience to process the spoken message during the performance time, and does not wish to weaken the performative force of the utterance for the benefit of the audience, then a higher degree of domestication might be necessary in theatre.

As I hope to have demonstrated, this higher degree of domestication is justified by psycholinguistic research on spoken language processing, and by psychophysiological studies on the effect of words pertaining to certain semantic areas. Not only is the spoken mode of delivery crucial, as theatre translators and practitioners have explored (Morgan; Espasa; Pavis, among others), but also the aural aspects of its reception. Theatre translators know that the playtext they translate will be part of "a structural system [which] exists only when received and *reconstructed* by a spectator from the production" (Pavis 25, my emphasis). This

[28] In Italian, there is no derogatory term to refer to indigenous Australians. Since in Italy it is common knowledge that Australia was inhabited by indigenous Australians prior to the settlement, the audience will not be confused by the term "negro" (lit. nigger) and will not think it might refer to a different ethnic group, for example African Americans. The term "negro" is the most offensive word in contemporary Italian to refer to black people, and that is the reason why I have opted for this solution.

reconstruction operated by the spectator through the affective, cognitive and psycholinguistic processes involved in the decoding of the spoken message, however, has often been overlooked in translation studies, despite its importance in the creation of meaning.

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Translating Frenchness: A Case Study of *La Délicatesse* by David Foenkinos

VIRGINIE PFEIFFER
Monash University

Abstract
La Délicatesse by David Foenkinos contains numerous cultural references that convey a certain form of "Frenchness". The novel was adapted for the cinema in 2011 by Foenkinos himself, who is also a screenwriter, thus raising questions concerning processes of "intersemiotic translation" (Jakobson 139). This article analyses the strategy Foenkinos used to translate the "Frenchness" of the written medium into a filmic one and shows how this can be considered an instance of self-translation. In 2012, the novel was translated into English by Bruce Benderson under the title *Delicacy*, and I also consider Benderson's strategy by examining various examples from the source text and assessing their rendition in the target text. Whether or not the cultural references were kept in the French context or adapted for the target readership provides insight into the strategies at play in the translation process. Additionally, this article highlights the translator's role as a bicultural mediator whose responsibility is to adequately translate not only the words but also the culture conveyed in a piece of literature.

Context
David Foenkinos's *La Délicatesse*, published in 2009, tells the story of a young woman, Nathalie, who falls in love with a young man, François. They live a life of marital bliss for several years before François's untimely and tragic death. Depressed and work-obsessed, Nathalie fights off the unwanted advances of her boss, Charles, before surprising herself and embarking on a new relationship with her Swedish colleague, Markus. The novel paints a delicate picture of a young woman dealing with grief in her own way.

Some of the themes touched upon in this novel are recognized as "universal" in nature: love, human connection, sadness, rebirth. Indeed, this is a story that could happen to anyone, and the element of "universality" renders the novel accessible. However, if the novel's interest was only derived from the use of such topoï of contemporary literature, it could be considered a banal page-turner – what in French is known as a "roman de gare", the kind of fast-paced novel typically found on sale in airports and train stations. What distinguishes *La Délicatesse* from traditional romantic fiction is Foenkinos's masterful use of language and style, despite engaging with a narrative that can be anchored in readers' lives. He arguably does the impossible: makes the reader both smile and think while enjoying a masterpiece of contemporary French literature.

Though the themes developed in this novel may give the reader a sense of déjà-vu, the novel's form is unique. *La Délicatesse* is 210 pages in length and is composed of some 117 chapters, which can be divided into two categories. While some are focused on the narrative itself, others, peppered throughout the book, offer lists of information, summaries, quotes and facts. This latter category is a highly original feature of the novel. Furthermore, these chapters provide additional information about a detail mentioned only briefly in the previous chapter. For example, in chapter 99 Nathalie takes the train from Paris to the small countryside town of Lisieux; in chapter 100 we receive the Paris-Lisieux train timetable. One could argue that such factual chapters do not serve any narrative purpose, but I argue that they represent the very essence of the novel in that they reveal the specificity of Foenkinos's literary style and

constitute a way of expressing the characters' thoughts. Chapter 15, for example, is devoted to a few thoughts that François likes to repeat to himself before going for a run in the park. While some of these chapters relate directly to the content of the novel, others are more experimental in terms of their form. Taken together, they portray a new way of experiencing the narrative. Moreover, many of these chapters are focused on "Frenchness"; that is, on the cultural references related to France and its specificities. For example, chapter 66 relates to the song lyrics from "L'amour en fuite" by well-known French musician Alain Souchon. This glimpse into "Frenchness" offered by the author allows a return to more traditional forms of storytelling and gives an additional layer to the narrative.

La Délicatesse was published by prominent French editing house Gallimard in their *La Blanche* series devoted to French literary classics, indicating that the French publishing industry considered the novel to be a potential literary success from the beginning. It was largely well received among readers and critics. The national newspaper *Le Figaro*, for example, published the following review: "Foenkinos sait raconter comme personne des histoires d'amour avec légèreté, humour et auto-dérision car son narrateur est souvent pris dans des complications hautement psychologiques" [Foenkinos knows how to tell a story like no other, with hints of lightness, humour and self-deprecation, because his narrator is often found in deeply psychological situations] (Aissaoui).[1] In another French newspaper, *L'Express*, Benamon writes that "l'auteur réussit comme jamais l'alchimie du grave et du léger, du drame et de l'espérance" [The author succeeds like no other in creating an alchemy of seriousness and lightness, of drama and of hope]. A further example comes from the literary blog *Enfin Livre*, shedding light on the link between the novel's title and its content: "voici un roman qui porte bien son nom: délicatesse des personnages, délicatesse dans l'analyse des sentiments, délicatesse de l'écriture toujours légère et élégante" [Here's a novel which wears its name well: the delicacy of the characters, delicacy in the way that feelings are analysed, delicacy in the writing which is always light and elegant] (Volle). These reviews not only highlight the complex issues explored in the novel and the way in which these are expressed through masterful language, but they also denote the juxtaposition between lightness of tone and profound reflection on the characters' part.

La Délicatesse is a unique novel in the French literary system in that it is the only novel to have been nominated for all five major literary prizes in France: the Prix Goncourt, the Prix Renaudot, the Prix Femina, the Prix des Lectrices Elle and the Prix de la Maison de la Presse. It has also won a number of other literary awards, including the Prix An Avel, the Prix Jean-Pierre Coudurier and the Prix Orange du Livre. The novel's popularity has undoubtedly grown thanks to its recognition by these major French literary prizes. Certain prizes are renowned for their commercial influence, demonstrating a connection between prize-winners and bestsellers, as exemplified in the case of *La Délicatesse*. This recognition increased both the novel's popular and commercial value. Indeed, as Sally-Ann Spencer argues, prizing helps "[popularize] literary fiction in a context where the special role accorded to writers and writing has traditionally been associated with a view of literature as an elite activity distinct from commercial trends" (205). The novel's success also helped establish its place within the French "literary polysystem" (Even-Zohar 199), as the French publishing milieu is extremely competitive and hard to penetrate. Once it was demonstrated that *La Délicatesse* could occupy a place in the French literary system, the novel had a greater chance of being both adapted for the screen and translated.

It wasn't only the novel that grew in popularity; its author did too. David Foenkinos studied literature at La Sorbonne before becoming a teacher. He began writing in 2002 and soon became a prolific author and screenwriter. Most of his novels have been quite successful,

[1] Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own.

though they pale in comparison to *La Délicatesse*, his ninth and most popular work. This may not be the case for long, however, as his most recent novel, *Charlotte*, published in 2014, has already achieved great success, notably by winning the Prix Goncourt, France's most prestigious literary award. Foenkinos is a very good example of an author who has gained "symbolic capital" (Bourdieu) – that is, a recognition of his status. Indeed, he has developed his craft over the years and has become a celebrated author among readers and literary critics alike. The novel's success and the reading public's fondness for the author mean that his writing has achieved a very high level of popularity and *La Délicatesse* has become known outside of France, being exported to numerous European and English-speaking countries through the film adaptation and Benderson's English translation. For all of these reasons, *La Délicatesse* is a unique and relevant text to examine in the context of Translation Studies.

Film adaptation

La Délicatesse was adapted for the screen in 2011, appearing with English subtitles the following year. The screenplay was written by the author, who directed the film together with his brother Stéphane. It is likely that Foenkinos always intended the book to be made into a film, as chapter 32 of the novel is an excerpt of the film script. This is an instance of "intersemiotic translation" (Jakobson 139) – that is, a translation from the written medium into a filmic one. Since Foenkinos is the writer of both the source text and the screenplay, I argue that this can also be considered an act of "self-translation", traditionally defined as "translation that can either refer to the act of translating one's own writings into another language or to the result of such an undertaking" (Grutman 257). In this case, however, it is the medium, rather than the language, that has changed.

In light of Foenkinos's dual role as both writer and screenwriter, I argue that, although the novel was released before the film, the two were conceived, and perhaps written, at the same time, as suggested by the inclusion of part of the script in chapter 32. We might therefore wonder whether Foenkinos intended his film to be similar in tone and content to the book. Regarding the intersemiotic translation of "Frenchness", we might also wonder if he tried to convey the subtleties and specificities of his style in the film adaptation or if he chose to distance himself from these, thus resulting in a somewhat different interpretation of the story.

Upon closer inspection, the tone of the film is very different from that of the book. There is a distinct lack of "Frenchness" in the film version, though it is set in Paris and the well-known French actress, Audrey Tautou, plays the main character. In contrast to the overwhelmingly positive reviews the novel received, reviews of the film in the French context were rather mixed. For example, the online blog *Critikat* argued that "le film préfère rester en surface plutôt que de se confronter aux réels enjeux de son sujet et affirme une préférence pour la forme que pour le fond" [the film prefers to remain at surface level rather than confront the real issues of the subject matter, and privileges form over content]. Many reviews critiqued the screenplay for downplaying the dramatic obstacles that support the plot. The film is seemingly trying to target the "romantic comedy" demographic, even though the novel itself goes far beyond this categorization. Indeed, the film is very much realized within the framework and requirements of Hollywood films, thus diluting the elements of "Frenchness".

For example, in the film adaptation, most of the cultural references are lost, as those odd chapters of the novel that provided most of the "Frenchness" and singularity are not present. The most striking example is when the main character, Markus, watches President Barack Obama's speech on the television, instead of a speech given by a member of the French Socialist Party (as is the case in chapter 49 of the novel). This is an example of how "Frenchness" has been erased from the film version, and indicates the extent to which it was aimed at a new, Anglophone target audience. It might be the case that Foenkinos targeted the novel to a more literary readership, while the film version was intended for an audience that

first and foremost likes to be entertained. The traditionally structured film adaptation lies in stark contrast to the deconstructed nature of the novel. Clearly, in producing the film adaptation within the Hollywood context, the producers have gone to great lengths to culturally adapt it for both an American audience and a French audience accustomed to American cinema.

The author as translator

Given that the film was intended for an American context, can the same be said for the written translation into English? That is, has Benderson reproduced the source text faithfully and retained most elements of "Frenchness" in his translation, or has he instead adapted it for an American audience, as is the case with the film? Benderson is first and foremost a literary author, a factor which is likely to influence his translation strategy and ability. He is an American novelist, essayist, journalist and translator, widely published in France and the United States. His works include an erotic memoir (*Autobiographie érotique*, originally written in French in 2004 and translated into English in 2006 as *The Romanian: Story of an Obsession*), a novel about drug addicts and prostitutes (*User*, 1994), an essay about the influence of the internet on human life (*Sex and Isolation*, 2007), an essay about class struggles in New York (*Toward the New Degeneracy*, 1997), a satirical novel about life in the US northwest (*Pacific Agony*, 2007), and a biography of James Bidgood (1999), among others. As a journalist, he has written many columns in well-known US magazines such as *The New York Times Magazine* and *The Wall Street Journal*. He has translated many French novels, as well as Celine Dion's autobiography, and in 2014 he began translating a thousand-page biography of filmmaker Jean Renoir. He is an activist-author with a taste for controversial themes and contemporary issues, who makes his voice heard through his work and is interested in taking a position. He has certainly gained a lot of "symbolic capital" (Bourdieu), thanks to his essays and his translations of prominent and controversial French authors (among them Alain Robbe-Grillet, Philippe Dijan and Benoit Duteurtre). Many of the books he has translated are aligned with his own writing ethics, dealing with controversial themes and/or written in a non-traditional form – examples include Nelly Arcan's *Whore* and Benoit Duteurtre's *Customer Service*. Benderson's translations have generally been well received by critics and journalists, allowing him to build a considerable reputation in the literary translation milieu. No doubt this popularity and experience in the area of French literary translation led to his being chosen to translate *La Délicatesse*.

Literary translation, according to Ziaul Haque, can be considered "one of the highest forms of rendition because it is more than simply the translation of a text. A literary translator must also be skilled enough to translate feelings, cultural nuances, humour and other delicate elements of a piece of work" (97). Indeed, literary translation is a special area of translation because it relates not only to the translation of content but also of form, and is not only about language but also culture. This last point is especially relevant for this case study.

The diverse skill set required of the translator – in Benderson's case, of the author-translator – has been amply considered from the point of view of Translation Studies. Bassnett notes that this new perspective "stresses both the creativity and the independence of the translator" (*Translation Studies* 5). Since a work of literature can be considered a piece of art, the translation "is supposed to be of artistic value too and the literary translator himself must be an artist" (Hassan Mansour 35). Being a creative writer is certainly a great advantage when it comes to the translation of literary texts, as it ensures greater mastery of the use of language and stylistic devices. Indeed, in terms of the linguistic aspect of the translation, Benderson has gone to great lengths to replicate the style and aesthetics of *La Délicatesse*. The various passages of free indirect speech in the source text have been expertly rendered in the target text. Benderson has also deftly reproduced the passages of stream of consciousness in his translation. His ability to successfully convey the linguistic style and aesthetic is likely due to

his own experience and skill as a practising author. Moreover, the fact that Benderson has already translated prominent and prized French authors into English has certainly helped to improve the quality of the translation from a linguistic point of view. His mastery of French language and culture has helped him to adequately convey the cultural elements specific to this novel. This will be further explored in the next section of this article.

Translating "Frenchness"

La Délicatesse is anchored in the French cultural context, and can be characterized as having a certain degree of "Frenchness"; not only because the novel is set in Paris and mentions names of the city's streets and places, situating it within a particular geographical space, but also because it contains French expressions and idioms that clearly situate it within French culture. These hints of French culture are peppered throughout the novel, resulting in a certain degree of fluidity. Expressions such as "sur le pouce" [eating quickly] and "une de perdue, dix de retrouvées" [one lost, ten found] are good examples of this. Foenkinos also names a few famous figures symbolic of French culture, such as the literary authors Albert Cohen, Marguerite Duras, Alfred de Musset, Boris Vian, Michel Butor and Guy de Maupassant, the singer Alain Souchon, and actors Jean-Paul Belmondo, Claude Lelouch, Annie Giradot and Pierre Richard. Moreover, the mention of the very famous "Larousse" dictionary of French language, the results of the football games in France, the mention of the "Parti Socialiste Français" [French Socialist Party] and its members Ségolène Royal and Martine Aubry, and the French radio station "Nostalgie", an "oldies" station, further anchor *La Délicatesse* in its French context. Additionally, there are specific cultural references that do not concern France as a whole but are uniquely relevant to Parisian life. The "RER", for example, is the public transport link between downtown Paris and nearby suburbs; the "Journal Métro" refers to the free daily newspaper handed out at every subway station in the city; and "Odéon", "Clichy" and "Passy" are all well-known neighbourhoods. These are examples of some of the most prominent French cultural references.

So how does one translate these cultural references, this "Frenchness"? Should the translator opt for a strategy of "domestication" or one of "foreignization"? (cf. Venuti *Invisibility*). Harald Martin Olk argues that the procedures the translator has used can be examined in order to "identify 'foreignization' or 'domestication' tendencies in the translator's approach to handling the cultural load of a text" (344). Though the linguistic translation of *La Délicatesse* is stylistically faithful to the original (as Benderson has conveyed very vividly and accurately the linguistic features of the source text in the target text), the cultural translation of this novel – that is, the rendition of "Frenchness" – is problematic. Indeed, the specificity of this novel lies in its use of the French culture to incorporate factual chapters about French life and customs. It would therefore make sense to keep those French cultural elements in the target text. However, Benderson has largely chosen to "domesticate", with domestication defined as "an exchange of source language intelligibilities for target language ones" (Venuti, *Invisibility* 203). In other words, when using a "domesticating" method, the translator adapts the source text references to the needs of the target culture. Benderson has chosen to adapt most of the prominent cultural references that anchor the novel in the French context. However, it is important to note that some French cultural references have been retained.

As I will demonstrate, however, Benderson has been somewhat inconsistent in his choices. It is important to examine these instances, to question what makes the translator decide which references to keep, which to change, and the strategies that are at play. According to Schleiermacher, the literary translator either "leaves the writer in peace as much as possible and moves the reader towards him, or he leaves the reader in peace as much as possible and moves the writer towards him" (49). Benderson chose overwhelmingly to leave the reader in peace, as little intellectual effort is required to fully understand the translation. Was this

adaptation the result of his role as an activist literary author? Were Benderson's adaptation choices influenced by the adaptation strategies deployed in Foenkinos's film? Let us consider three major examples in order to understand Benderson's strategy of adapting the French cultural elements in the target text.

Case study analysis

All examples chosen represent instances of cultural reference, which in a broad sense is defined as "words which refer to objects and concepts specific to a given culture" (Ranzato 67). More specifically, Jean Pierre Mailhac defines cultural references as "any reference to a cultural entity which, because of its distance from the target culture, is characterized by a sufficient degree of opacity from the point of view of the target reader to constitute a translation problem" (173). This definition views cultural references as creating potential misunderstandings in the target culture if not translated accurately. Indeed, cultural references have been considered to pose a "translation problem" (Gonzales Davies and Scott-Tennent 168). In other words, cultural references in the source text are opaque to the extent that they pose a considerable challenge to the translator, who will need to adopt an appropriate strategy to make these references understandable in the target culture. Moreover, the fact that "translation is not just of texts, but of entire cultural representations and identities" (Pym 79) points to the translator's role in creating and maintaining cultural stereotypes. It is very important that this role is performed adequately by the literary translator, although the task can be quite difficult. Indeed, as Hervey and Higgins note, "cultural differences can sometimes be bigger obstacles to successful translation than linguistic ones" (31). As a result, the role of the literary translator is not only that of a facilitator of communication but also that of a cultural mediator.

The most striking example in this case study relates to the film adaptation of *La Délicatesse*. Chapter 49 in the source text portrays Markus watching a televised political speech from the "Parti Socialiste Français", and the whole chapter is about his inner thoughts regarding what he sees. Yet, as already mentioned, Benderson seems to have taken inspiration from Foenkinos's idea of adapting the French cultural context for the American one and has changed the French Socialist Party to the US presidential candidate Barack Obama on election night. Furthermore, it was not simply a one-line reference that was changed; an entire page was adapted to the American context, with references to "the Great Depression", "Yes we can", "Atlanta" and "Barack Obama's inaugural speech" (104-106), among others. This example reveals that the author may influence the translator's choice of strategies: Foenkinos chose Barack Obama's speech in the film adaptation and the translator followed suit. Was this perhaps discussed by Foenkinos and Benderson prior to the release of both the film and the English translation, in order to maintain consistency? Was this an attempt at placating target readers, who would subsequently not have to think too deeply about cultural references, given that they were already adapted for them? Unfortunately we cannot answer these questions, as the target text appeared with no translator's preface or notes.

I would argue that it is likely that Benderson followed the adaptation strategy used by Foenkinos in the movie version and replicated it in the English translation. However, he in fact went beyond Foenkinos's changes and added some of his own. For example, in chapter 48 of the source text, Markus, the Swedish colleague, recalls some childhood memories with his girlfriend at the time, Brigitte, whom he parallels with the French icon Brigitte Bardot. Bardot is an actress, a model, a singer and an activist, an emblem of sensuality, whom Benderson chose to replace with a domestic equivalent: Marilyn Monroe. Although there are many parallels between the two icons – both were born in similar periods, cultivated a similar physical appearance and attained a similar cultural status – this is a very clear case of adaptation. By replacing a French reference with an American one, Benderson makes the cultural reference more understandable for the target culture but loses an aspect of the source

culture. Similarly, chapter 95 of the source text is devoted to an announcement made on television by Isabelle Adjani, a celebrated French actress who won five major prizes for her roles in cinema. Benderson again chose to use the strategy of cultural relocation by replacing Adjani with Oprah Winfrey. There is little similarity between the two women.

The last example consists of a change in the narrative itself, with Benderson choosing to condense two chapters into one. The source text begins with the death of Nathalie's husband, François. This event is divided into two chapters, which creates a distinct rupture in the text, foreshadowing something tragic. In the target text, however, the chapters are conflated so that no such rupture exists. What is more interesting is that this event happens between chapters 12 and 13 in the source text, while only chapter 12 recounts it in the target text. Since the number thirteen is usually associated with misfortune and misery, it was perhaps an attempt by Foenkinos to foreshadow the tragic event. Yet Benderson chose not to keep this allusion. This is arguably less of a change than the previously mentioned adaptations, but I would suggest that it is not the translator's role to modify the novel's structure, nor to influence its impact on target readers.

In choosing an adaptation strategy for what would seem to be – in Benderson's eyes, at least – the less comprehensible French cultural references, the translator is either seeking to render the work's "Frenchness" invisible or to make the task of the American target readers less difficult. In any case, the translator should be mindful of instances in which cultural non-equivalence will interfere with readers' understanding of the target text. It is true that in adopting the domestication method, the translator usually facilitates the target reader's comprehension and avoids confusion. On the other hand, it may compromise the novel's cultural identity. Benderson, it would seem, has chosen to culturally adapt a novel that was deeply anchored in a specific culture. As a result, much of the work's "Frenchness" has been lost in the target text, thus leaving the English-speaking readership with a translated novel that conveys both a bit of "Frenchness" and a lot of "Americanness". This is obviously not what was intended by Foenkinos in the source text, but was arguably the case in the film version. I would therefore argue that there is an inextricable link between the film and the English translation of the novel, the latter being influenced by the adaptation strategy chosen by Foenkinos in his intersemiotic self-translation.

Conclusion

As a case study, *La Délicatesse* raises the question of how to translate culture and, more specifically, "Frenchness". Bassnett reminds us that "translation is vital to the interaction between cultures" ("Introduction" 6), thus suggesting that translation helps cultures interact with each other and, potentially, understand each other. In addition, Venuti reminds us that "a translation does not communicate the source text itself but the translator's interpretation of it, and the translator must be sufficiently expert and innovative to interpret the linguistic and cultural differences that constitute a text" (Venuti *Changes* 113). In other words, the translator must be bi-cultural – that is, according to literary translator Clifford Landers, he or she must be able to "perceive in a unique way the signs and symbols of both cultures; to pick up signals even at a subconscious level and to share in the collective unconscious" (77). David Katan goes further, highlighting the importance of a "bi-cultural vision". He explains that "the translator is uniquely placed to identify and resolve the disparity between sign and value across cultures" (14). Although Translation Studies theorists have emphasized the literary translator's need to be a "cultural mediator", in this case study Benderson has kept few of the French cultural references from the source text and has instead followed the guidelines of the film adaptation.

Indeed, the fact that Foenkinos directed the film adapted from his novel, as an instance of intersemiotic self-translation, greatly influenced Benderson's strategy in translating cultural elements. The film version of *La Délicatesse* adapts the tone and content of the book to serve

different purposes. I would argue that Benderson chose to follow this version in translating the cultural elements of the novel; while he faithfully reproduced the linguistic style of the source text, he closely followed the cultural adaptation strategies used for the movie to cater for an American audience. This therefore gives a lot of agency to Foenkinos who, as author and screenwriter, was able to influence the translation of his book through the release of the film.

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Review of Some Twentieth-Century Chinese Works in Translation

HAORAN HUANG
The University of Adelaide

Hong Ying. *I Too Am Salammbo*. Translated by Mabel Lee. Sydney: Vagabond Press, 2015.

Hong Ying, Zhai Yongming and Yang Lian. *Poems of Hong Ying, Zhai Yongming and Yang Lian*. Translated by Mabel Lee, Naikan Tao and Tony Prince. Asia Pacific Poetry Series. Sydney: Vagabond Press, 2014.

Gao Xingjian. *City of the Dead and Song of the Night*. Translated by Gilbert C. F. Fong and Mabel Lee. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2015.

In her introduction to the collection of new translations of poems by Chinese writers Hong Ying, Zhai Yongming and Yang Lian, translator and scholar Mabel Lee writes that "while older writers were still reeling from their Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) experiences, young unpublished writers came forward to reclaim their own voice and to write about the full range of their own perceptions of reality" (xi). The work of the authors in this cohort, which also includes Gao Xingjian, exemplifies what Lee describes as the "proliferation of Chinese literature" in recent years. Each, in their own way and from their particular location, took part in this 1980s movement to "reclaim their own voice".

Hong Ying (born 1962) is an internationally acclaimed feminist novelist. While she is now a UK citizen, all her important works have been written in Chinese. Born an illegitimate daughter and raised in poverty, her background pervades the tone of her works. Hong Ying's life changed significantly in the early 1980s when, inspired by the blossoming of those "young unpublished writers", she decided to become a writer herself. Her personal trajectory, from a slum by the Yangtze River – resembling tears and death in her poems – to a prominent writer, reflects, to an extent, several key aspects of China's cultural transformation in recent decades.

I Too Am Salammbo, the title of both this collection of Hong Ying's work and of one of the poems it includes, suggests latent connections to Flaubert's Orientalist French novel *Salammbô* (1862). This is a collection of works spanning two decades, including some that were translated and collected in the 2014 anthology *Poems of Hong Ying, Zhai Yongming and Yang Lian*. The poems are organized as if reading an autobiography in reverse, looking back across the path of memory from poems written in 2012 to those written in 1991. The first section, "Illegitimate Child (2007-2012)", opens with the poem "Chongqing Slum", referring to Hong Ying's place of origin as remembered in the present day. This section is followed by poems of spiritual exploration in "Lotus Prohibition (1999-2005)" and "Scales of Grief (1990-1997)", and then a section immersed in the painful beauty of love and cruelty in "Butterflies and Butterflies (1992-1995)". The reader is finally led ashore by poems like "London", "Berlin" and "Paris" in the section "Record of Nine Cities (1991)" which remembers the poet's life overseas. Like many other curiosities about the author, the question of the mysterious link with Flaubert is perhaps answered in the poem "Salammbo is just a name" (44).

In the 2015 edition, Lee has made changes to certain phrases, lexical choices and formal features from the 2014 selection. Through the removal of a line in the earlier edition of "Another Sonnet", for example, this rhyming verse complies more closely with the traditional English format of the sonnet. The translator finely tunes the tone of "Electric Shock" through

a different choice of verbs: “descend” rather than “lower”, and “scream” rather than “shriek”. The reorganization of the syllabic beginning of each line in the 2015 edition emphasizes the pattern of a set of dental consonants and a set of open vowels in crisscross form, allowing utterances to flow more smoothly in a well-formed rhythm.

In the earlier selection, Hong Ying is joined by Zhai Yongming, translated by Naikan Tao and Tony Prince, and Yang Lian, again translated by Mabel Lee. Combining the work of three poets in a single book is a challenge. Most of the works in this collection were considered “avant-garde” at the time of their publication in China, with the term tending to indicate the influence of Western ideas. This may be so. But under the skin of the lexical peculiarities that traditional Chinese aesthetics would reject, the imagery is uniquely native. Given that many of Hong Ying’s poems in this book are also included in *I Too Am Salammbo*, I will concentrate here on the other two poets in this collection.

Zhai Yongming (born 1955), a generation older than Hong Ying, “spent two years doing hard labour with the peasants during the Cultural Revolution” (xv). She was actively involved in the 1980s poetry movement in which the two cycles of poems *Woman* (1984) and *Jing’an Village* (1985) established her credentials among Chinese contemporary poets. Apart from writing, Zhai is also a cultural practitioner, hosting a literary salon where many literary events are held.

Sensitive to ordinary people’s daily encounters, Zhai’s harmonious voice poetically presents their lives from a sympathetic and sometimes critical stance, as shown in *Jing’an village* (1985). In their translation, Tao and Prince adopt a simple but effective strategy to represent 1980s rural China. The proverbs in daily use which have become disconnected from their original meanings are revived by revisiting the original form of the Chinese language through “literal” translation into English. For example, “how can I enter / This village where even the crows and sparrows are silent now?” A Chinese phrase for signifying absolute silence by presenting the image of soundless birds is brought back to its moment of invention when the birds were alive in the language users’ awareness, and thus in this line recreates a living (but absolutely silent) village.

Yang Lian (born 1955) is one of the most important figures of 1980s Chinese poetry. He was actively involved in *Jintian* [Today] magazine (established in 1978 and banned in 1980), an icon of China’s new poetry movement. However, because he was unaligned in the Chinese political ideology of the time, his poem cycle *Norlang* (1983) was criticized as “spiritual pollution” and he was banned from publishing for a year. While Yang Lian now lives in Germany and spends most of his time outside China, he continues to write in the Chinese language.

Yang Lian has formed his signature style in Chinese poetry through appealing to the epic landscape by way of a great historical sensitivity and a masculine voice. Such features also position his poems alongside a generation of cinematic works from the 1980s. These include the films of the so-called Fifth Generation film makers represented by Chen Kaige’s *Yellow Earth* (1984), which depicts the vast remoteness of western China, and Zhang Yimou’s *Red Sorghum* (1988), portraying rural figures in an unbreakable bond with their harsh and barren land. The translation of Yang Lian’s poem “The Golden Tree”, a piece from the cycle *Norlang*, emphasizes the first person pronoun “I” in the first two quatrains by announcing it at the beginning of each line. In doing so, the masculine voice that claims its power in the world is strengthened.

Gao Xingjian (born 1940) was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2000. While his novels are published and well received outside China, his dramatic works have had a significant impact on the development of China’s stage art. His monumental works, *Absolute Signal* (1982), *Bus Stop* (1983) and *The Other Shore* (1986), marked a new era of exploration in Chinese dramatic work. The language of Gao’s drama is both close to everyday language

and carefully crafted to comply with his emphasis on the purity of language. Although Gao is reluctant to embrace the view that regards scripts as "dramatic literature", a separate literary form that does not require performance on the actual stage, his works nevertheless "can be fully enjoyed as literary texts", according to Lee (ix).

The City of the Dead, written in 1987 and later translated by Fong, provides a new interpretation of a tale from classic Chinese opera. Attention is turned from the mockery of an unfaithful woman in the classic version to a criticism of men in Gao's drama – what Lee refers to in the introduction as men's "flippant and cavalier attitude to their female sexual partner or partners" (xv). Fong's translation allows English readers an opportunity to look into one of Gao's early experiments, an "attempt to transform an obsolete traditional opera into a modern play". This attempt, in conjunction with Gao's stress on the performer's actions and his humorous (sometimes cheeky) and poetic language, is explored in the "Suggestions and Instructions" for performance that are included with the text.

Song of the Night was first written in French, then rewritten by Gao in Chinese as a "choreopoem" and published in Taiwan. Translated by Lee, this drama of dance, music and poetry continues to demonstrate Gao's attention to the female psyche in the encounter with men. His exploration of pronouns in the Chinese language, also a feature of his novel *Soul Mountain*, presents a challenge to translation into English. Obvious differences between the two languages in terms of pronouns are that Chinese distinguishes regular Second Person Singular from Second Person Honourable (SPH) while English does not have the latter form; Chinese also distinguishes Second Person Singular from Second Person Plural (SPP) while modern English does not. Lee's translation wisely adopts unadorned, grammatically functional expressions such as "you dear" for the equivalent of Chinese SPH and "all of you" for SPP. More importantly, the dramatic sarcasm of the Chinese Honourable is maintained. When the female actor pronounces the English word "dear", the strength in a female psyche against men's bias is, as Gao advises in the stage instructions, "directed at males in the audience" (64), and thus remains as powerful as in the Chinese original.

Evident in all three of these books is the dynamic poetic language that prospered in Chinese literature in the 1980s and has since continued to develop from those early experiments towards a more skilful application. This collection of translations offers multiple angles that allow us to examine contemporary Chinese poetry and literary works across different time periods, locations and forms.

Karla Suárez's Cuban Novel *Silencios* in English Translation[*]

KATRINA HAYES
Australian National University

The debut novel of Cuban writer Karla Suárez, *Silencios,* was published in 1999. The Spanish original has since been translated and published in French, German, Italian, Portuguese and Slovak, and several publishers have printed new editions of the original. In France, the work was even converted into a musical. However, consistent with the famously low publication rates of translated literature in English, the novel remains unavailable to the English-speaking reader.

It is a shame that there is no English translation because Suárez's is a significant voice among contemporary Cuban writers – she is one of the most discussed female writers of the so-called "post-novísimo" movement, comprising authors who were born around the 1970s and were producing works in the 1990s (Timmer 159).[1] It is also a shame because *Silencios* is a novel that comes alive in translation, being at once familiar and foreign: familiar, because the main character grapples with many issues to which an English speaker, or indeed any human, can relate – the ups and downs of growing up, the excitement of new experiences, difficult family relationships, and the gradual realization that one's ever-present family members are individuals with their own personal struggles and secrets; yet foreign, because it brings into the picture the less familiar backdrop of post-revolutionary Cuban society under Communist rule. The foreign and the familiar seem at odds, but this apparent disharmony reflects what makes translation so crucial: the way it reaffirms the many things we share as humans while revealing to us new realities and ways of seeing and experiencing the world.

The narrative of *Silencios* spans 20 years. The narrator-protagonist, who remains unnamed throughout the novel, speaks in the first person, describing her life growing up in post-revolutionary Cuba. It is a novel about journeying through adolescence into adulthood, and about how the narrator's responses to the reality and relationships around her shape the person she becomes. Below, I present a translation of the second chapter, in which the narrator is still a young girl.

The "silences" of the title grow stronger as the novel progresses, as the narrator begins to isolate herself from her family and her reality. In the second chapter she is still communicating and engaging with the members of her extended family, with whom she lives in a large Havana apartment, although she is beginning to identify the pain and secrets that were always there, but which she had not understood.

The second chapter focuses in particular on the narrator's interactions with her aunt, as suggested by the chapter's title, "Una tía soltera", which I have translated as "An Unmarried Aunt". Titles can be problematic for the translator; they are made up of only a few words, and they sit alone and out of context. When translated, they can lose a double meaning present in the original, or convey one not originally there. In the case of "Una tía soltera", *soltera* means "single" in the sense of not having a partner or spouse. But in English "A Single Aunt", while a possible translation, could be confused with meaning "only one aunt". This explains my use of "unmarried", which, while more specific than "single", conveys a similar meaning but without the ambiguity, and avoids creating new meanings such as the negative connotations that would be associated with a translation like "spinster" or "maiden" in place of "unmarried".

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[1] The 1990s in Cuba was a period of economic and ideological isolation following the Soviet collapse, a period that saw tensions within Cuban society grow and Cuban literary output flourish (Becerril 84).

When translating the chapter, I focused on maintaining the youthfulness and naivety of the narrative style. The novel's narration in general is direct, chronological and minimalist, free of unnecessary flourishes. In the early chapters these characteristics are coupled with a child-like simplicity, as though the narrator, looking back on her past, is armed only with the expressive capacities of a young girl. This is reflected in what Timmer identifies as a sensory focus: the narrator describes what she saw and heard, but not how she felt or how she interpreted the things she witnessed (161).

The narrator describes what she sees and does in a linear, fluid manner, with many long, winding sentences conjoined with *and*s, *then*s and commas, rather as if she were writing in a personal diary. This style reflects the narrator's youth, and many of the long sentences stretch on for a reason, matching or adding meaning to the moments and events being described. In such cases, I translated the sentences intact. Other translators have also emphasized the importance of retaining a particular feature of an author's style where it serves a specific purpose, even when doing so seems unnatural (or grammatically incorrect) in the target language. Gregory Rabassa, for example, preserved the lack of paragraph division and minimal punctuation in his English translation of Gabriel García Márquez's novel *El otoño del patriarca* (translated as *The Autumn of the Patriarch*), stating that these elements were what maintained the drive and momentum of events in the story (101). One sentence that I left unbroken stretches across many lines, punctuated by ten commas and a single semi-colon, wherein the narrator describes what she did and how she felt in the happy, magical moments when she was granted permission to immerse herself in the world of her aunt's bedroom. With so many elements of the memory contained within a single sentence, the reader is encouraged to imagine that moment as an uninterrupted string of sensations flashing by, as though in a single breath.

In *Silencios*, Suárez creates, through the eyes of her narrator, a strong sense of what life is like inside the Havana apartment in which the narrator lives with her extended family. Outside the apartment is the post-revolutionary Cuba of the 1980s, a period in which resources were scarce and many were trying to flee. In the translated chapter, there are various allusions to some of the social and political dynamics of the time, in particular the tension between those who are trying to leave for the United States and those who are not. The image is a little hazy, however, given that it is a view of Cuban society as seen through the youthful eyes of the narrator, when her knowledge and understanding of the world beyond the apartment is limited.

I sought, therefore, to maintain this haziness in my translation. It has been suggested that a translation is always clearer than the original: Blum-Kulka has claimed that an inherent effect of the translation process is the increased explicitness of a text; that is, "explicitation" is used to clarify information that was implied or less obvious in the original (292). However, Blum-Kulka seems to be referring to clarifications that are necessary and largely unavoidable due to the *structure* of the target language (292).[2] There may be other, non-linguistic aspects of the text, such as descriptions of its historical setting or socio-political context, that are unclear to the new reader. But clarifying these is not unavoidable – it is a choice. In choosing to explicitate, the translator adds information that was not present in the original. I argue that such explicitation should be avoided unless it serves a purpose for the particular text and it is clear that the original reference would have been widely understood by the original readership.

In the second chapter of *Silencios*, the author alludes to some aspects of Cuban society that, while a daily reality for the author and other Cubans, are likely to be obscure to many outsiders. For example, there are various mentions of people "leaving from Mariel", which refers to the large number of Cubans who left for the United States on boats from a port in the town of Mariel in 1980, a series of events known as "the Mariel Boatlift" or "the Cuban

[2] These kinds of necessary clarifications come up often in any translation, and *Silencios* was no exception. For example, in a later chapter the narrator talks about *las otras* in the context of her classroom, which, if translated into English as "the others", would no longer clearly indicate other *female* students, as does the original Spanish.

Boatlift" (Card; Copeland). As the reference was initially unfamiliar to me, I imagined that it would also be unfamiliar to other English-speaking readers, and considered adding new elements to the translation to clarify that people were leaving from a port located in the town of Mariel and heading for the United States. However, I also considered the fact that the novel was first published in Spain and would be likely to have a diverse Spanish-speaking readership. Many non-Cuban readers of Spanish are also likely to find the "Mariel" reference and other descriptions of Cuban society obscure. Indeed, a reader in peninsular Spain might have less knowledge of the meanings behind these references than a US reader of the English translation, given the US's proximity to and relationship with Cuba. Since it is not clear that these references would be lost solely on English-speaking readers, to make them explicit in the English translation goes beyond the role of the translator in this instance. I therefore did not make the meaning of these references explicit, choosing to leave the Spanish and English readers on equal footing.

Furthermore, I do not believe that using explicitation to clarify references to Cuba's social and political situation is particularly important or useful in the case of *Silencios*. Margaret Jull Costa has written about her use of explicitation in certain translations, and explains that she is guided by the purpose and the essence of the text in question (119). In *Silencios*, the sense of childhood and of growing up is central – the dynamics inside the apartment are more important than those outside it. Indeed, it is possible that the descriptions of Cuba's social and political context were intentionally presented in a hazy manner by the author, reflecting the narrator's necessarily patchy knowledge of the world as a child and allowing the reader's knowledge to grow as hers does. In any case, a sense of Cuba and of some aspects of the social and political context of the time do come through to the reader of the translation without explicitation. I therefore avoided any clarifying phrases and focused instead on capturing the gradual growth in the narrator's understanding.

Suárez's *Silencios* is a melancholic yet beautiful debut novel. In English translation the world of the central character is brought to life. The reader of the translation follows her as she becomes acquainted with her reality, and is likely to recognize many of the experiences and hardships associated with growing up. At the same time, the reader gains an insight into the more culturally specific aspects of the narrator's family life and the private worlds that exist inside the Havana apartment, while also catching a glimpse of the wider social context outside its walls.

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Una tía soltera
by Karla Suárez

No es que yo detestara la música argentina, pero esa manía de mi madre de escuchar tangos comenzó a molestarme, entonces fue cuando empecé a pintar.

Las noches de mi cuarto eran la lucecita de la lámpara de noche y mi madre junto a ella, tendida, con aquel casi susurro de su tocadiscos viejo, aquella melancolía asqueante, amores perdidos u olvidados, y el mutismo de mi madre. Todo aquello me hacía sentirme incómoda, porque además sabía de sobra que ella no dormiría en toda la noche y yo no podría salir a deambular, ni meterme en el cuarto de la tía; entonces empecé a pintar. Pintaba todo lo que veía en el cuarto, una mujer sombría que de madrugada levantaba la vista para preguntarme qué tanto hacía yo metida en aquel cuaderno.

—Yo pinto, tú escuchas tangos y yo pinto.

—La vida es como un tango, nena, tenés que aprender eso.

Y entonces continuaba hablando de la vida, fijaba la mirada en el techo y hablaba de mi padre, que por aquel entonces andaría metido en otro tango y otras sábanas, porque yo procuraba revisar las suyas todas las mañanas y siempre iguales, sin muestras de uso, sin marcas de presencia, salvo los domingos en la mañana cuando la abuela intentaba barrer debajo del sofá y mi padre se levantaba furioso diciendo que en esa casa ya no había espacio para él, entonces agarraba la camisa y se largaba a sentarse en la escalera del edificio. Yo acostumbraba a seguirlo, me sentaba junto a él, y le contaba de la escuela, decía cualquier cosa hasta que se calmara un poco; entonces comenzaba a hablar. Hubo un tiempo en que de repente todos empezaron a hablar; mi padre sólo decía frases vagas, murmuradas muchas veces en ruso. Yo trataba de ordenar las palabras sin poder comprenderlo, hasta que me pasaba la mano por el pelo agregando que yo era lo único que servía en esa casa y por eso me invitaba al barcito de la esquina, donde podía comer

An Unmarried Aunt
by Karla Suárez
Translated by Katrina Hayes

It's not that I didn't like Argentinian music, but that obsession my mother had with listening to tangos began to annoy me, so that's when I started to paint.

Night time in my bedroom was the glow of the night-light and my mother lying next to it, with that almost whisper of her old record player, that sickening melancholy, loves lost or forgotten, and my mother, so mute. It all made me feel uncomfortable, because I also knew that it meant she wouldn't sleep at all during the night and I wouldn't be able to go out wandering or go into my aunt's room; so I started to paint. I painted everything I saw in the room, a sombre woman who, in the early morning, would look up to ask me what I was doing so engrossed in that notebook.

"I'm painting. You listen to tangos and I paint."

"Life is like a tango, baby girl, you need to learn that."

And then she would go on talking about life, she'd fix her gaze on the ceiling and talk about my father who, back then, would have been off entangling himself in another tango and another set of sheets, I knew because I tried to inspect his sheets every morning and they were always the same, no signs of use, not a trace of his presence, except Sunday mornings when my grandmother would try to sweep under the sofa and my father would get up, furious, saying there was no room for him in that house, then he'd grab his shirt and take off to sit in the stairwell of the building. I got into the habit of following him, I used to sit next to him and tell him about school, talk to him about whatever until he calmed down a bit; then he would start to talk. It was a time when, suddenly, everyone started talking; my father said only vague things, often murmured in Russian. I tried to make out the words without being able to understand him, until he would stroke my hair saying that I was the only one of any use in that house and therefore I was invited to

cualquier cosa y él desayunarse un aguardiente, para animar el día. La situación resultaba buena, porque al cuarto trago ya el día se animaba, mi padre comenzaba a cantar en ruso, y el dependiente servía limonada gratis para mí.

Mi madre no sospechaba nada de esto porque sólo escuchaba tangos, entonces yo volvía al cuarto y me sentaba a pintar a mi padre, callada en una esquina, pintaba y pintaba sin cesar. Era bueno. A veces pasaba todo el día allí, pintándolo todo, la casa, la familia, mi abuela peleando, mi tía soltera. Mi tía siempre había sido soltera y eso me llamaba la atención, sobre todo porque después que Mamá y ella tuvieron problemas y Mamá comenzó a hablar, sólo decía que mi tía era una frustrada, solterona y medio gusana. Eran los ochenta, yo ya había aprendido en la escuela que gusano se le decía a los que se iban del país. Cerca de mi escuela habían abierto una oficina adonde acudían todos los que querían irse de Cuba, a nosotros nos paraban en el patio para gritarles «escoria» o «gusanos», o nos incitaban a tirarles huevos a sus casas, y eso era bien divertido, pero mi tía no se fue por el Mariel, ni nada de eso, y salvo por su delgadez no le veía semejanza con esos bichos asquerosos.

Una vez le enseñé uno de los dibujos que había hecho de su cuarto y se puso muy contenta, dijo que yo tenía talento para la pintura y sé que mintió, pero colgó el dibujo en una de sus paredes y ahí permaneció acompañando los cientos de carteles tapizados por el polvo y las telas de araña que crecían día a día dentro de su habitación.

Mi tía siempre resultó un personaje interesante. Estaba flaca y siempre usaba ropa medio rara, con cordones colgando de su cuello y siempre fumando y diciendo alguna cosa interesante. En la época de los conciertos en su cuarto, era divertido, porque ella se tiraba en la cama, cerrando los ojos, y se entregaba a la música mientras yo podía

go with him to the tavern on the corner, where I could eat whatever I wanted and he could have a brandy for breakfast, to liven up the day. In the end it was nice because, by his fourth nip, the day was already brightening up, my father would be starting to sing in Russian, and the waiter would be bringing out a free lemonade for me.

My mother didn't suspect any of this because she was busy listening to tangos, so I would return to the bedroom and sit down to paint my father; quiet in a corner, I would paint and paint without stopping. It was good. Sometimes I spent the whole day there, painting everything, the house, the family, my grandmother arguing, my unmarried aunt. My aunt had always been single and this drew my attention, particularly because after she and Mama had their problems and Mama started talking, all she would say was that my aunt was frustrated, a spinster, and a bit of a worm. It was the eighties, and I had already learnt at school that *worm* was what they called people who were leaving the country. Near my school there was an office that had opened up where people who wanted to leave Cuba would go, they used to get us to stop in the playground and shout at them "scum" or "worms", or they'd get us to throw eggs at their houses, which was really fun, but my aunt never ended up leaving from Mariel, or anything like that, and, except for being thin, I didn't see any similarity between her and those horrible grubs.

One time I showed her one of the drawings I'd done of her room and she seemed very pleased, she said that I had a talent for painting and I know she was lying but she hung the drawing on one of her walls and there it stayed, accompanying the hundreds of dust-covered posters and cobwebs growing in her bedroom day after day.

My aunt had always been an interesting character. She was skinny and always wore slightly odd-looking clothing, with chains hanging from her neck, and was always smoking and saying something interesting. I enjoyed the days of having concerts in her room because she would lie on the bed with her eyes closed and give herself over to the

jugar con todo. Lo único que no podía tocar era una copa que guardaba encima del librero; decía que era una copa encantada, la copa de la buena suerte, pero sólo su encantador podría tocarla. Lo demás era accesible. Yo jugaba a disfrazarme. Ella tenía una peluca puesta encima de una cabeza de maniquí, yo me ponía la peluca, pintaba mis labios, me colgaba sus collares y luego tomaba cualquiera de los sombreros llenos de polvo que pendían de una de las paredes; entonces danzaba con aquella música celestial salida del viejo tocadiscos, y era bueno, porque podía volar, alcanzaba la ventana y me largaba lejos, regresaba para mirarme en el espejo y cambiarme de sombrero, mientras ella se levantaba, cambiaba el disco, decía cualquier cosa y se daba un trago. La tía siempre tenía algo de beber, guardaba encima del librero, junto a la copa encantada, un montón de botellas de diferentes diseños y etiquetas que iba llenando aleatoriamente con cualquier licor comprado en el barcito de la esquina. Eso me gustaba, eso y su manía de esconder los cigarros en cualquier sitio. A veces terminaba una caja y jugábamos a encontrar el escondite, yo buscaba entre los libros, discos, cajitas, dentro de la botellas vacías. La primera que encontrara uno tenía derecho a escoger la próxima audición. Era divertido. Pero todo eso desapareció cuando Mamá volvió a sus tangos y su lamparita nocturna.

Yo empecé a molestarme. Una noche me puse a pintar y a tararear la novena sinfonía una y otra vez, el mismo pedacito, mientras pintaba y subía el volumen de mi voz, sólo mirando el papel. En una de esas Mamá se levantó y preguntó qué pasaba.

—Pinto y canto —eso respondí.

—Lo hacés para molestarme, sos igual que tu padre.

Entonces me levanté y dije que iba a la sala a pintar. Mamá se puso un almohadón en la cara y dijo que todos la dejaban sola, huían de ella, y yo era igual que todos, igual que esa familia de locos. Cerré la puerta porque en verdad no tenía nada que responder y atravesé el pasillo silenciosa. Al pasar por el

music, while I was allowed to play with everything. The only thing I wasn't allowed to touch was a crystal glass that she kept on top of her bookshelf; she said it was an enchanted glass, her good luck glass, but that only its enchanter could touch it. Everything else was allowed. I used to play dress-ups. She had a wig perched on top of a mannequin's head, I would put the wig on, paint my lips, put on her necklaces and then take one of the dust-filled hats that was hanging from one of the walls; then I would dance to that celestial music coming from the old record player, and it was good, because I could fly away, I'd reach the window and go far away, then return to look at myself in the mirror and change my hat, while she would get up, change the record, say something and take a swig of her drink. My aunt always had something to drink; up on the bookshelf, beside the enchanted glass, she kept a stash of bottles of different designs and labels that she continually filled up at random with whatever liquor she'd bought from the tavern on the corner. I liked that, that and her compulsive habit of hiding cigarettes all over the place. Sometimes she would finish a pack and we'd play find-the-cigarettes, I'd search among the books, the records, the little boxes, inside the empty bottles. The first to find a pack got to choose what we listened to next. It was fun. But all of this ended when Mama returned to her tangos and her little night-light.

I started to get annoyed. One night I began painting and humming the Ninth Symphony over and over again, the same bit, and I kept painting and singing louder, looking only at the paper. On one of those occasions, Mama got up and asked what was going on.

"I'm painting and singing," I responded.

"You're doing it to annoy me, you're just like your father."

So I got up and said I was going to the living room to paint. Mama covered her face with a cushion and said that everyone leaves her, runs away from her, and that I was the same as everyone else, the same as that family of crazies. I closed the door, in truth because I didn't have anything to say in

cuarto de la tía escuché un ruido extraño, como un cristal chocando contra algo, y luego unos sollozos agitados. Pensé tocar en su puerta pero sentí miedo y me fui a la sala a pintar. Pinté una botella rota. Luego me aburrí y me tiré en el sofá un rato para jugar a hacer dibujos con las sombras de mis manos en el techo. Al rato sentí unos pasos en el pasillo. Me levanté y caminé hasta el cuarto de la tía; la puerta estaba abierta y entré. Adentro todo estaba regado como siempre, la cama revuelta, llena de libros, la máquina de escribir tirada en una esquina, todo en una semipenumbra como siempre, y en el piso estaban los pedazos de la copa encantada, regados encima de un charco de ron, con algunas manchas de sangre a su alrededor que llegaban hasta la puerta. Me asusté y no pude hacer otra cosa que quedarme allí parada, muy quieta, hasta que sentí la voz de la tía a mis espaldas.

—¿Tú qué haces aquí?

Di la vuelta y ella estaba parada, mirándome muy seria, apretándose con la mano derecha una venda que cubría su muñeca izquierda. No supe qué decir y ella entró empujando la puerta con un pie.

—Puedes quedarte, el encantamiento se rompió y yo me corté, eso es todo.

Mi tía fue hasta el tocadiscos reafirmando que podía quedarme y entonces escucharíamos el *Réquiem* de Mozart, una melodía a tono con los tiempos. Bebió de la botella que tenía a los pies de la cama y me invitó a sentarme mientras se recostaba encendiendo un cigarro. Creo que estaba un poco ebria porque me invitó a un trago, pero no acepté. Entonces empezó la música y ella comenzó a hablar. Era el tiempo en que todos me hablaban, no sé por qué. Yo sólo escuchaba sin hacer preguntas, siempre escuchaba las voces de los otros. La tía contó que un día había sido más joven y se había enamorado de un hombre casado, un profesor de la universidad, muy respetado e inteligente; dijo que la inteligencia a veces era imperdonable, sobre todo para los que no tenían inteligencia pero tenían poder. Ella se enamoró del hombre y él de ella y empezaron una relación sin que nadie lo supiera. Las

response, and silently crossed the hallway. As I passed my aunt's room, I heard a strange noise, like a piece of glass smashing against something, and then some distressed sobs. I thought of knocking on her door but I felt scared so I went to the living room to paint. I painted a broken bottle. Then I got bored and lay down on the sofa for a while, making pictures on the ceiling with the shadows of my hands. After a while I heard footsteps in the hallway. I got up and walked to my aunt's room; the door was open and I went in. Inside, everything was scattered as usual, the bed in a mess, full of books, the typewriter dumped in a corner, everything dimly lit as always, and on the floor were the pieces of the enchanted glass, scattered in a pool of rum, and around it some bloodstains that reached as far as the door. I got scared and couldn't do anything but stand there, very still, until I heard my aunt's voice at my back.

"What are you doing here?"

I turned around and she was standing, looking at me very seriously, pressing her right hand onto a bandage covering her left wrist. I didn't know what to say and she came in, pushing the door with one of her feet.

"You can stay, the spell broke and I cut myself, that's all."

My aunt went over to the record player, saying again that I could stay and then we listened to Mozart's *Requiem*, a fitting melody for those days. She drank from the bottle that she had at the foot of the bed and invited me to sit down while she lay back, lighting a cigarette. I think she was a bit drunk because she offered me a swig, but I didn't accept it. Then the music started and she began to talk. Those were the days when everyone was talking to me, I don't know why. I would just listen without asking questions, I was always listening to the voices of other people. My aunt told me about how she had been younger once and had fallen in love with a married man, a university professor, very respected and intelligent; she said that sometimes intelligence was unforgivable, especially for those who didn't have any intelligence but did have power. She fell in love with that

personas mienten, eso ya yo lo sabía. Pero un día, el hombre tuvo un problema, mi tía dijo que eran tiempos de cacería de brujas y no la entendí; entonces explicó que el hombre tenía amigos, y sus amigos tenían ideas y hablaban mucho, y un día uno de sus amigos se fue del país y el hombre siguió siendo su amigo, pero eso al director de la universidad y a los otros no les gustó, entonces quisieron que él no recibiera cartas ni llamadas telefónicas, ni fuera más su amigo, pero el hombre se negó y ahí empezó a tener problemas, hasta que un día lo llamaron y lo acusaron de estar en contra del país y, además, de adulterio. La palabra no la entendí, pero mi tía dijo que era lo mismo que hacía mi padre y entonces sí entendí. Al final, al hombre lo botaron de la universidad, la mujer lo dejó y se fue con uno de los directores, y los otros que decían ser sus amigos dejaron de visitarlo porque ya nadie quiso tener problemas. Sólo mi tía se quedó con él, pero él estaba muy triste, empezó a beber, y dijo que no haría nada hasta que no reconocieran que había sido injusto. El tiempo pasó y sus amigos se hicieron directores, y los directores ministros y su ex mujer cambió de marido y él se volvió un alcohólico esperando justicia y se encerró en su casa y su inteligencia se la llevó la mierda.

Yo no entendía muchas cosas. Mi tía hablaba entre dientes y bebía muy rápido. Dijo que él se transformó, se fue muriendo lentamente y un día bebió tanto, tanto, tanto, que cuando ella llegó a su casa, lo encontró desnudo en la bañadera con las venas recién abiertas. Mi tía corrió y logró salvarlo. Luego lo internaron en una clínica para alcohólicos, pero no quiso estar más allí y volvió a su casa, a beber y escribir cartas, dice que siempre escribía cartas pero nadie respondía. Sólo ella estuvo siempre para acompañarlo, cosa que ni mi padre ni mi abuela le perdonaron nunca, aunque lo amara. Mi tía encendió otro cigarro y se quedó mirando

man and he with her and they started a relationship without anyone knowing. People lie, this I knew already. But one day, the man had a problem; my aunt said those were witch-hunting days and I didn't understand her, then she explained that the man had friends, and his friends had ideas and talked a lot, and one day one of his friends left the country and the man continued to be his friend, but the university director and others didn't like this, so they didn't want him to receive any letters or phone calls, nor continue to be his friend, but the man refused and at that point he began to have problems, until one day they called him and accused him of being against the country, and, moreover, of adultery. That word I didn't understand, but my aunt told me that it was the same as what my father was doing, so then I did understand. In the end, the man was sacked from the university, his wife left him and went off with one of the directors, and the others who had said they were his friends stopped visiting him because by this stage nobody wanted any problems. Only my aunt stayed with him, but he was very sad, he started to drink, and he said that he wouldn't do anything until they stopped thinking that he had done something wrong. Time passed and his friends became directors, the directors became ministers, and his ex-wife found a new husband, while he became an alcoholic waiting for justice who locked himself in his house, and his intelligence was carried away with all the shit.

There was a lot I didn't understand. My aunt was talking under her breath and drinking very fast. She said that he changed, that he was slowly dying and one day he drank so, so much that when she arrived at his house, she found him in the bath, undressed, with his wrists slashed not long before. My aunt ran and managed to save him. Then they admitted him to a clinic for alcoholics, but he didn't want to stay there so he returned to his house to drink and write letters, she says that he was always writing letters but no one responded. She was the only one to stay by him, something which neither my father nor my grandmother ever

fijamente la nada, entonces yo pensé que el amor era en verdad una cosa verdaderamente triste, mi madre escuchaba tangos, mi tía era soltera, mi abuela había sido abandonada, y yo no quería eso. Lo que quería no lo sabía, pero el amor, esa palabra era lo suficientemente triste como para yo necesitarla, y entonces decidí rechazarla.

Mi tía cambió la cara del disco, bebió nuevamente y dijo que no siempre se llega a tiempo a todos los lugares. La noche anterior, el hombre había terminado definitivamente con toda su agonía, porque una historia de mierda, dijo, merece un final de mierda, y entonces se echó a reír como una loca, diciendo que ella había conservado durante años la copa que él le había regalado en su primera salida, que no estaba encantada ni un carajo y no era más que una copa de mierda llenándose de polvo y cargándola de recuerdos inútiles y porquería sentimental, y para qué conservar un cristal viejo si ya los gusanos empezaban a frotarse las manos por el cuerpo aún calentico, lleno de alcohol y mierda, inteligencia putrefacta, sonsa, inútil. Mi tía me miró fijamente y dijo que no éramos más que carne de gusanos, pero había que hacer algo: ella no se iba a cortar las venas nunca, quería ser como Mozart, del que hacía casi dos siglos no quedaban ni los gusanos nietos, pero que estaba allí, en su cuarto, llenando todos los espacios, y entonces se levantó y comenzó a dar vueltas, danzando con el *Réquiem*, dando tumbos, medio borracha y riendo coma una histérica. Yo me levanté asustada, pero ella me alcanzó con sus brazos y empezamos a dar vueltas hasta que cayó al piso, empezó a llorar de rodillas y yo salí del cuarto.

Caminé un tanto desorientada hasta la sala, pero descubrí el cuerpo de mi padre tendido en el sofá; entonces me senté en un rincón, tomé la libreta de mi bolsillo y pinté un gusano grande frotándose las manos. Me sentí más calmada, pero aún tenía miedo de que mi tía saliera a buscarme. Caminé de puntillas hasta mi cuarto, Mamá había apagado la luz pero se escuchaba un tango

forgave her for, even though she loved him. My aunt lit another cigarette and stared into the void, and I thought about how love was really something truly sad, my mother listened to tangos, my aunt was alone, my grandmother had been abandoned, and I didn't want that. What I did want I didn't know, but love, that word was sufficiently sad for me not to need it, so I decided to discard it.

My aunt turned the record over, took another drink and said that you don't always arrive everywhere in time. The night before, the man had put an end to his agony once and for all, because a shitty story, she said, deserves a shitty ending, and then she burst out laughing madly, saying that for years she had kept the glass he gave her the first time they went out, that it wasn't enchanted one damn bit and was nothing more than a shitty glass filling up with dust and heaping useless memories and sentimental bullshit on her, and why keep an old glass if the worms had already started rubbing their hands together in anticipation of his body, still warm, filled with alcohol and shit, and rotten, stupid, useless intelligence. My aunt fixed her gaze on me and said that we were nothing more than worm food, but that she had to do something: she was never going to cut her veins, she wanted to be like Mozart who'd been gone almost two centuries so not even the worms' grandchildren would still be there, but who was here, in her bedroom, filling the spaces, and then she got up and started spinning around, dancing to the *Requiem*, staggering about, half-drunk, and laughing hysterically. I got up, frightened, but she caught me in her arms and we started spinning around until she fell to her knees on the floor, started to cry, and I left the room.

I walked, somewhat disoriented, to the living room, but I discovered my father's body stretched out on the sofa; and so I sat in a corner, took the notebook from my pocket and painted a big worm rubbing its hands together. I felt calmer, but I was still scared that my aunt would come looking for me. I tiptoed to my room, Mama had turned out the light but she was still listening to a tango very

muy bajito. Me acosté a su lado y la abracé, ella me dio un beso en el pelo y preguntó si pasaba algo. Dije que no. Al cabo de un rato la volví a abrazar y murmuré entre dientes que no dejaría nunca que los gusanos le hicieran daño. Mi madre sonrió.

—No, nena, los gusanos se irán todos por el Mariel y a nosotros nadie va a hacernos daño nunca.

low. I got into bed next to her and hugged her, she gave me a kiss on the head and asked if something had happened. I said no. After a little while I hugged her again and murmured under my breath that I would never let the worms hurt her. My mother smiled.

"No, baby girl, the worms will all leave from Mariel and nobody will ever hurt us."

Translating "Liangzhou Ci": Alternating between Intervention and Non-Intervention

JUN TANG and CONRAD BAUER
Southeast University, China (JT)

"Liangzhou Ci" was written by Ge Fei, the pen name of Liu Yong (1964-), winner of three national literary awards in China and currently a professor at Tsinghua University. The fictional story, which was first published in the mid-1990s and has been republished several times since, describes a conversation between the narrator and Dr Lin An, regarding an academic article of Lin's. The story begins with Lin's self-exile and rumours of his death, and highlights his resistance to complying with the expectations of academic rigour in his unsubstantiated account of the life story of the Tang poet Wang Zhihuan. In summary, Lin is portrayed as one of those Chinese intellectuals who have failed to keep pace with the changing society.

Literary translations "have always been expected […] to be near-equivalents of the originals' message, meaning, tone, and quality" (Koerner 213). However, translation scholars are familiar with concepts such as translation as a form of rewriting (Lefevere) and translation as intervention (Munday), which have been used as umbrella terms describing the textual manifestations of a multitude of intentional or deliberate translation shifts in target texts. Although rewriting and intervention have often been ascribed to ideological concerns or political agendas, cross-linguistic or intercultural differences may also lead to the adoption of an "interventionist approach" to translation (Limon 30), which will result in various translation shifts (e.g. additions, omissions, lexical changes, stylistic changes).

To avoid the cross-linguistic or intercultural pitfalls that translating into one's non-native language can entail, the native Chinese-speaking translator (Jun Tang), through networking, found a co-translator (Conrad Bauer), who is a native English speaker from the United States and holds a Master's degree in Chinese Language and Literature. We also sought some help from Bauer's brother, a professional editor.

Rejecting the "more traditional understandings of fidelity" (Floros 70) that tend to disempower translators and reduce their confidence in mediation and intervention (Limon 33), we agreed on the importance of producing a readable and culturally adequate translation. We alternated between two approaches for this purpose: an interventionist approach intended to enhance readability of the target text by making changes or rewriting textual segments, and a non-interventionist approach intended to preserve the textual features of the source text by staying close to the original words. Due to space restrictions, only outstandingly significant translation shifts regarding cross-linguistic or intercultural differences are explained here.

The first thorny problem is how to translate the culture-laden title of the original story. First, "Liangzhou Ci" (lit. A Song of Liangzhou) is also the title of a well-known ancient poem mentioned in the story, which is also known as "Chu Sai" (lit. Beyond the Border), and which depicts the desolate scenery of the northwestern border region of the Tang Empire. Second, Liangzhou is a prefecture of the Tang Empire (618-907), whose capital city is Wuwei – the setting of the fabricated anecdote of the Tang poet in the second section of the source text and one of the stops on the protagonist's lengthy trip. However, we deemed it impractical to burden readers with lengthy notes, and hesitated about the choice between an interventionist approach and a non-interventionist one. Upon the suggestion of one of the anonymous peer reviewers of the translation, we opted for a non-interventionist approach and elected to render "Liangzhou Ci" as "A Song of Liangzhou".

A second thorny problem is how to render the culture-specific references in Ge Fei's story (e.g. personal names, place names, poem titles, book and magazine titles). First, the protagonist's name, Lin An, coincides with the name of a southeastern city (Lin'an, the ancient

name of Hangzhou). The original writer seems to use the geographical distance between Lin'an and the northwestern city Wuwei (the setting of the anecdote fabricated by the protagonist in the story) as an indicator of the protagonist's disorientation in a changing society and his isolation from reality. We were thus faced with two options – either to follow the norm for transcribing Chinese names (i.e. spelling the family name and the given name separately and making the family name precede the given name), transcribing the protagonist's name as "Lin An", or to disregard the default pattern, spelling the name as "Lin'an", recalling the name of the southeastern city. After some hesitation we decided to abide by the norm and adopt a non-interventionist approach because English-speaking readers lack the background knowledge to understand the cultural inferences of the second option.

Second, the source text uses both the name Wang Zhihuan as well as an alternative form – the courtesy name Wang Jiling – to avoid repetition. Although this is a culturally specific tradition that is familiar to Chinese readers, a non-interventionist approach to translation will only confuse the English-speaking receiving audience, who might not understand that these names refer to the same person. We therefore adopted an interventionist approach in this instance, and only used Wang Zhihuan as the poet's name, to avoid confusion. We felt that this change, while diluting the cultural specificity of the source text (Tymoczko 224), could help produce a readable target text.

Third, the Chinese original also mentions some place names. To improve the readability of the target text, we adopted a primarily interventionist approach, omitting two place names that seemed unnecessary or irrelevant (i.e. "Aqsu" and "Changsha") and adding geographic location information where we saw fit (e.g. "the northwestern city of Zhangye", "the southeastern seaside city of Shanghai", "Lin traversed diagonally two-thirds of China", "the heartland city of Taiyuan").

Fourth, since the aim is to produce a sense-oriented rather than sign-oriented translation (Limon 36), we alternated between two approaches when translating culture-specific references such as poem titles and book and magazine titles. In cases where we believed that a faithful representation of the original culture-specific reference might mislead the reader, we opted for an interventionist approach and made relevant changes. Otherwise we adopted a non-interventionist approach. For instance, the first paragraph of the third section of the original story mentions *Tang Shi* (lit. *Tang Poems*), which is a well-known abbreviation for *Quan Tang Shi* (lit. *The Complete Tang Poems*). Following an interventionist approach, we stuck to the unabbreviated title of the book and added the descriptive word "authoritative" in the target text to designate the literary status of the collection of poems. Another illustrative example is "Yan Ge Xing" (lit. A Song of the Yan State), a poem by the Tang poet Gao Shi, which is mentioned in the second section of Ge Fei's story. Since a literal rendering of the poem title could leave target readers wondering about the meaning of "the Yan State", we opted for an interventionist approach and translated the poem's title as "The Battle on the Northern Border". Our reasons were twofold: first, the poem describes a bloody battle fought on the northern border, and "the Yan State" does not designate the location of the battlefield; second, "Yan Ge Xing" is one of the preset titles for poems written according to the *yuefu* style (a folk song style well-known in ancient China).

The third challenge lies in bridging crosscultural differences in stylistic preferences. "Writer responsibility is when the burden of communication is on the writer" (McCool 2). It has been contended that English is characterized by writer responsibility (Hinds) and promotes values such as "clarity and concision" (McCool 2); Chinese, on the contrary, is characterized by reader responsibility and "demands more of the reader" (McCool 14). From the perspective of a writer-responsible language, the Chinese style of writing may be wordy, implicit and unclear. In this regard, we endeavoured to produce a readable target text instead of trying to reproduce the original style.

The source text is divided into four sections, which recount, respectively, the narrator's unexpected meeting with Dr Lin An and Lin's frustrating experience with academic research, a fictional anecdote regarding the Tang poet Wang Zhihuan's social life in northwestern China told by Lin, a fictional story regarding the loss of the bulk of Wang Zhihuan's poems and Lin's discussion of Wang's motive in destroying those poems, and the end of the narrator and Lin's conversation on the Tang poet. The author employs four section headings, whose literal translations, following a non-interventionist approach, are as follows: "The chit-chat", "An old tale", "Poems and their disappearance" and "Conclusion". English-language readers would normally expect that section headings of a fictional story and those of an academic article would be written in quite different styles. In contrast, the section headings of the source text are written in a reader-responsible style – being unclear or misleading, they fail to fulfil their primary function, that of clearly summarizing multi-paragraph sections of a fictional story, and instead lend a sense of alienation to the target text, a feature which could distract the attention of the target readers or disrupt the reading experience. We first attempted to adopt an interventionist approach and rewrite the headings. However, having failed to find satisfying substitutes that sounded natural in English, we decided, in the end, to omit the headings. Omission of the four headings makes the last paragraph of the second section strike readers as an irrelevant digression. Literally, this paragraph can be translated as "Lin stayed in the bathroom much longer than I expected. I knew that was not the end of our conversation. In the humming noise of the freezer compressor, the sad face of his wife came to my mind. I had not seen her since their divorce." In order to avoid the perception of irrelevance, we used an interventionist approach and cut out the paragraph to maintain the coherence of the text.

Other stylistic changes (e.g. rewriting or restructuring sentences, combining or splitting paragraphs, eliminating unnecessary or irrelevant details) have also been made to enhance clarity and readability. For instance, as mentioned above, Chinese writing tends to be wordy and often contains unnecessary or irrelevant details, which can be omitted to guarantee a less distracting reading experience. In the fourth paragraph of the first section of the source text, Lin is quoted as saying in one of his academic articles that the opening line of the well-known poem "Shu Dao Nan" (The Perils of Traveling in Sichuan) is "Yi xi hu xu" (噫唏唿嘘), which is a misrepresentation of the original line, "Yi xu xi" (噫吁嚱). The misrepresentation is intended to demonstrate Lin's contempt for scientific rigour. The problem is that both the original line and its misrepresentation are comprised of several interjections that defy a word-for-word approach to translation. Since the mere mention of "the opening line" is enough, we adopted an interventionist approach and omitted the cluster of interjections. In the last section of Ge Fei's story, the second paragraph reads "Light had appeared in the sky, but the sun didn't rise". From the perspective of an English-speaking reader, it provides irrelevant details that disrupt the cohesion and coherence of the text. Hence we cut out this sentence.

The fourth challenge derives from the translation of several segments of the source text portraying the appearance and behaviour of women. Scholars have noticed "the internalized male gaze surveying the female as sex object" (Conway 4) and criticized patriarchal modes of representation. However, maintaining a critical stance does not mean that translators can freely change textual segments to fit their own ideological inclinations. Any ideological intervention on the part of the translator must be justified not only because "translators are normally expected, even assumed, to keep their politics out of their work" (Von Flotow 24), but also because certain changes to the original content may affect the source text's cohesion and coherence. Hence we made only a number of minor textual changes of lingua-cultural rather than political or ideological significance.

Floros has demonstrated the possibility of "a contradiction between theoretical ideals and actual contexts of practice" (65), something we encountered in translating Ge Fei's story. We assumed the role of cultural mediators, with the intention of guaranteeing the survival of

the source text in the target culture by enhancing readability of the target text. We "see it as part of [our] role to intervene" (Limon 31); our choices were based on the aforementioned ethical intention. While we cannot guarantee that all our solutions are optimal, we can guarantee that they are justifiable.

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凉州词

格非

闲谈

作为当代文化研究领域内声名显赫的学者，临安博士近来已渐渐被人们遗忘。四年过去了，我从未得到过他的任何消息。正如外界所传言的那样，不幸的婚姻是导致他最终告别学术界的重要原因。最近一期的《名人》杂志刊发了一篇悼念性质的文章，作者声称，据他刚刚得到的讯息，临安先生现已不在人间，他于一九九三年的六月在新疆的阿克苏死于霍乱。直到今年秋天，当临安博士背着沉重的行囊突然出现在我寓所的门前，上述推断才被证明是无稽之谈。

他是从张掖返回长沙的途中经过上海的。由于那则不负责任的谣传和多年不见的隔膜，我们相见之下令人不快的尴尬是不难想象的。这些年来，世事沧桑，时尚多变，在大部分人忙于积攒金钱的同时，另一些人则自愿弃世而去，我们的谈话始终笼罩着一层抑郁、伤感的气氛，临安博士已不像过去那样健谈，激情和幽默感似乎也已枯竭。我们长时间看着窗外，看着那些花枝招展的少女穿过树林走向食堂，难挨的沉默使我们感到彼此厌倦。

在我的记忆中，临安先生尽管学识丰湛，兴趣广博，却称不上是一个治学严谨的学者，他的研究方式大多建立在猜测和幻想的基础上，甚至带

A Song of Liangzhou

Ge Fei

Translated by Jun Tang and Conrad Bauer

Though Dr Lin An had once established himself as a renowned scholar of cultural studies, he had backed out of the spotlight four years ago, cutting off all contact with his academic colleagues. I had heard nothing about him since then. The rumour, which happened to be true, was that he could not cope with the devastating effects of his divorce. *Celebrities* magazine had recently published a memorial for Lin; the author claimed that, according to freshly-obtained information, Lin had succumbed to cholera in the northwestern border region back in June of 1993. When Lin suddenly showed up at my door weighted down by a heavy backpack, I could not have been more surprised by the gap between reporting and reality.

Travelling from the northwestern city of Zhangye to the southeastern seaside city of Shanghai, Lin traversed diagonally two-thirds of China. Owing to that erroneous report and all these years of estrangement, our unexpected meeting was considerably embarrassing. Much had changed in the last four years, not just for those within our academic circles, but the rest of society as well. While most people busied themselves in amassing personal fortune, others amongst us had willingly forsaken the pursuit of worldly goals. Lin and I carried on our conversation in a melancholic and sentimental mood. He was no longer the passionate and humorous conversationalist I once knew. During the awkward moments of silence that bored both of us, we gazed out the window, watching stylishly dressed co-eds walk through the trees towards the university cafeteria.

For as long as I could remember, Lin would not abide by the expectations of academic rigour, though he was a person of wide knowledge and diverse interests. His research, laced with facetious

有一些玩笑的成分。对于学术界在困难的摸索中渐渐养成的注重事实和逻辑的良好风气，临安常常出言讥诮，语露轻蔑：“捍卫真理的幼稚愿望往往是通向浅薄的最可靠的途径。”

四年前，他将一篇关于李白《蜀道难》的长文寄给了《学术月刊》，从此销声匿迹。在这篇文章中，他一口断定《蜀道难》是一篇伪作。“它只不过是一名隐居蜀川的高人赠给李白的剑谱，其起首一句‘噫唏嘘嘘’便是一出怪招……”《学术月刊》的一名女编辑在给我的信中流露出了明显的不安：“你的那位走火入魔的朋友一定是神经出了问题。”现在看来，这篇文章也许仅仅是临安博士对学术界表示绝望的戏仿之作。

remarks, was based on presumptions and whimsy. As China’s reform-era academics strained to incorporate international standards of scholarship, Lin used to mock their gradual and laborious development of respect for facts and logic: “The childish wish to defend the truth is the surest route to shallowness”. Before he disappeared four years ago, Lin had sent a lengthy contribution to *Academic Monthly* on the poem “The Perils of Travelling in Sichuan” by Li Bai. In the manuscript, he proclaimed that the poem should not in fact be ascribed to the famous Tang Dynasty poet: “It is a manual of sword fighting techniques bequeathed to Li Bai by a reclusive martial artist living in Sichuan. The opening line describes an unidentified fighting technique…” One of the magazine’s editors sent me a letter expressing her concern: “Your eccentric friend must be mentally disturbed.” It is probable that the submission was intended as an ironic expression of his disappointment with the academic world in which he had been unable to find his place.

不过，临安博士并未就此与学术绝缘，这次见面，他还带来了一篇有关王季凌《凉州词》的论文。他告诉我，他写这篇论文的初衷只是为了排遣寂寞，没想到竟意外地治愈了他的失眠症。文章的风格与他的旧作一脉相承，标题却冗长得令人难以忍受。如果删去枝蔓，似乎就可以称做：《王之涣：中唐时期的存在主义者》。

This rejection had not dampened Lin’s enthusiasm for academic writing. He brought with him a recently finished article on “A Song of Liangzhou,” a well-known poem by Wang Zhihuan, a contemporary of Li Bai’s. Lin told me that he began writing the article to dispel feelings of isolation and exclusion. Unexpectedly, the process of writing cured his insomnia. The article was characterized by his signature writing style and an unbearably long title. If I were to take the liberty to present the title in a condensed form, it would read: “Wang Zhihuan: An Existentialist of the Mid-Tang Period.”

旧闻

“普希金说过：湮灭是人的自然命运。我也是最近才明白这句话的真正含义……”临安博士就这样开始了他的论述，并立即提到了有关王之涣的一段旧闻。

Lin’s article began: “Pushkin once remarked that ‘Man’s ineluctable fate is to pass into oblivion.’ It is only recently that I have come to understand his meaning…” In the ensuing paragraphs, Lin commenced his discourse on Wang

在甘肃武威城西大约九华里外的玉树地方，曾有过一座两层偻的木石建筑。现在，除了门前的一对石狮和拴马用柱铁之外，沙漠中已无任何残迹。这幢建筑位于通往敦煌和山丹马场的必经之路上，原本是供过路商旅借宿打尖的客栈。到了开元初年，随着边陲战事的吃紧，大批戍边将士从内地调集武威，这座客栈一度为军队所租用。最后占领这座客栈的是一些狂放不羁的边塞诗人，他们带来了歌妓、乐师和纵酒斗殴的风习，竞夕狂欢，犹如末日将临。

自从世上出现了诗人与歌妓之后，这两种人就彼此抱有好感。但这并不是说，在地僻人稀的塞外沙漠，诗人与歌妓们蚁居一处饮酒取乐，就一定不会发生这样或那样的争执。为了防止流血事件的频繁出现，一个名叫叶修士的诗人在酒后发明一种分配女人的方法，具体程序说来也十分简单：诗人们一般在黄昏时从城里骑马来到这里，随后饮酒赋诗，叙谈酬唱。等到月亮在沙漠中升起，歌妓们便依次从屏风后走出来，开始演唱诗人们新近写成的诗作。只有当歌妓演唱到某位诗人的作品时，这位诗人才有权与她共度良宵。

“这种仪式有些类似于现在在英国流行的‘瞎子约会’，”临安博士

Zhihuan by relating an anecdote about the poet.

In a place that nowadays is nothing but sand, there once stood a two-storied wood and stone building. This was in Yushu, less than three miles away from the city of Wuwei in the remote desert province of Gansu. The preserved traces of this long-forgotten building are two stone guardian lions and an iron hitching post. The vanished building initially served as a caravansary for merchants and travellers on what was once the only route to the Shandan Horse Farm and Dunhuang. When in the early eighth century military forces were called into Wuwei from inland areas to help secure the border against invading nomads, officers and soldiers requisitioned the inn to serve as their lodgings. Later, its rooms were occupied by a group of free-spirited frontier poets, together with musicians and courtesans, whose revels often lasted until dawn.

We know from even the earliest written records that poets and courtesans have long possessed a natural affinity for each other. But when sardined into this isolated inn drinking and carousing on the edge of the uninhabited desert, they inevitably came to quarrelling over one matter or another. Desperate action was needed to reduce the frequency of bloodshed. In a moment of drunken inspiration, a poet named Ye Xiushi devised a method for distributing the courtesans amongst the poets. The procedure was exceedingly simple: the poets usually arrived at the inn on horseback at dusk. They wrote as they drank, bantering and composing responses to their friends’ poems. When the moon rose above the desert horizon, the courtesans appeared one by one from behind a screen, singing one of the recently finished poems. The poet whose poem the courtesan sang won the privilege of her company for the evening.

“To a degree, the procedure shares similarities to a blind date,” Lin explained.

解释道，“它使得传统的嫖娼行径更具神秘性质，而且带有一种浓烈的文化色彩。”

自从王之涣贬官来到武威之后，就成了这座客栈的常客，遗憾的是，他的诗作从未有幸被歌妓们演唱过。根据后代学者的分析，王季凌在这里备受冷落，除了他“相貌平平，神情犹疑”，不讨女人们喜欢之外，最重要的原因是他的诗歌不适合演唱。情况确也是如此，让一个卖弄风情、趣味浅俗的歌妓大声吟唱“黄河远上……”一类的词句，的确有些过分。不过，不久之后发生的一件事似乎完全出乎人们意料。这件事显然不属于正史记述的范畴，清代沈德潜在其《唐诗别裁》一书中对这段旧闻偶有涉及，但描述却极不准确。

这天晚上，诗人们的聚会依旧像往常一样举行。只是听说客栈新来了几名歌妓，诗人们的情绪略微有些激动。第一个从屏风后面走出来的是一名身材臃肿的当地女子。大概是因为此人长相粗劣，诗人们的目光显得有些躲躲闪闪，惊惶不安，唯恐从她的嘴里唱出自己的诗篇。这位姑娘用她绿豆般的小眼扫视了一遍众人，最后将目光落在了高适的身上。她唱了一段《燕歌行》。人们在长长地松了一口气之后，都用同情的目光看着高适。高适本人对此却有不同的看法，他低声地对邻座的王之涣说道：“这个姑娘很可爱，我喜欢她的臀部。”

接着出场的这名歌妓虽然长相不俗，但毕竟已是明日黄花。她似乎被王昌龄高大、英俊的外表迷住了，曾经异想天开地用一把剪刀逼着王昌龄与她结婚。她每次出场，总是演唱王昌龄的诗作，因此，其余的诗人对她不会存有非分之想。果然，她这次所

“It lent seeking professional pleasure a sense of mystery and refinement.”

After Wang Zhihuan was demoted from his position in the central government and exiled to Wuwei to serve as a low-ranking official, he became a regular patron of this inn. Yet not once had any of the courtesans sung one of his poems. Later generations of scholars believed that Wang Zhihuan’s poems were neglected for two reasons: the poet’s “plain looks and unconfident demeanour” failed to win him the favour of the fairer sex, and, more importantly, his compositions were not easily put to music. It would be unimaginable for a coquettish and shallow courtesan to sing aloud his majestic verses.

At a certain point, the situation took an unexpected twist. Though official histories paid it no heed, an inexact account was rendered in the eighteenth-century work *A Collection of Tang Poetry* by Shen Deqian.

One evening, the poets gathered at the inn as usual. A rumour had circulated that several new escorts had arrived at the inn, which boosted the spirits of the poets. Appearing first from behind the screen was a plump, plain-looking local girl. The poets kept their heads down, each one fearing that she would sing one of his compositions. Glancing around, the girl’s beady eyes fell on Gao Shi as she sang a stanza of his poem “The Battle on the Northern Border”. The other poets all breathed a sigh of relief, looking at Gao Shi sympathetically. Gao Shi did not seem the least bit put off: “This girl is adorable; I like her backside,” he whispered to Wang Zhihuan, sitting next to him.

The next courtesan was good-looking, but she was a fixture at the inn, and well past her prime. She was obsessed with the tall and handsome poet Wang Changling; in one encounter, she had impulsively menaced him with a pair of scissors, demanding a marriage proposal. Every time she appeared onstage she sang

唱，又是那首老掉牙的《出塞》。王昌龄看上去虽有几分扫兴，但仍不失优雅风度，他谦虚地嘿嘿一笑：“温习温习……”

时间就这样过得很快。王之涣似乎已有了一丝睡意。在这次聚会行将结束时，从屏风后面突然闪出一个女人。她的出现立即使王季凌困倦全消。

关于这个女人的美貌，历来存有不同的说法。有人称她“玉臂清辉，光可鉴人”，有人则说“仪态矜端，顾盼流波，摄人心魄”。不管怎么说，这些评论在某一点上是一致的：她的身上既有成熟女人的丰韵，又有少女般的纯洁清新。她所演唱的诗作正是王季凌的《凉州词》。

看上去，这个端庄、俊美的女人并未受过基本的音乐训练。她的嗓音生涩、稚拙，缺乏控制，一名衰老的琴师只能即兴为她伴奏，徒劳无益地追赶着她的节拍。她的眼中饱含泪水，仿佛歌唱本身给她带来的只是难以明说的羞辱。

“如果有人决心喝下一杯毒酒，最好的办法莫过于一饮而尽，”临安对我说，“她就是在这样一种交织着犹豫、悔恨以及决定迅速了却一桩心愿的急躁之中，唱完了这支曲子，然后不知所措地看着众人。”

短暂的沉默过后，人们看见王之涣干咳了两声，从椅子上站起身来，朝这名歌妓走去。他脸上的冷漠一如往常，勉强控制着失去平衡的身体。他甚至连看都没看她一眼—就像这个女人根本不存在似的，匆匆绕过她身旁的几只酒坛，径直来到了屋外。

深秋的沙漠中寒气袭人，沙粒被西风吹散，在空中碰撞着，发出蜜蜂般嗡嗡的鸣响。借着客栈的灯光，他

one of Wang Changling’s poems, so none of the poets had bothered to give her a second look. As expected, the courtesan sang “Beyond the Border”. Although Wang Changling looked upset, he conducted himself with grace. Smiling modestly, he said, “For old times’ sake…”

Time flew by quickly; Wang Zhihuan felt a little drowsy. Just as the evening was about to conclude, a woman emerged whose presence instantly dispelled the poet’s lethargy.

There are multiple descriptions of the woman’s beauty, either marvelling at her “jade-like, smooth arms” or acclaiming her as “a demure lady with alluring eyes”. Observers were invariably impressed by her unique blend of femininity and innocence. She sang Wang Zhihuan’s “A Song of Liangzhou.”

It was obvious that this gentle and attractive woman had not received even the most basic vocal training. She sang awkwardly, seemingly unable to control her voice. An aged accompanist improvised on the zither, trying in vain to keep pace with her erratic tempo. The woman sang with tearful eyes as if experiencing some unspeakable humiliation.

“If a person has decided to drink a glass of poisoned wine, he’d better empty his glass in one gulp,” Lin drew a comparison. “The woman finished singing in just this kind of hasty manner, probably with regret. She stood there, bewildered, looking out at the group of poets.”

While the audience looked back in silence, Wang Zhihuan cleared his throat twice and rose from his chair. He walked past the woman and the wine jars beside her without giving her a single glance, all the while keeping his balance and faking nonchalance. It was as if the woman were completely non-existent to him.

Outside, in that cold autumn night, wind-blown sands whipped against each other, making a droning sound. In the

在一排倒坍的栅栏边找到了那匹山丹马。接着，他开始流泪。客栈里传来了酒罐被砸碎的破裂之声，那名歌妓发出了惊恐的尖叫。

“现在，我们已经知道，那名歌妓正是王季凌的妻子。”临安故作平静地说，“这件事说起来有些令人难以置信，但它毕竟是事实。你知道，当时在玉树的这座客栈定期举行的诗人聚会与如今港台地区盛行的流行歌曲排行榜并无二致，在那个年代，它几乎完全操纵着武威这个弹丸小城附庸风雅的文化消费。王之涣的妻子平常足不出户，丈夫频繁的终夜不归使她颇费猜测。在一个偶然的机会，她从一个上门来兜售枸杞子的穆斯林口中知道了玉树客栈所发生的一切，丈夫在那里遭受的冷落不禁让她忧心如焚。后来，她慢慢想出了一个办法……”

“看来，这个女人对于诗歌艺术有一种狂热的爱好……”我对临安说。

“仅仅是一种爱好而已。而且这种爱好也仅仅是因为她的丈夫恰好是一名诗人。那时的女人们就是这样，假如她的丈夫是一个牙科医生，那么她就会莫名其妙地对拔牙用的老虎钳产生亲近之感。事实上，她对诗歌几乎一窍不通。在太原时，她曾对王之涣的那首《登鹳雀楼》提出质疑，按照她的逻辑，欲穷千里目，更上一层楼是远远不够的，起码也应该一口气爬上四五层楼，因为这样才能看得更远。王之涣怎么向她解释都无法说服她。最后，他只得将妻子带到那座即将倒塌的鹳雀楼前。‘你瞧，这座楼总共只有三层，’王之涣耐心地解释道，‘我写这首诗的时候是在二楼…

glow of the light emanating from the inn, Wang Zhihuan spotted his Shandan horse beside a toppled fence. Suddenly, tears ran down his cheeks. From inside the guesthouse, the sound of breaking wine jars was followed by a frightened shriek from the woman.

“We now know that the courtesan was Wang Zhihuan’s wife in disguise,” Lin said with feigned calmness. “However incredible it may sound, it’s true. You see, during the mid-Tang period, the regular poet gatherings at the inn in Yushu had an influence comparable to the Taiwan and Hong Kong singles charts nowadays. At that time, those gatherings served as the invisible hand guiding the cultural trends of the nearby city of Wuwei. Wang Zhihuan’s wife, who rarely left home, had become paranoid about her husband’s frequent absences. She soon learned what was happening at the inn from a Muslim hawker selling dried Chinese wolfberries. Concern for her husband’s possibly damaged self-esteem gnawed at her constantly. In the end, she thought of a ruse to prevent the situation from worsening.”

“Well, the woman must have been a passionate lover of poetry,” I chimed in.

“An amateur enthusiast. It is simply because her husband was a poet. A woman in pre-modern China was like that: if her husband were a dentist, she would undoubtedly take a liking to forceps. In fact, Wang Zhihuan’s wife knew nothing about poetic composition. When the couple was living in the heartland city of Taiyuan, the wife questioned the logic behind her husband’s composition, ‘On White Stork Tower’. The last two lines of the poem read: ‘An even grander panorama of the mountains and the Yellow River will stretch out before you / should you ascend the stairs to the next floor’. According to her line of reasoning, one has to climb at least four or five floors up to enjoy that kind of view.

…’他话音刚落，妻子便不好意思地笑了起来，露出一排洁白的牙齿：我明白啦。因此，这件不幸事情的发生仅仅与爱情有关。在我看来，所谓爱情，不是别的，正是一种病态的疯狂。”

Unable to persuade her to come to terms with the poem, Wang Zhihuan had no choice but to take her to visit the shabby tower. Upon their arrival, Wang Zhihuan said, ‘There! The tower only has three floors; I wrote my poem while standing on the second one.’ His wife grinned, embarrassed, ‘Now I understand.’

“So, it’s clear that the wife’s sole motivation for impersonating a courtesan was her love for her husband. As far as I can see, love is no more than a morbid fascination.”

“也许还是一种奢侈。”我附和道。

“确实如此，”临安站起身来，似乎准备去上厕所，“在王之涣身上发生的这件事已经远远超出了悲剧的范畴。按照现在流行的观点来看，它正是荒谬。类似的事在我们这个时代倒是俯拾即是。”

“Perhaps also a kind of luxury,” I chipped in.

“Absolutely.” Lin stood up and moved toward the bathroom. “Taking a contemporary perspective, what Wang Zhihuan had gone through was not only pathetic, but absurd. Similar examples of this absurdity abound in our present age.”

临安在厕所里有好长一段时间没有出来。我知道，我们的谈话远远没有结束。在冰箱压缩机单调的哼哼声中，我的眼前浮现出临安妻子那副忧戚的面容。自从她与临安离婚之后，我就再也没有见过她。

诗作及其散佚

众所周知，王之涣在十三四岁的少年时代即已开始了写作的生涯，四十年后在文安县尉的任上死于肺气肿，身后仅余六首诗传世。这些诗作后虽被收入《唐诗》，但经过考证，《宴词》等四首亦属伪托之作，“移花接木，殊不可信”。因此，准确地说，王之涣留给后人的诗篇只有两首，这就是脍炙人口的《凉州词》和《登鹳雀楼》。

It is common knowledge that Wang Zhihuan began his writing career in his early teens and died of emphysema in his fifties. Only six of his works were compiled in the authoritative *The Complete Tang Poems*. Yet after careful examination, scholars have concluded that four of these compositions are false attributions. Thus, only two of his poems have been recognized as authentic – “A Song of Liangzhou” and “On White Stork Tower”, both of which remain popular to this day.

临安博士告诉我，他在张掖、武威一带滞留时，曾在一家私人藏书楼中读到李士佑所撰木刻本的《唐十才子传》。作者的生卒年月皆不可考。其境界俗陋，引证亦多穿凿附会之处

Resuming the conversation, Lin told me that he had stayed for sometime in Zhangye, Wuwei, and nearby areas, where he came upon a woodblock edition of *Biographies of Ten Talented Writers of the Tang Dynasty*, by one Li Shiyou, whose personal information cannot be traced.

，但却以一种极不自信的笔调暗示了王季凌诗作散佚的全部秘密。

按照李士佑的解释，王之涣病卧床榻数月之后，自知在世之日无多，便在一个豪雨之夜将自己的全部诗作付之一炬，而将《凉州词》与《登鹳雀楼》分别抄录在两张扇面上赠给长年跟随的仆佣，聊作纪念之表。

对于王季凌自焚诗稿的原因，李士佑认为，这是王季凌渴望身后不朽的一种冒险。他进而做了一个象征性的说明：假如世上仅剩一对价值连城的花瓶，你砸碎其中的一只，不仅不会有任何损失，相反会使另外一只的价值于顷刻之间成倍地增值……

“这种描述的可笑与浅薄是不难证明的，”临安博士一谈起这件事，就显得愤愤难平，“我们知道，王之涣生前对于自己诗作的公之于众极为谨慎，即便是惠送知己、酬赠美人也往往十分吝啬，这种怪癖后来直接引发了他与高适、王昌龄二人的反目。如果王之涣像李氏所说的那样爱慕名声的话，那么他现在的地位已不在李、杜之下。”

在临安博士的这篇论文里，他用了很长的篇幅描绘了许多年前的那个风雨之夜，行文中处处透出苍劲和悲凉。但我不知道他的描述在多大程度上是真实的。当我留意到他的那张形同朽木的脸颊以及额上的茎茎白发，我知道，事实上我无权向他提出这样的疑问。

“即便是一个理智正常、神经坚强的人，也不免会产生出自我毁灭的念头，”过了一会儿，临安换了一种较为柔和的语调说道，“这种念头与他们在现世遭受的苦难及伤害的记忆有关。一般来说，这种记忆是永远无

The volume was poorly written, citing flimsy evidence and containing many far-fetched interpretations. As for the mysterious disappearance of Wang Zhihuan’s poetry, Li offered a dubious explanation.

One night during a heavy rain, Wang Zhihuan calligraphed “A Song of Liangzhou” and “On White Stork Tower” onto two unfolded fans before burning the transcriptions of the remaining poems in his corpus. At that point, he had already lain on his sickbed for months. Knowing that he would soon depart this world, he gave the two fans to his servants as a token of his friendship. Li Shiyou believed that Wang Zhihuan took a gamble, destroying his other poems in hopes of consolidating his reputation as a leading poet. Li presented this analogy: imagine a pair of priceless vases; breaking one of them would only increase the value of the other…

“This line of reasoning is ridiculous and superficial,” Lin said indignantly. “We know that Wang Zhihuan was very cautious about disseminating his poetry. He seldom dedicated his poems to anyone, including his friends. This stubbornness even led to estrangement from his poet friends Gao Shi and Wang Changling. If what Wang Zhihuan really craved was literary fame, he could have been as celebrated as Li Bai or Du Fu.”

In his article, Lin wrote in detail about that dismal night when Wang Zhihuan allegedly destroyed the lion’s share of his poems. The piece made for compelling reading, but I couldn’t help doubting the truthfulness of the story. Looking up, I caught a glimpse of Lin’s withered face and white hairs. I knew then that I was not in a position to question him.

“Even a reasonable and strong-willed person is occasionally tempted by the idea of self-destruction.” Lin paused for a moment, then spoke in a gentler tone. “Likely it stems from old wounds and unforgettable trauma. These ineffaceable memories still have the capacity to

法消除的，它通常会将人的灵魂引向虚无缥缈的时间以及种种未知事物的思索，尽管逃脱的愿望往往带来绝望。正如曹雪芹后来总结的那样：世上所存的一切说到底只不过是镜花水月而已。”

临安的一番话又将我带向过去的岁月。早在几年前，他的妻子在给我的一封信中已预示出他们婚姻行将崩溃的种种征兆。这封信是用俄文写成的，她心事重重地提到，临安近来的状态让她十分忧虑，也使她感到恐惧。因为“他在不经意的言谈中已渐渐流露出了对地狱的渴望……”

“说到王之涣，倒使我想起一个人来，”临安用手指敲打脑壳，似乎想竭力回忆起他的名字，“一个犹太人……”

“你说的是不是里尔克？”

“不，是卡夫卡，”临安纠正道，同时由于兴奋，他的脖子再度绽出青筋，“王之涣焚诗的举动常使我想起卡夫卡忧郁的面容。他们都死于肺病，在婚姻上屡遭不幸；他们都有过同样的愿望—随着自己的消失，在人世间不留任何痕迹，但都没有获得成功—世人往往出于好心而弄巧成拙，使这些孤傲的魂灵不得安宁。在这一点上，马克斯·布洛德的行径是不可原谅的。”

“你的意思是不是说，王之涣的自甘湮灭与他对这个世界的仇恨有关？”

“仇恨仅仅是较为次要的原因，”临安说，“况且，对于王之涣的身世，我们知道得很少，问题在于，王之涣已经窥破尘世这座废墟的性质，并且谦卑地承受了它。这一点，我以为，他在《凉州词》一诗中已说得十分清楚。”

“你在这篇论文中似乎还提到了地理因素……”

“沙漠，”临安解释道，“王之涣长年生活的那个地区最常见的事物

dampen one’s spirits, engendering a vain desire for seclusion and hopeless speculation on the unknowable. Cao Xueqin is right in saying that in the end all things in this world are nothing but flowers in a mirror and the moon’s reflection on the water.”

Lin’s comments reminded me of a letter his wife had sent to me; it was written in Russian and suggested that their marriage was teetering on the brink of divorce. She mentioned that she was seriously concerned about Lin, whose mental state alarmed her. “His casual conversations gradually betray a desire for self-destruction…”

“Our discussion of Wang Zhihuan brings to mind a Jewish writer…” Lin attempted to recall the name, tapping his head with his fingers.

“Do you mean Rilke?”

“No, it’s Kafka I’m thinking of,” Lin said. “Wang Zhihuan reminds me of Kafka. They both were unsatisfied with their relationships and died from lung-related diseases. They even shared the same wish: to leave no trace behind after death. For both of them, this wish went unfulfilled. They were immortalized: people, out of goodwill, tend to do the opposite of help. They just would not leave these writers’ souls in peace. Max Brod’s acts against Kafka’s last will were truly unforgivable.”

“Are you suggesting that Wang Zhihuan’s hatred of this world is the reason he yearned for oblivion?”

“Hatred is only a minor factor here,” Lin responded. “Besides, we know little about Wang Zhihuan’s personal history. The point is: he already understood the nature of this world as a heap of ruins, humbly accepting it. In my opinion, he made the point quite clear in ‘A Song of Liangzhou’.”

“Your article mentions a geographical factor…”

“It’s the desert,” Lin explained. “Wang Zhihuan lived in an area bordering

就是沙漠。在任何时代，沙漠都是一种致命的隐喻。事实上，我离开甘肃几天之后，依然会梦见它在身后追赶着我所乘坐的那趟火车。我走到哪里，它就跟到哪里。我在想，如果这个世界如人们所说的那样有一个既定的进程的话，毫无疑问，那便是对沙漠的模仿。”

结 论

“你无需考虑别人的命运，却也不能将自己的命运交给别人去承担，这就是我在这篇文章中所要表达的基本思想。”临安在做了这样一个简短的总结之后，我们之间的谈话就结束了。

天已经亮了，不过太阳还没有出来。

临安博士走到我的书橱前，大概是想随便抽出一本书来翻翻。

他在那里一站就是很久。

书橱的隔板上搁着一件工艺品玩具：用椰壳雕成的一头长尾猴。

它是临安以他与妻子的名义送我的纪念品。当时，他们新婚不久，刚从海南回来。我记得，那是一个遥远的午后，他们俩手拉着手，站在我的窗下，她头上别着的一枚银色发箍，在阳光下，闪闪发亮。

the desert. ‘Desert’ is a timeless metaphor for death. In fact, several days after I had left Gansu, I was still dreaming that the desert was chasing after my train. If, as people say, the world has some predetermined agenda, it undoubtedly concerns exemplifying the metaphorical meaning of the desert.”

“What I’m trying to make clear in my article is, let others determine their destiny, and take yours into your own hands.” Lin ended our conversation at dawn with this brief summary.

Lin walked over to the bookshelf, looking as if he wanted to flip through one of the volumes. For a long time, he stood there motionlessly. A handmade toy sat on one shelf, a monkey carved from a coconut shell. Lin and his wife had given it to me after returning from a tour of Hainan Island. I could still recall the image of the newly married couple holding hands and standing beside my window; the silvery hair band of his wife glittered in the afternoon sunlight.

Translating Stefan Hertmans

NYNKE VAN DER SCHAAF

Stefan Hertmans is a novelist, poet, philosopher and essayist of note in his native Belgium. He is Flemish and writes in the Dutch language, though naturally, in bilingual Belgium, he is also fluent in French. His work has long been available in translation within the European cultural world, but so far only *Intercities*, a book of travel essays, has been published in English for the general market. This is about to change.

In August 2013 *Oorlog en Terpentijn* was published, a magnificent work of fiction inspired by the World War I diaries of Hertmans' grandfather. It is the story of a small man in the Great War, a man who longs all his life to become an artist. The book was an immediate success in the Netherlands and Belgium, and by the end of September 2013 was in its fourth reprint. At the Frankfurt Book Fair in October, translation rights were rapidly sold to eminent international publishing houses in France, Germany, Italy, Scandinavia, the UK, America and Australia amongst others. The book is scheduled for release in its English translation in 2016; its title will be *War and Turpentine.*

The book I have translated, with the consent and cooperation of the author, is an earlier novel entitled *Naar Merelbeke*, English title *To Blackbird Creek*. Recently Stefan Hertmans wrote me the following illuminating comment regarding *Naar Merelbeke*, and I translate: "That book is a first 'genealogical proof', there still in the form of a grotesque fairytale, which now in *War and Turpentine* becomes a true epic." *To Blackbird Creek* is the beguiling story of a young, unnamed boy, growing up in a polder village during the 1950s and 60s. He's a sensitive boy, creative, with a vivid imagination, not too sure of his place in the world, and so on. The story is told in the first person and this allows for the reality shifts, time shifts, blurring of lines, dreams and fantasies, which inhabit the boy's mind. Throughout we hear a hint of the narrator's adult voice, giving an edge to the story. In the first chapter a calamity befalls the young boy; he has been dozing, all alone, in a charmed spot in the vast polder, when on the way home, he loses his right leg in a most bizarre manner. This sets up the sense of ambiguity that pervades the novel – can this be true? Stylistically this expresses itself in a light ironic tone, conveyed by misunderstandings, innuendos, *double entendres*, translingual puns and hidden meanings. Clearly the translator has to be alert to this linguistic playfulness.

In the three consecutive chapters I have chosen, we are introduced to the enigmatic figure of uncle Doresta. His very name poses a challenge to the translator, its meaning not made manifest until the end of the novel, when an intricate Flemish dialect wordplay is revealed. How to convey this in English? In the end the author and I decided upon Luke Hericums as a good solution, though its ultimate meaning still lies buried within. In the chapter *A Hundred or None*, we are told uncle Hericums' joke about clocks and towers, French punning, which the children understand and enjoy. But a little later, Hericums introduces sexual innuendo in a reference to the "salt and sweet" of French fries and applesauce, and this the boy does not understand. He is confused by the ambiguous remarks, suggestions and actions, which his uncle

presents him with. There is always something in the air when Hericums is around – a foil to the boy's innocence in the face of his own sexual awakening.

In an earlier chapter, linguistic duality becomes a part of the narrative. It is based on the *double entendre* "valse lente", which to the Dutch eye reads as a "false spring" and to the French reader as a "slow waltz". I decided to name the chapter "Valse Lente" (unlike the Dutch original), in the hope of setting up a little tease for the French-literate English reader. Then I proceeded to the punch line, where Hericums reveals to the boy the other meaning of the words he has written, a slow waltz. Of course he mocks our little hero in the process: and what would you know about a slow waltz? Words are no longer reliable, they befuddle, they lose their meaning.

In these chapters we also meet *tante* Alphonsine, Hericums' wife. She is French, from Rouen, and speaks French exclusively. Language here becomes an indicator of class, of superiority, of otherness. Whenever she speaks I have chosen to retain the italicized French words, followed by a translation for the English reader (the author does not provide a translation in the original). Where single French words occur, and they are recognizable, I may let them be, in order to involve the reader in this bilingual world, for example "tante" for 'aunt'. Distinctions between Dutch, Flemish, regional dialect and argot are tackled on an individual basis. A case in point is the description of Hericums' daughters as "wreed schoon"; literally this means "cruelly beautiful", but in Ghent the adverb is now commonly used to indicate "very". I considered this too tame and settled on "devastatingly beautiful". Again, I have chosen to use "uncle" Hericums as designation, but "nuncle" in spoken dialogue, a nod to the Flemish "nonkel".

This novel is interspersed with lyrical passages of great beauty – the death of the boy's grandmother, the silent flooding of the village plain, the birches of the Russian steppes. There is a taste of this descriptive exuberance in the chapter "The Military Parade Ground", where the boy dreams of an underground city – frantic activity and human warmth under the surface of the earth, wind-swept desolation above, reality turned on its head. In other passages, the smooth surface of the water hides a treacherous space, where you might lose your way, drown or suffocate.

Indeed, water is ever-present. The unique nature of the polders, reclaimed land, open and low-lying, intersected with drainage channels, provides a particular challenge to the translator. The nature and names of a native landscape always do. In this context, I wish I could find a worthy equivalent for the word "sloot". The ancient man-made watery ditches of the lowlands, lined with reeds and covered with duckweed, brim with life; birds, fish and frogs populate them, children catch tadpoles, youths leap over them, lovers lie in their lee, everyone skates when winter freezes them over. "Ditch" hardly seems an adequate word here, yet it is enlivened by Stefan Hertmans' rich storytelling.

Naar Merelbeke, its name holds an illusion. And so the translation of the title must be literal, *To Blackbird Creek.*

Naar Merelbeke
Stefan Hertmans

Honderd en Zonder

Als Doresta langskwam, veranderde het hele huis. Mijn moeder werd een beetje een jong meisje, ze hing aan de hals van haar halfbroer, het huis werd vervuld van sigarerook, mijn grootvader dronk met Doresta van 's ochtends vroeg al *Elixir d'Anvers,* er werd over vroeger gesproken, de tafel werd elke dag feestelijk gedekt, Doresta stond soms alleen in de *serre* en las zichzelf in het Frans hardop gedichten voor, schoot dan in een bulderende lach, schudde het hoofd om wat hij had gelezen bij die *gaillard van ne Rimbaud,* sloeg mijn vader op de rug en noemde hem *ne goeie garçon.* Op een dag kwam hij van een wandeling terug, zag mijn moeder in de keuken bij het fornuis bezig, liep omzichtig naar de pomp, stak er zijn hand onder, en streelde haar toen over haar wang. Wel meiske, zei hij, ik ben just efkens gaan pipi doen, maar ik kan het niet laten u te strelen zie. Mijn moeder sloeg hem gilletjes slakend van zich af. Zo kende ik haar niet.

Doresta had vroeger in Tournai gewoond, in het Vlaams Doornik, maar dat vond hij maar flauw. Tournai, dat was zijn stad, een provinciestad met stand en trots, met een kerk die *cinq tours et quat' cent cloches* had, vierhonderd klokken dus, zoals hij niet naliet te zeggen, waarop wij het grapje moesten verbeteren en zeggen *quat' sans cloches, nonkel!* Want de kerk van Doornik had jammer genoeg maar één toren met een klok. Zo, helemaal als die torens die zogezegd vijfhonderd klokken hadden maar uiteindelijk vier torens zonder klok bleken te zijn, op diezelfde manier galmde Doresta zelf. Alles leek beter, opwindender, spannender dan het feitelijk was. Nonkel Doresta had iets van een tovenaar, dat was me als kind al duidelijk geweest, en toen hij later op die ongelooflijke manier aan zijn einde kwam (iets waarover ik pas hoorde toen ik al lang geen kind meer was), werd eigenlijk iets absurds bevestigd, al had hij

To Blackbird Creek
Stefan Hertmans
Translated by Nynke van der Schaaf

A Hundred and None

Whenever Hericums came by, a change would come over the whole household. My mother would be like a young girl, she'd wrap her arms around the neck of her half-brother, the house was filled with cigar smoke, my grandfather would drink *Elixir d'Anvers* with Hericums from early morning, there was much talk about the past, the table was set festively every day, Hericums would occasionally stand alone in the sunroom reading French poems out loud to himself, and then bellow with laughter, shake his head in astonishment at the poem he'd just been reading by that *knave of a Rimbaud,* slap my father on the back and call him *ne goeie garçon* – my good man. One day he came back from a walk, saw my mother busy at the stove, walked circumspectly to the pump, put his hand under it, and then came over and stroked her cheek. Well girlie, he said, I've just had a pee, but I can't help it, I just have to stroke you, see? My mother shook him off, squealing with laughter. I had never seen her like that.

Uncle Hericums had formerly lived in Tournai – Doornik in Flemish, but he thought that was a bit feeble. Tournai, that was his town, a provincial town of proud standing, with a church which had *cinq tours et quatre cents cloches,* that is five towers with four hundred clocks, as he would not fail to say, whereupon we had to correct his little joke and say *quat' sans cloches*, *nuncle*! That is, four without clocks, because the church of Doornik, sad to say, had only one tower with a clock. So, just like those towers, which ostensibly had five hundred clocks, but in the end were four towers without clocks, in the same manner Hericums himself boomed forth. Everything appeared better, more exciting and thrilling than it really was. Uncle Hericums had something of the magician about him, that had been clear to me even as a child, and when later he met his

daar waarschijnlijk minder de hand in gehad dan de bedoeling was.

Doresta was sinds kort weduwnaar, maar dat hij daarom alleen maar triest of neerslachtig zou zijn, dat was een misrekening van onze kant. Wel had hij nu meer tijd om langs te komen. Want Doresta was van plan tenminste enkele weken te blijven logeren. Zijn vrouw was een dochter van goeden huize geweest, de dochter van de burgemeester van Rouen, een beetje lichtzinnig en mooi, en eentalig: ze sprak uitsluitend *en français*. Doresta deed allles voor haar, behalve ophouden andere vrouwen het hof te maken. Hij maakte het eten klaar, deed de boodschappen, maakte het huis schoon, kocht dure spullen voor haar, en tante Alphonsine bleef in haar stoel zitten tronen en lachen. Ze hadden een riante burgerwoning achter het grote militaire oefenplein, en vanuit hun veranda kon je nog een aftandse tank zien staan, toen in de jaren vijftig. Ze hadden *chauffage uit Brussel*, twee beeldschone dochters die me waanzinnig verlegen maakten, en nonkel Doresta maakte *pommes frites* met appelmoes voor ons, zodat 'we leerden dat zoet en zout goed samengaan, onthou dat maar voor later menneke'. Waarop het gezelschap in een voor mij onbegrijpelijk gegrinnik uitbarstte.

Doresta had een eervolle militaire carrière achter de rug. Hij liep met verende pas met mijn vader en grootvader over het oefenplein in Tournai terwijl tante Alphonsine een kleine siësta nam – nog zoiets wat me helemaal onbegrijpelijk voorkwam: bij ons thuis ging niemand slapen overdag.

Ach – Tournai op zondag, nog bijna geen auto's, de geur van paardemest op het oefenplein, het Delfts blauw in het hoge toilet, mijn giechelende nichtjes, en dan die ene keer dat we naar de zolder geslopen waren en we daar een onbegrijpelijke installatie zagen staan, alles van Doresta, met kolven en glazen, met meetlatten en kruidenpotten, met dikke vieze vloeistof, met

end in that unbelievable manner (which I only found out about much later, when I was no longer a child), something absurd was confirmed, even though he probably had less of a hand in it than was intended.

Hericums had not long been a widower, but to think that this would make him a totally sad and dejected figure was a miscalculation on our part. He certainly had more time to call on us now. In fact he planned to come and stay with us for a few weeks. His wife had come from a good family, the daughter of the mayor of Rouen, beautiful and somewhat frivolous, and monolingual: she spoke exclusively *en français*. Hericums did everything for her, except refrain from courting other women. He prepared the meals, did the shopping, cleaned the house, bought her expensive stuff, whilst *tante* Alphonsine sat enthroned on her favourite chair, smiling and alluring. They had a spacious, bourgeois house behind the large military parade ground, and from their veranda, at that time in the fifties, you could still see a dilapidated army tank left there from the war. They had central heating from Brussels, two stunningly beautiful daughters, who made me insanely bashful, and uncle Hericums cooked *pommes frites* – fries with apple sauce for us, so we could "learn that sweet and salt go well together, just remember that for later, little man". Whereupon the whole gathering burst into chuckles, quite inexplicable to me.

Hericums had enjoyed an honourable military career. He walked with buoyant step across the square in Tournai, accompanied by my father and grandfather, whilst *tante* Alphonsine was taking a little siesta, yet another thing that struck me as inexplicable – at our place nobody ever went to sleep during the day.

Ah – Tournai on a Sunday, hardly any cars yet, the smell of horse manure on the parade ground, the Delft blue of the lofty lavatory, my two giggling cousins, and then that time that we crept up to the attic and came upon an intricate installation belonging to Hericums, with flasks and glasses, with measuring rods and spice pots, with thick,

schraapmessen en scalpels, en op een oude kast een foetus in een vles. Blauw zat het monstertje, als het ware met zijn duim in zijn koude mond, ons aan te kijken met van die grote insektogen, drijvend in een vaaggroene vloeistof. Een van mijn nichtjes wilde de fles van de kast pakken, ze donderde van de bijgeschoven stoel, de fles wankelde, trilde, ging even uit evenwicht, helde over de kastrand boven haar hoofd en bleef toen, nog wat nawankelend, net op de rand toch staan. We vluchtten van de zolder weg. Door het raampje op de hoogste overloop zagen we mijn moeder gearmd met mijn vader lopen, en Doresta liep er met breed zwaaiende gebaren en sigaren rokend naast. Een van mijn nichtjes legde haar arm om mijn schouder terwijl wij hen zo stonden te bespieden. En kijk, achter een struik zagen we tante Alphonsine staan. Ze was aan het bessen plukken, maar het was duidelijk dat ze ook een beetje probeerde te luistervinken wat daar allemaal in het *Flamand* besproken werd. We stonden te giechelen, mijn jongste nichtje pulkte in haar mooie wipneus en keek daarbij stralend uit haar grote bruine ogen. *Tu vois,* zei ze, *ma mère est toujours un peu seule.* Ik knikte begrijpend en rook hoe lekker haar adem was.

We liepen de trappen af en gingen achter elkaar aan zitten op het grote oefenplein. Ik kroop boven op de oude tank en maakte schietgeluiden in de richting van de twee blonde paardestaartjes. Als ze dan even later proestend wegrenden en me geen blik meer gunden, ging ik zitten kijken naar de huizen aan de overkant van het reusachtige plein. Ik zag allerlei diepe sporen in de modder, en in de verte, door de autoloze straten, kwam een man aanlopen met een paard aan de teugel. Kijk, hoorde ik Doresta zeggen, dat is tegen de kolieken in de buik. Ik begreep dat niet goed. Dacht dat het tegen zoiets als de katholieken was. Maar hoe kwamen die in je buik?

Tournai op zondag, Doresta die ons uitzwaaide in de schemer. Misschien, heb ik later bedacht, was dat wel het echte Merelbeke uit mijn droom. Maar dat waren tijden van voor de Grote Muur in mijn leven.

yucky liquid, with scrapers and scalpels, and on top of the cupboard a foetus in a bottle. The little blue monster, floating in a green murky liquid, ogled us with huge insect eyes, its thumb in its ice-cold mouth. One of my cousins wanted to grab the bottle from the top of the cupboard, but she toppled from the chair she'd just pulled up, the bottle wobbled, shook, teetered, tilted over the edge of the cupboard right above her head, and then, still wobbling a little, steadied itself and stayed put. We fled from the attic. From the little window on the highest landing, we could see my mother walking arm in arm with my father, and Hericums beside them, broadly gesticulating and smoking a cigar. One of the cousins wrapped her arm around my shoulder, whilst we were thus engaged in spying on them. And look, behind a shrub we could see *tante* Alphonsine. She was picking red currants, but it was clear that she was also eavesdropping on what was being discussed in Flemish there. We got the giggles, my younger cousin was picking her beautiful little nose as her big brown eyes sparkled at me. *Tu vois*, she said, *ma mère est toujours un peu seule* – my mama is always a little lonely, you see. I nodded understandingly and smelled her sweet breath.

We went down the stairs and, one by one, sat down on the large parade ground. I crawled on top of the old tank and made shooting noises in the direction of the two blond ponytails. When a little later they ran away, snorting with laughter and not giving me a further glance, I began to study the houses at the far end of the gigantic square. I could see all kinds of deep tracks in the mud, and in the distance, through the car-less streets, a man appeared leading a horse. Look, I heard Hericums say, that would be a good remedy for the colic in the stomach. I didn't quite understand that. Thought it had something to do with Catholics. But how did they get into your stomach?

Tournai on a Sunday, Hericums waving us off as evening fell. Perhaps, I later thought, perhaps that was the true Blackbird Creek of my dreams. But those were the days before the Great Wall in my life.

Later was Doresta naar Rouen verhuisd. Zijn schoonvader bewoonde er nog een veel groter herenhuis, en tante Alphonsine had heimwee. Heimwee naar Frankrijk, naar het pleintje in Rouen, naar Normandië, naar de Seine, naar haar moeders taartjesmanie, naar de notariële waardigheid van haar vaders werkkamer, naar de geur van parket dat al vijftig jaar met boenwas werd doordrenkt, naar de roddeltjes met haar *maman,* naar het leven van de betere stand, want ze vond nog steeds dat ze Doresta een groot cadeau had gegeven door hem haar *jeunesse* te schenken, zij die veel beter had kunnen krijgen. Ik zie u alleen graag voor wat ge zijt, zei Doresta tegen haar, en zij zei dat het voor haar *justement la même chose* was.

En toch is ze niet uit heimwee teruggekeerd, maar uit koleire.

Er moeten zich heel wat furieuze ruzies hebben voorgedaan achter die vreedzaam lijkende façade, achter die zondagse burgerlijke helderheid, en soms kwam Doresta in grote woede een paar dagen bij ons logeren. De eerste dag hoorde ik dan in de keuken opgewonden gesprekken, waarin meer dan eens woorden vielen als *verwend, pretentieus, ondankbaar* of *geruïneerd*. Maar dan, door het gezelschap van mijn ouders en grootvader, door zijn wandelingen en de *compagnie,* werd zijn humeur op een dag weer zo aanstekelijk vrolijk dat hij begon terug te verlangen naar *ons Alphonsinneke,* en dan stuurde hij haar een telegram vanuit het postkantoor in ons polderdorp, om te zeggen dat het voor *toujours* was met haar en dat die anderen allemaal niet meetelden. Die anderen, dat is ons Alphonsine uiteindelijk te machtig geworden. Op een dag vertrok ze met pak en zak naar Rouen en liet hem weten dat ze een andere *amant* had. Doresta zakte in elkaar, was nog maar een schim van zichzelf, snikte en hikte nachten en dagen, zei dat hij *zot ging komen, zich ging verdoen,* stuurde telegrammen en bloemen, en hoorde dat ze

Later on Hericums moved to Rouen. His father-in-law lived there in an even grander residence, and *tante* Alphonsine was homesick for her place of birth. Homesick for France, for the little square in Rouen, for Normandy, for the Seine, for her mother's craze for little cakes, for the notarial dignity of her father's office, for the smell of parquetry glossed with wax for over fifty years, for the gossiping with her *maman*, for a life of better social standing; she maintained her belief that she had bestowed a great gift on her husband when she granted him her youth, she who could have done so much better. I just like to see you for who you are, Hericums said to her, and she said that it was exactly the same for her.

And yet, it was not out of homesickness that she returned to Rouen, but out of vexation.

Some pretty fierce arguments must have taken place there behind that seemingly peaceful façade, behind that bourgeois Sunday propriety. Sometimes Hericums would come and stay with us for a few days at a time, in a state of great fury. The first day I would overhear heated discussions in the kitchen, in which words such as *spoilt, pretentious, ungrateful* and *ruinous* were uttered more than once. But then, due to the presence of my parents and grandfather, due to the long walks and the *compagnie*, his mood gradually became contagiously happy again, and he began to long for his *sweet little Alphonsine*, and then he would send a telegram from the post office in our village in the polder, to say he was dedicated to her forever, *toujours*, and that all the others did not count. But those others were, in the end, too much for our Alphonsine. One day she left for Rouen taking with her the whole caboodle, and let it be known that she had another *amant*, another lover.

Hericums fell to pieces, he became a shadow of his former self, sobbed and spluttered night and day, swore that he was

daar in Rouen allemaal schande spraken van hem, dat hij een hoerenbok was die zo'n schoon vrouw had opgesloten en mishandeld. Doresta kon daar niet tegenop. Hij, die zijn hele leven met ouderwetse militaire eergevoelens voor haar had gezorgd en haar op een *piëdestal* had gezet zoals hij altijd zei, ging nu door voor een vuilak, een vrouwenonderdrukker en een genieperd. Op een dag kwam een man op straat naar hem toe en siste: Awel, klootzak, ge hebt wat ge verdient he, uw schoon madam poept met een Fransman.

Doresta moest toen twee weken in ons polderdorp komen uithijgen van ellende. Het was duidelijk dat hij Alphonsine nog steeds aanbad, maar wellicht had hij haar met een van zijn *folies* zozeer gekwetst dat het haar te machtig was geworden. Hij jankte en kermde als een klein kind, en ik, die maar amper de kinderjaren was ontgroeid, vond dat het ergste wat ik ooit had gezien, zo'n jankende grote vent. Het deed me denken aan mijn eigen vader onder de pruimeboom, toen hij in het midden van zijn leven in een groot donker woud vertoefde en een hartaanval kreeg.

Binnen een halfjaar were Doresta zo grijs als een duif. Hij was genezen van zijn flirterige vrolijkheid, maar dat vond iedereen nu net onnatuurlijk en ziekelijk voor hem. Hij stuurde telegrammen naar Rouen, maar er kwam niets terug.

Het is nooit meer echt goed gekomen met die twee. De kinderen waren mee naar Rouen, en ten slotte ging Doresta er zelf ook heen. Hij sprak met haar ouders, zag zijn Alphonsine in een glimp op de gang en moest toen zo hard blèren dat ze hem *un petit cognac* moesten geven. Jaren later, wanneer hij een vrouw zag die zelfs maar in de verte op haar leek, kreeg hij een rare waterige blik, zei *jaja menneke, zout met zoet*, en begon in zijn blauwe ogen te wrijven alsof hij ze uit hun kassen wilde drukken. Dan haalde hij luidruchtig snot op, hief het hoofd in de nek en begon over iets anders. We hebben gehoord dat hij Alphonsine daar in Rouen uiteindelijk wel regelmatig terugzag. Ze

going crazy, that he would do himself in, sent telegrams and flowers, and heard that in Rouen they were all speaking ill of him, that he was a whore-fucker, who had locked up his beauty of a wife and mistreated her. Hericums couldn't handle it. He who all his life had looked after her with an old-fashioned military sense of honour, had placed her on a pedestal, as he always maintained, was now being accused of being a filthy bastard, an oppressor of women, a nasty piece of work. One day, a man came up to him in the street and hissed: Hey, you piece of shit, you had it coming to you, didn't you? Your good lady is screwing a Frenchman now! Hericums was forced to retreat to our village for a couple of weeks, just to catch his breath in his misery. It was clear that he still worshipped Alphonsine, but apparently he had wounded her so much with one of his *folies*, that it had become unbearable for her. He cried and whimpered like a baby, and I, who had barely outgrown my childhood, thought it was the most terrible thing I'd ever seen, a big bloke, blubbering like that. It made me think of my own father under the plum tree, when in the midst of his life, he dwelled in a great, dark wood and suffered a heart attack.

Within six months, Hericums had gone as grey as a dove. He was cured of his cheerful flirtatiousness, but now everyone found that strange and morbid. He sent telegrams to Rouen, but nothing came back. It was never right again between the two of them. The children had gone to live with their *maman* in Rouen, and in the end Hericums followed them. He spoke with her parents, caught a glimpse of his Alphonsine in the corridor and then wailed so loudly, that they had to give him *un petit cognac*. Years on, whenever he saw a woman who resembled her even remotely, his eyes would take on a pathetic watery gaze, and he'd say: *yes, yes little man, salt with sweet*, and rub his blue eyes, as if he wanted to press them into his skull. Then he would noisily clear his nose, throw his head back in his neck, and begin to talk about something else. We heard that in the end he did see Alphonsine again on a

kwam soms koffiedrinken in zijn klein appartement, ze gingen soms zamen naar het theater, ze werden gesignaleerd als ze op zondag samen wandelden in de romantische dorpjes in de omtrek. Maar het was publiek geheim dat hij 'niet meer aan haar mocht komen'. Daar in Rouen, als een militair in ruste, las hij zijn Franse klassieken helemaal opnieuw, dronk likeurtjes in een stemmige *petit bar* twee huizen verder, en jankte om zijn Alphonsine. Zijn kinderen wilden hem niet meer zien. Soms ging hij aan de schoolpoort staan met zijn militaire stramme eer en zijn waterogen. Dan kreeg hij daarna een standje van Alphonsine. Ja, ze heeft haar gram op hem gehaald, en dat zal hij geweten hebben. Het schijnt dat de hele affaire waar het om draaide eigenlijk al afgelopen was voor Alphonsine terug naar Rouen vluchtte om het 'uit revanche met een Fransman te doen'. En dat het dan nog om een *vrouwmens* ging dat nog niet aan de enkels van Alphonsine kon reiken, enfin, en dat ze het erom had gedaan, om Alphonsine te kunnen raken, die stralende schoonheid die zo vertroeteld werd door haar toegewijde vrouwengek. Doresta had zich zo'n twintig keer per dag geëxcuseerd, haar telkens in zijn armen genomen, haar verzekerd dat het tussen hen *pour toujours* was, lekker eten voor haar gemaakt, haar mee uit eten genomen, cadeautjes voor haar gekocht, een reis naar Joegoslavië georganiseerd.

Niets hielp. Aan een Joegoslavisch strand bracht de nog steeds zeer schone en volslanke Alphonsine opzettelijk, om zich te wreken, een Serviër het hoofd op hol, een kast van een kerel die haar van dat ogenblik bleef achtervolgen. Ook voerde ze sinds die tijd geregeld haast onbetaalbaar dure telefoongesprekken met een verre neef van haar die in Singapore woonde. Doresta voelde zich vreselijk oneerlijk behandeld, en soms hoorde ik hem tegen mijn grootvader vloeken dat ze een *vulgaire verwende bourgeois-teef* was.

Toen Alphonsine stierf, had hij zich met zijn *schoonfamilie* verzoend. Zijn *wreed schone* dochters waren een beetje ouder dan ik, ik zag de foto's die hij meebracht en vroeg

regular basis, there in Rouen. Sometimes she would come and have coffee with him in his small apartment, or they would go to the theatre together, there were reports that they'd been seen taking Sunday walks in romantic little villages in the vicinity. But it was public knowledge that he "couldn't touch her anymore". There in Rouen, like a military man at rest, he read his French classics all over again, drank liqueurs in a sedate *petit bar* two houses down, and wept for his Alphonsine.

His children no longer wanted to see him. Sometimes he would stand at the school gates, with his upright military air and watery eyes. Then he'd get told off by Alphonsine. Yes, she'd got her own back alright, and he knew it. It seems that the affair in question was practically over, even before Alphonsine had fled to Rouen, in order "to do it with a Frenchman, out of pure revenge". What's more, this particular female couldn't hold a candle to Alphonsine, as a matter of fact that was the very reason the woman had done it, to get at Alphonsine, that dazzling beauty, so cosseted by her devoted ladies' man. Hericums had begged her pardon at least twenty times a day, embraced her time and again, assured her that their love was *pour toujours* – for ever, cooked delicious meals for her, had taken her out to dinner, bought her presents and even organized a trip to Yugoslavia for her. It was no use.

On a beach in Yugoslavia, Alphonsine who was still an exceptionally beautiful and shapely woman, made a Serbian bloke lose his head over her, intentionally and in revenge. He was built like a tank and from that moment on kept pursuing her. At that time she also began making impossibly expensive telephone calls on a regular basis with a distant cousin of hers in Singapore. Hericums felt he was being treated in a most unjust manner, and at times I could hear him cursing to my grandfather that she was a *vulgar, spoilt, bourgeois bitch.*

When Alsphonsine died, he finally reconciled with his family-in-law. His own *devastatingly beautiful* daughters were a bit older than me, I saw the photos he'd brought

of ik er een kreeg. Awel menneke, zei hij, blijft gij maar van het vrouwvolk af als ge gelukkig wilt zijn. En zeker van die uit Rouen.

Maar hij bleef daar wonen. Hij sprak met vuur over een filosoof uit Rouen, een man die zijn hele leven lang elke dag een pagina had geschreven, stukjes die volgens hem de hele Franse literatuur overtroffen, en hij bekende dat hij daar ook mee was begonnen, zijn gedachten over van alles nog wat opteschrijven, en dat dat *zijne chagrin d'amour* voor Alphonsine kalmeerde.

along and asked if I could have one of them. Ah well matey, he said, better leave the ladies alone if you want to be happy. Especially the ones from Rouen.

But he kept on living there. He spoke fervently about a philosopher from Rouen, a man who had written a page a day, his whole life long, little articles which according to him, surpassed the whole of French literature put together, and he confessed that he had begun just such an undertaking himself, writing down his thoughts on random subjects, and that this helped calm his *chagrin d'amour*, his pain of love, for Alphonsine.

Het Oefenplein

Ooit had ik een droom waarin de mensen hun steden ondergronds hadden gebouwd. Alles was van een te vol, vervuild en onleefbaar aardoppervlak weggehaald, en beetje bij beetje hadden generaties na elkaar gewerkt, gesleept, gegraven met gigantische apparatuur, om de steden ondergronds uit te bouwen. De veelgelaagdheid van deze labyrinten contrasteerde fel met wat aan het oppervlak gebeurde: tot het laatste restje van de holle, vochtige en sinds lang verlaten gebouwen werd afgebroken, gedumpt of vernietigd. In de plaats daarvan werden groenzones aangelegd. Geleidelijk veranderde het aardoppervlak in een soort kunstmatige nabootsing van wat het ooit moest zijn geweest. Bossen, grasvlakten, wind en stilte waar een eeuw tevoren auto's raasden, treinen tegen elkaar opreden en vliegtuigen crashten, waar sirenes gilden en het altijd stonk naar benzine, teer en olie. Alles weg, vervangen door vergetelheid, en de grote ruimte onder de wolken weer leeg. Ondergronds en vandaar ook moeiteloos onderzees ging nu alles al even druk en hectisch door, alle verkeer raasde elektrisch in reusachtige metro's, over ondergrondse pleinen, door ruimtes van tien verdiepeningen onder en boven elkaar. Wie wilde ontsnappen, kon het voor een paar dagen aan de oppervlakte proberen. Maar daar heerste lege hitte, betekenloosheid,

The Military Parade Ground

I had a dream in which people built their cities underground. Everything had been removed from the overcrowded, polluted and unsustainable surfaces of the earth, and bit by bit generations of men had been working, lugging, excavating with gigantic machines in order to build these underground cities. The multi-layered nature of this labyrinth contrasted sharply with what was happening on the surface, where the last remnants of the empty, damp and long since deserted houses had been wrecked, dumped or demolished. In their place green zones were laid out. Gradually the surface of the earth changed into an artful imitation of what it once must have been. Forests, expanses of grass, wind and silence where in the previous age cars had raced at speed, trains had collided and planes crashed, where sirens had wailed and where the stench of bitumen, petrol and oil was always in the air. Everything gone, lost in oblivion, the great space under the clouds empty once more.

Underground and therefore undersea as well, everything continued at the same hectic pace, electrically powered traffic sped through gigantic metro systems, across subterranean public squares, through spaces tens of storeys below and above. If you wanted to escape from all this, you could try things out on the surface for a few days. But there barren heat held sway, lack of meaning,

afhankelijkheid van factoren als het klimaat, dingen die steeds onwenniger en onbegrijpelijker geworden waren. Als een knaagdierenkolonie bewoog alles onder de grond, en boven strekten zich jonge, lichtgroene wouden van zilverberken uit. Zwerfkatten, gele honden en kraaien bewogen als schimmen in een lege, droomachtige en hoogst onnatuurlijk aandoende natuur. Maar ondergronds woekerde het ware leven, de warmte, de nabijheid, de opwinding, het gevaar, de communicatie, kortom de menselijke werkelijkheid. Het aardoppervlak leek nutteloos en spookachtig verlaten, een plek die even onvruchtbaar was voor de menselijk bedrijvigheid als de leegte tussen de planeten. Zoals in vroegere eeuwen de diepten van de oceaan ver en onwezenlijk waren, was nu ook het aardoppervlak een lege, onvatbare plek op op de planeet geworden. Maar er was een derde ruimte bij gekomen: de holle ruimte van de planeet zelf, een ruimte zonder stijl of variatie, zonder overzicht of horizon, warm en intiem en onmetelijk tegelijk. En toen ik wakker werd, herkende ik in de besloten drukte van mijn ondergrondse steden en wegen mijn op hol geslagen verbeelding: een tijd tevoren had ik over zoiets gelezen, een gemeenschap waarin lang geleden dezelfde droom van de volledige afgeslotenheid leek te zijn gekoesterd – namelijk in de middeleeuwse holenkloosters van Kiev.

Toen ik wakker werd, zag ik het vriendelijk lachende hoofd van Doresta bij het open raam. Hij kwam al terug van een lange wandeling langs de vaart en hij zei dat ik moest opstaan omdat de lente zo schoon was als een vrouw. Nonkel Doresta, zei ik terwijl ik nog in bed lag, ik heb gedroomd dat de hele aardoppervlakte was veranderd in het oefenplein in Tournai. Wanneer gaan we daar nog een keer naar toe? Doresta zweeg en keek dwaas en triestig naar binnen. In plaats van mij een antwoord te geven vroeg hij of ik nog in *mijne cahier* schreef, dat ik daar maar in moest opschrijven wat ik nog allemaal van het oefenplein wist. Dat leek me zo'n onzinnig voorstel dat ik me kwaad omdraaide

dependence on such factors as climate and other things that had become more and more strange and inexplicable. Underground, everything moved about like a rodent colony and above ground young, light green forests of silverbirch stretched out. Feral cats, yellow dogs and crows moved like shadows in an empty, dreamlike and seemingly unnatural landscape. But below ground, it was teeming with true life, warmth, proximity, excitement, danger, communication, in brief with human reality. The earth's surface appeared useless and eerily deserted, a place as unsuited to the fruitfulness of human activity as the space between the planets. Just as in previous ages the depth of the ocean had been a distant and illusory domain, now too the surface of the earth had become an incomprehensible place on the planet. But a third space had appeared: the hollow space of the planet itself, a space without style or variant, without overview or horizon, warm and intimate and at the same time, immeasurable. And when I awoke, I recognized in the confined busyness of the underground cities and roads, traces of my own agitated imagination: some time ago I had read about something similar, a community of long ago with the same dream of being completely cloistered from the world – namely the medieval cave monasteries of Kiev.

When I woke up I saw Hericums' friendly face, smiling at the open window. He was back from a long walk along the canal, and he told me to get up. The spring day was as beautiful as a woman, he said. Nuncle Hericums, I said whilst I was still in bed, I dreamed the whole of the earth's surface had turned into the parade ground in Tournai. When can we go back there again? Hericums was silent and looked inside with a sad and foolish expression on his face. Instead of giving me an answer, he asked me if I was still writing in my *cahier*, my notebook, that I should write down everything that I remembered of the parade ground. That seemed such a crazy idea to me, I turned over angrily and pulled the blankets over my head. I fell asleep again and

en de dekens over mijn hoofd trok. Ik viel weer in slaap en droomde dat de schone dochters van Doresta vleugels hadden in de vorm van grote geplooide berkzaden. Daarmee vlogen ze over het IJzeren Gordijn. Ik hoorde hen giechelen en lachen aan de andere kant. Ik dacht dat ze me uitlachten, en dat het plein van Tournai daar aan de andere kant begon. Maar plots kon ik los door die muur heenlopen, ik kwam eerst in verstikkend duister terecht als was ik in de steen aan het verdrinken, toen kwam ik als het ware boven water, aan de andere kant van de steen. Ik hijgte en snikte nog na. Daar was het oefenplein. Maar het stond vol met lichtgroene berken, waaiende kruinen als ijle bladerwolken, en mijn nichtjes renden voor mij uit. De oudste had een lichte zomerjurk aan, die ging op en neer, ik zag haar benen, en dan plotseling waaide de jurk zo hoog op dat ik haar witte broekje zag. Op dat ogenblik schrok ik wakker, er gebeurde iets daar onder de lakens, iets heets en heerlijks. Mijn moeder kwam binnen en zei dat het ongezond was om zo lang in bed te liggen, en dat nonkel Doresta over mij niet te spreken was.

Het was weer zo'n ongelofelijke dag, licht stond als een huid tegen het glas van de serre, Doresta stond een sigaar te roken in een blauwig waas van tegenlicht, mijn grootvader snoeide zijn druivelaars en mijn moeder was aan het zingen terwijl ze de was te drogen hing. Ik hinkte naar het dorp met mijn krukken, en daar zag ik Margreet door de dorpstraat aan komen fietsen. Ze remde toen ze me zag, dat maakte een kniepend en knarsend kabaal van belang. Daar moest Margreet om lachen. Ik wist niet wat te zeggen, dacht aan het witte broekje uit mijn droom en hoorde niet wat ze zei. Maar omdat ze in haar neus pulkte terwijl ze sprak en me met grote bruine ogen aankeek, moest ik weer aan de zondagen in Tournai denken, lang geleden, nog van voor de Grote Muur, en het was alsof een van mijn nichtjes uit Rouen in de huid van Margreet was gekropen. Omdat ik daar zo sullig stond, gaf ze me een zoen en zei dat ze gauw een keer zou langskomen, morgenmiddag als ik dat goed vond. Ik vond het goed, al kwamen de

dreamed that Hericums' beautiful daughters flew over the Iron Curtain with wings of enormous pleated birch seeds. I could hear them giggling and laughing on the other side. I thought that they were laughing at me and that the Tournai parade ground began on the other side. But suddenly I could walk straight through that stone wall, at first I found myself in a suffocating darkness, as if I was drowning in stones and then I surfaced as it were above water, on the other side of the wall. I was still heaving and sobbing. There was the parade ground. But it was full of light green birches, their tops swaying like fleeting clouds of foliage, and my cousins were running ahead of me. The older one was wearing a light summer dress, fluttering up and down, I could see her legs and then suddenly the dress blew up so high that I could see her white panties. At that moment I woke up with a start, something was happening under the sheets, something hot and lovely. My mother came in and said it was unhealthy to be staying in bed so long and that uncle Hericums was not pleased with me.

Again it was such an unbelievably beautiful day, the light stretched like skin against the glass of the sunroom, Hericums was smoking a cigar in a blue haze of backlight, my grandfather was pruning his vines and my mother was singing, as she was hanging up the washing to dry. I hopped along to the village on my crutches, and in the main street I saw Margreet riding towards me on her bike. When she saw me, she braked and screeched to an impressive halt. That made her burst into laughter. I didn't know what to say, thought of the white panties in my dream and didn't hear what she was saying. But because she was picking her nose whilst she spoke, and looking at me with her big brown eyes, I was reminded again of those Sundays in Tournai, long ago, before the Great Wall even, and it was as if one of my cousins from Rouen had crept into Margreet's skin. I stood there like an idiot, and then she kissed me and said she'd come around to my place sometime soon, tomorrow afternoon if that was okay with

woorden bijna onherkenbaar uit mijn mond. Toen fietste Margreet alweer weg, en haar jurkje leek op een berkezaadje.

Nonkel Doresta kwam eraan, heel onverwacht. Hij had gezien dat ik met Margreet had staan praten, enfin, dat Margreet had staan praten tegen de stotterende roerdomp die ik me voelde. Menneke, zei hij, ge moet goed verstaan dat we nooit meer naar het oefenplein gaan. De tijd van *les exercises* is voorbij. Prent dat maar goed in uw kopke. En hij liet me staan waar ik stond en vervolgde zijn wandeling op de veldweg. Ik liep naar huis langs een andere kleine binnenweg. En daar ergens, in het zand, zag ik A.D. geschreven staan, met de punt van een dikke stok. Ik wist meteen dat het een kinderlijk teken van Doresta z'n geheime miserie was: dat hij ooit zo jong was geweest dat hij letters in het zand schreef, en dat hij, nu hij oud geworden was en Alphonsine allang dood, dat weer deed. Ik besloot om nooit meer naar het oefenplein te vragen.

Ik hinkte het erf op. De vroege lente maakte dat het ijzer van het hek heviger geurde dan gewoonlijk.

Mijn moeder zat net bij het het gasfornuis, het was elf uur in de ochtend.

Ze had de lakens van mijn bed gehaald en in de grote wasketel gestopt. Ze keek als een donderwolk en snauwde of ik soms goesting had om ruggemergtering te krijgen. Om wat, vroeg ik. Maar ze liep vol verachting naar de woonkamer. Zelf ging ik in de tuin rondstruinen. En plotseling was ik er zeker van: die smeerlap van een kastanjeboom bewoog zich langzaam maar overduidelijk in de richting van onze nieuwe tuin. Hij stond nog maar een paar meter van de haag verwijderd. Weer, zoals heel lang geleden, wilde ik snokken en rukken om de boom uit de grond te krijgen. Dat was natuurlijk nog onmogelijker: ik had geen steunpunt meer, of beter, ik had net zoals hij maar één steunpunt, en tegen een stam is één been niet opgewassen. Bovendien was die stam al bijna vijftien centimeter dik.

Dus ging ik maar onder zijn openbloeiende takken zitten, onder de

me. I said that was fine, though the words coming out of my mouth sounded like gibberish. Then Margreet rode off again, and her dress looked like a birch seed.

There, coming along the street totally unexpectedly was uncle Hericums. He had seen me talking with Margreet, or rather that Margreet had been talking with a stuttering imbecile. Matey, he said, you've got to understand that we'll never be going back to the parade ground again. The days of *les exercises* are over. You'd better get that into your head. And he left me where I was and continued his walk along the country road. I walked home along a different, smaller backroad. And there, somewhere in the sand, I saw the letters A.H. written with the point of a sturdy stick. I knew straightaway that it was a childish sign of Hericums' secret misery: that he had once been so young as to write letters in the sand, and that now, when he had grown old and long after Alphonsine had died, he was doing it again. I resolved never again to ask him about the parade ground.

I limped into our yard. The early spring made the iron of the gate emit a heavier smell than usual.

My mother was sitting by the gas stove, it was eleven o'clock in the morning. She had stripped the sheets from my bed and shoved them into the big laundry tub. She looked like a thundercloud and snapped at me, did I want to bring some spinal cord disease upon myself, or what? Why Ma? I asked her. But she walked off to the living room, full of disdain. I myself went to potter about in the garden. And suddenly I was sure of it: that bastard of a chestnut tree was shifting itself ever so slowly but surely in the direction of our new garden. It was only a few metres away now from the hedge. Once again, just like long ago, I wanted to tug and pull at the tree, to wrench it out of the ground. Of course that was even more impossible now: I didn't even have a foothold, or rather just like the tree I had only one foothold, and one leg is no match for a tree trunk, a sturdy tree trunk at that, close to fifteen centimetres thick in fact. So I sat down under its budding

uitlopende botten waarvan een dichter ooit heeft gezegd dat het de grootste domheid is van beginnende dichters, dat ze die bloeiende toppen altijd weer met kaarsen vergelijken.

branches, under its spreading bones, on the subject of which a poet once stated, that it is the greatest folly of fledgling poets to persist in comparing those flowering crowns to candles.

Translating Jerzy Lutowski: The Transplantation of Allegorical Drama

KEVIN WINDLE
Australian National University

The work of Jerzy Lutowski, well known in his native Poland, has attracted less attention abroad than it deserves and has not been widely translated. In a country with a very strong theatrical tradition, he was a highly skilled playwright, a thoughtful writer and an astute commentator on the social and moral issues of his time, as will be clear from the scene below, taken from his best-known play, *Love Thy Saviour*. While self-evidently relevant to the Polish situation, this play has much wider, indeed universal import, and merits the attention of translators and theatre directors beyond Poland's borders. The following brief introduction to the translation attempts to place the work in its historical context, draw out the allegorical sub-text, and outline some matters relating to the process of linguistic and cultural transfer to the English-language stage.

Lutowski was born in 1923 in the eastern city of Lwów, now in Ukraine, where it is known as Lviv. In the years of Nazi occupation, he served in the underground Home Army (*Armia Krajowa*) and took part in the Warsaw Rising in the summer of 1944. After the war, though trained as a doctor, he forged a career in journalism, film and literature, in the process making a very significant contribution to the literary and theatrical culture of the period, at a time when strict ideological control made self-expression in the arts uniquely difficult. His first plays *A Family Matter* (1952) and *The Mole* (1953), written while Poland was firmly under Stalinist rule, may be said to be cast in the Socialist Realist mould, then *de rigueur*, but his *Emergency Ward* (1955) showed a questioning intellect at work. While seeming to adhere to the requirements of the day, according to Kazimierz Braun, "the dialogue contained a critique of the political persecutions and posed questions about the moral mandate of the Party to rule the country" (Braun 55). In later years Lutowski would collaborate with the film director Jerzy Kawalerowicz to produce the script for the film *Night Train* (1959) and with Jerzy Hoffman on that of *Pan Wołodyjowski* (1969), based on the novel by Henryk Sienkiewicz (*Wielka encyklopedia*, v. 16, 235). He died in 1985.

Love Thy Saviour, a play in three parts, is a telling attack on totalitarian rule, both in Lutowski's own country and in the wider world. It was written between 1956 and 1964 but could not appear in print in Poland until 1980, when Communist rule was shaken by the Solidarity movement and the censorship was temporarily relaxed, to be restored when General Wojciech Jaruzelski, with Leonid Brezhnev standing over him, imposed martial law in December 1981.

The three parts essentially form three short plays which can be staged as separate entities. They are united not by any of the traditional unities of classical drama, or even by the same characters, but by their theme and the author's stipulation, stated in his Foreword, that the same actor should play the leading role, that of the "benefactor" or "saviour", in all three (Lutowski 5), although the roles themselves are different and belong to widely separated historical eras and geographical settings.

The Foreword further states that *Love Thy Saviour* is "meant as a contemporary morality play", dealing with "contemporary matters of faith in man, his right to freedom, and human dignity". Through the leading figure in each of the three scenes, "the author wishes to show what these outwardly different human attitudes have in common, namely their inhumanity". Lutowski attached particular importance to the epigraph, which he took – with more than a hint of irony – from Maxim Gorky's play *The Lower Depths*: "The word Man has a proud ring". This, he writes, indicates the course to be followed in production.

In Part I, set in Poland in 1953, "Ex", an officer of the security police, has a nightmarish conversation with the ghost of his mentor, a Polish revolutionary and security officer of a slightly earlier and more idealistic period. "Ex" explains to him how much harder the task of eliminating "enemies" has become. There is no such thing as an innocent civilian; the state must be protected against the people (all the people), because "people are the greatest danger", he maintains, to the bewilderment of his late colleague.

Part III has as its setting the Spanish Inquisition in 1493. Rachel, a Jewish girl, has renounced her faith in order to marry Alonso, a Spanish grandee, who has promised to help her father flee Spain to escape the Inquisition. However, when Alonso reveals his utter contempt for the Jews and support for the Holy Order, Rachel undergoes a change of heart with regard to her "saviour": she breaks off her engagement, thus condemning herself and her father to the fate of other Jews in Spain.

The setting for the scene translated below (Part II) is the Netherlands in 1793. The French revolutionary army has "liberated" Eindhoven, and a French sergeant, Lebon, is billeted with a young saddler and his wife. Piter and Beetje are not easily persuaded of the joys of the "liberty" brought by Lebon, or of the vileness of the "tyranny" from which they have supposedly been liberated. The crude dogmatism of the liberators, coupled with the mutual incomprehension of the parties, leads ineluctably to tragic consequences. The dogmatism and the incomprehension constitute essential components of the theme.

The wide-ranging content makes certain demands on the audience in terms of general and historical knowledge, and on the English translator, whose audience is less likely than the source-language audience to be equipped to appreciate its numerous allusions and allegorical parallels. Although the text is in Polish, the translator is obliged to manipulate and mediate not one foreign culture but three. The scene relies for much of its effect on historical parallels between the cultures of Poland, Holland and France, and it is here that the English-language audience is likely to be at a disadvantage. Indeed, the translator confronts the question of the extent to which the transplantation of theatrical allegory into a fourth culture is possible.

To Polish readers and theatre-goers, the parallels are immediately apparent. None would fail to observe that "the People" of the Netherlands are less eager for "liberty, equality and fraternity" than their liberators suppose, and not because they are simply backward. The Polish audience will automatically substitute Poland for Holland, 1920 for 1793, Bolshevik for French, and red star for the tricolour cockade. In the Russo-Polish war of 1920, Józef Piłsudski's Polish army had struck into Ukraine and successfully taken Kiev, but was soon expelled and driven back as far as the gates of Warsaw. At that stage Lenin and Trotsky had every hope that their Cossack "soldiers of freedom" would bring class war to Poland on the points of their bayonets and overthrow its anti-Communist regime. In the words of Robert Service (294), Lenin "at his most bloodthirsty" wished to send "squads into the Polish

countryside with a view to seizing and hanging class enemies", but he underestimated Polish national awareness and the sense of unity in the newly reconstituted nation state. In what Poles subsequently referred to as "the miracle on the Vistula", the Soviet armies were turned back; Poland would be spared Bolshevik "liberation", but only for nineteen years. The Molotov-Ribbentrop pact of August 1939 brought with it liberty *à la soviétique*, along with mass deportations and executions in a reign of terror equal in savagery to that of Robespierre and Saint-Just. The elimination of French and Dutch "aristocrats" and priests, enthusiastically supported by Sergeant Lebon, has its gruesome analogue in the massacre by the NKVD of the Polish officer corps, over 21,000 men, representing a large proportion of the country's educated classes, in Katyn Forest and elsewhere in the spring of 1940.

The parallels go further: Lebon's threat to "abolish the border" sounds very like the twentieth-century reality of the People's Republic of Poland, whose eastern border, though not abolished, had been moved permanently westward in 1945, to the advantage of the USSR, and in any case the Polish Communist government had limited freedom of action. In 1810, seventeen years after the events in this scene, the Netherlands would be incorporated into France. Parallels such as these depend for their fullest effect on some knowledge of Polish history: that which the English-speaker brings to them will inevitably be less complete than that of most Poles. Nevertheless the broad thrust of the play's argument has its own explanation in the text, and the comparisons suggested will not be lost on most of the target-language audience, even if some points of detail defy easy transplantation. It is also worth noting that some elements of Dutch history invoked by the playwright, such as the exploits of Willem Daendels and the Batavian Patriots, and the exile of the Prince of Orange – unlikely to be familiar to non-specialists in the English audience – are hardly more familiar to the source-language audience. Yet their use in context makes their meaning clear without further explication in either the original or the translation. The same applies to Lebon's references to prominent figures of the French revolution.

Symbols, some of them visual rather than verbal, play an important role in the parallels: the catalyst for the tragic ending is provided by the crucifix on the wall. The clash between religion and atheism, highly relevant to the Polish predicament, is personified as Beetje leaps to protect the cross against the invading unbeliever. Here at least the translator's audience is at no disadvantage. Lebon himself, with his naïve notions and primitive demagoguery, is a largely symbolic figure. He resembles no one so much as Poligraf Poligrafovich Sharikov, the Bolshevik archetype in Mikhail Bulgakov's satire *The Heart of a Dog*, set in Moscow in the early 1920s.

Costumes, stage props and interiors also serve to provide local colour and markers of national identity and social class, again in largely symbolic fashion, and the language and register of the dialogue is of crucial importance. The play is of course in Polish, but we understand from its geographical and historical setting that in this scene the characters are "really" conversing in French, in Lebon's case, an earthy, demotic form of it, with a generous admixture of revolutionary slogans; in Piter's case, a standard form of French as a foreign language. Occasional reminders are provided in the form of phrases like "sans-culotte" and "bon appétit", and blood-curdling revolutionary songs sung partly in French, supported by references to the guillotine and the revolutionary month of Pluviose.

Clearly, any markers of Frenchness and Dutchness present in Lutowski's original as topographical and cultural signals, need to be preserved in the translation. The illusion that the dialogue is in French must be maintained. On the other hand, obvious intrusions of Polishness would be out of place. In an acting version, such as that intended here, they would violate a central principle of *Sprechbarkeit* ("speakability") and *Spielbarkeit* ("performability") enunciated by Fabienne Hörmanseder for the translation of drama (Hörmanseder 102). Ronald Hingley, the eminent scholar and translator of Chekhov, emphasized that a translated script must be "speakable" (Chekhov III, x); it cannot be left "dangling in the limbo of translationese" (Chekhov IX, xiii; see Windle 156-58). It remains axiomatic that, if a translation is to work effectively in a stage production, it needs to maintain full coherence, untainted by source-language interference, in the dialogue.

The translation below endeavours to replicate in English the language of class warfare spoken by Lebon in French and refracted through the playwright's Polish, as well as the puzzlement of his uncomprehending Dutch interlocutors. (Beetje has no French, and converses with her husband, naturally, in her native Dutch.) The "Frenchness" and limited education of the revolutionary soldiers, clearly represented in the Polish, along with the humour derived from mutual incomprehension, contribute much to the allegorical theme, as well as determining the register. Revolutionary slogans aside, Lutowski crafts his dialogue entirely in modern Polish, complete with occasional modern expletives, making no attempt to replicate the spoken language of the late eighteenth century. In this respect too, the transplanted version endeavours to follow the original.

A close translation of the Polish title *Szkoła dobroczyńców* would be *Benefactors' School*, or a little less closely, *Saviours' School*. In order to reflect the underlying thrust and the irony of Lutowski's play, the less direct *Love Thy Saviour* is suggested. This was the title used for Miro Polatynski's English-language stage production of the whole play, in this translator's version, at the Toronto Centre for the Arts in 2010.

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Szkoła dobroczyńców (Cz. II)
Jerzy Lutowski

Przy wygaszonej widowni rozlega się brzmiąca miedzią i kotłami muzyka wojskowa.

Z lewej kulisy szybkim, francuskim krokiem marszowym wychodzi trzech żołnierzy w mundurach z czasów Wielkiej Rewolucji. Środkowy niesie na drzewcu czapkę frygijską, dwaj skrzydłowi karabiny na ramionach. Pośrodku sceny zatrzymują się, odwracają ku widowni. Wtedy na umieszczonej pod czapką frygijską, jak numer pułkowy, deseczce odczytać można napis:

ROK 1793

Żołnierze robią zwrot w lewo — idą dalej — nikną w kulisie. Oddalające się dzwięki marsza brzmią wciąż niewyraźniej — gasną. Słychać monotonne postukiwanie młotka.

Kurtyna idzie w gorę.

Izba w mieszkaniu Cloosów. Z lewej strony drzwi wejściowe, z prawej drugie, wiodące do sąsiedniego pokoju. W głębi okno, zasłonięte muślinową firanką. Pod ścianami rzeźbione skrzynie, pośrodku pokoju stół i parę krzeseł. Całość sprawia wrażenie przytulne i schludne.

Przy stole siedzi Piter Cloos, młody, tęgawy blondyn. Odziany jest w koszulę z wykładanym kołnierzem, brązową kamizelę i takież spodnie, sięgające kolan. Na nogach drewniane saboty. Podśpiewując pod nosem, wyrównuje klamrę skórzanego pasa. Beetje, drobna, piękna blondynka, nie ma jeszcze dwudziestu lat. Spod białego czepeczka zwieszają się na plecy ciężkie, grube warkocze. Wcięta w pasie długa suknia, biały, jak i czepeczek, fartuch. Przytulona bokiem do ściany

Love thy Saviour (Pt II)
Jerzy Lutowski
Translated by Kevin Windle

With house lights dimmed, the sounding brass and drums of a military band are heard.

Out from the left wing come three soldiers at a brisk, French-style march step, wearing uniforms from the time of the French revolution. The one in the middle is carrying a flagstaff with a Phrygian bonnet on the end of it. The two flanking him carry shouldered muskets. In the middle of the stage they halt and turn to face the audience. Then it is possible to read what is written on the board hanging under the bonnet, like a regimental number: THE YEAR 1793.

The soldiers wheel to their left and march on, disappearing into the wings. The retreating strains of the march sound steadily fainter until they fade out. The monotonous tap of a hammer is heard.

Curtain rises.

A room in the home of the Cloos family. On the left the front door. On the right another door, leading into the adjoining room. On the back wall is a window covered with a muslin curtain. Carved wooden chairs against the wall; a table and one or two chairs in the middle of the room. The overall impression is cosy and tidy.

At the table Piter Cloos is seated. He is a young, stoutish blond. He is dressed in a shirt with a turn-down collar, a brown waistcoat and knee-breeches, also brown. He has wooden clogs on. He hums to himself while beating out the buckle of a leather belt. Beetje, a pretty little blonde, is not yet twenty. Her thick, heavy braids fall onto her shoulders from under her white bonnet. Her long dress is drawn in at the waist and she has on an apron as white as her bonnet. At the window, her side pressed close against the

śledzi coś, co dzieje się na ulicy.

Beetje: Wciąż stoi.
Piter: *nie przerywając pracy Ten żołnierz?*
Beetje: Tak.
Piter: Niech sobie stoi.
Beetje: Patrzy na nasz dom.
Piter: No więc co z tego?
Beetje: Ma w ręku jakąś karteczkę.
Piter: Odejdź już, Beetje, od tego okna. Miałaś dać podwieczorek.
Bieetje: O Boże! Wchodzi!
Piter: *podnosi głowę Do nas?*
Beetje: Tak. Minął już furtkę.
Piter: Pewnie chce o coś zapytać. Oni nie znają miasta.
Beetje: *zwrócona twarzą w stronę pokoju Boję się, Piter. Boję!*
Piter: Beetje, maleńka! Nie bądź głuptaskiem. Oni mówią innym językiem, ale są naszymi przyjaciółmi. Przyszli, by nas wyzwolić.
Beetje: Słyszysz? Wchodzi po schodach.
Piter: Niech wchodzi. Beetje! Co z tobą?
Beetje: Ludzie tak różnie mówią. Podobno u van Riitsów...
Piter: Van Riits jest bogaczem. Nam także dał się we znaki. Takich Francuzi nie lubią.
Beetje: Może zapuka do Hijermannsów?
Piter: Beetje!
Głośne pukanie do drzwi.
B*eetje:* Piter!
Piter podnosi się z krzesła. Idzie ku lewym drzwiom.
Beetje: Nie! Nie otwieraj! Może sobie pójdzie.
Piter: Czyś oszalała, kobieto? *Zdecydowanie odsuwa żonę. Otwiera drzwi. W progu stoi Lebon, drobny szczupły sierżant francuski w wieku około trzydziestu lat. Zbyt obszerny*

wall, she is watching something which is happening outside.

Beetje: He's still standing there.
Piter: *(going on with his work)* That soldier?
Beetje: Yes.
Piter: Let him stand.
Beetje: He's looking at our house.
Piter: So what?
Beetje: He's holding a piece of paper.
Piter: Come away from the window, **Beetje**. You were going to get some supper ready.
Beetje: Oh Lord! He's coming here!
Piter: *(looking up)* To us?
Beetje: Yes, he's already come through the gate.
Piter: I expect he wants to ask about something. They don't know the town.
Beetje: *(facing into the room)* I'm afraid, Piter. I'm afraid.
Piter: Beetje, my darling! Don't be silly. They speak a different language, but they're our friends. They've come to set us free.
Beetje: Do you hear? He's coming up the steps.
Piter: Let him come. Beetje! What's the matter?
Beetje: The things people have been saying. I heard that at van Riits' …
Piter: Van Riits is rich. He's made trouble for us too. The French don't like his sort.
Beetje: Perhaps he'll knock on the Hijermanns' door.
Piter: Beetje!
(Loud knock on the door.)
Beetje: Piter!
(Piter gets up from his chair and goes to the left door.)
Beetje: No! Don't open it! Perhaps he'll go away.
Piter: Are you out of your mind, woman?
(Pushes wife firmly aside. Opens door. Lebon, a short, wiry French sergeant of about thirty, is standing in the doorway. His over-size uniform hangs about him like a suit on a scarecrow. On one knee of

mundur wisi na nim jak na psie frak. Na kolanie białych ongiś spodni olbrzymia łata. Zakurzone buty są już mocno sfatygowane. Bagnet obciąga pas sztukowany konopnym sznurem. Na ramionach plecak, w ręce karabin.

Lebon: Tu mieszka rymarz Piter Cloos?

Piter: Jestem**.**

Lebon: *Przykłada dłoń do trójgraniastego kapelusza.* Pozdrowienia i braterstwo! *Podaje Piterowi kartkę papieru* Mam stanąć u ciebie na kwaterze.

Piter milczy zaskoczony.

Lebon: *Wskazuje na siebie, potem zatacza ręką po izbie* Kwatera! *Rozgląda się* Nie ma tu kogo, kto mówi po francusku?

Piter: Ja mówię.

Lebon: Ty? *Uderza Pitera po ramieniu* No, raz w życiu mam szczęście. Dupleau z mojej kompanii popadł do jakiegoś staruszka. Chłop wkładał już w gębę gorące kartofle, ale nic nie pomaga. Stary jak nie kapował, tak nie kapuje.

Piter: Mam tylko dwie małe izby. W tamtej jest warsztat.

Lebon: Nie szkodzi. Możemy spać w warsztacie. Albo ty się tam przeniesiesz. *Wskazuje głową, Beetje* To twoja siostra?

Piter: Żona.

Lebon: A! *Podchodzi do Beetje, salutuje* Sierżant Lebon z pewnej kompanii pewnego pułku. *Rozkłada ręce* Szczegółów nie ma. Tajemnica służbowa.

Piter: Powiedziałeś, obywatelu, „możemy". To znaczy, nie jesteś sam?

Lebon: Przydzielili mnie do ciebie z Verneyem. Też sierżant. Morowy chłop, chociaż Bretończyk. Poszedł szukać wina. Pewnie zaraz przyjdzie. Czemu tak stoisz? Chyba cieszysz się, że możesz przyjąć obrońców wolności?

Piter: Gdybym tylko miał większe mieszkanie...

his no-longer-white trousers is a huge patch. His dusty boots are well worn. A bayonet hangs from his belt, which has been repaired with a piece of rope. He has a knapsack on his back and a musket in his hand.)

Lebon: Does Piter Cloos the saddler live here?

Piter: That's me.

Lebon: *(raising hand to his tricorn hat in salute)* Greetings and brotherhood! *(Hands Piter a sheet of paper)* I have to move in with you—I'm billeted here.

(Piter, taken aback, says nothing.)

Lebon: *(indicating himself, then pointing into the room)* Billet! *(Looking about him)* Ain't there anyone who speaks French here?

Piter: I do.

Lebon: You do? *(Slaps Piter on the shoulder)* Then I'm in luck for once in my life. Dupleau from my company's stuck with some old geezer who don't understand a thing. Dupleau tried talking with a hot potato in his mouth—didn't do no good. The old boy still don't understand nothing.

Piter: I've only got two rooms. The other one's my workshop.

Lebon: That don't matter. We'll sleep in the workshop. Or you can move in there. *(Nodding in Beetje's direction)* That your sister?

Piter: No, my wife.

Lebon: Aha! *(Goes up to Beetje, salutes)* Sergeant Lebon of X Company, X Regiment. *(Spreading hands)* No details. Military secret.

Piter: You said "we", citizen. Does that mean you're not alone?

Lebon: I've been billeted on you together with Verney. Another sergeant. A fine lad, even if he is a Breton. He's gone off to find some wine. He'll be back soon. Why are you standing like that? Aren't you glad to be welcoming the defenders of freedom?

Piter: If we only had a bit more room …

Lebon: Powiedziałem ci już — jakoś się pomieścimy. Zresztą my nie na długo. Za parę dni idziemy dalej.
Piter: z *ulgą* Tak?
Lebon: A jakeś myslał? Są jeszcze kraje, które trzeba wyzwolić spod jarzma tyranów.
Piter: Siadaj, obywatelu. Cieszę się, że mogę cię gościć pod swoim dachem.
Lebon: *No, sądzę! Rzuca na stół kapelusz. Odstawia karabin pod ścianę*
Beetje: Co on mówi?
Piter: Przydzielili mu u nas kwaterę. Uspokój się. Tylko na parę dni.
Lebon: *wraca do stołu* Sankiulotka nie zna francuskiego?
Piter: Nie.
Lebon: Szkoda. Powinieneś *ją* nauczyć. To jedyny język, który można zrozumieć. Za parę miesięcy będzie nim mówiła cała Europa.
Piter: Beetje! Przynieś coś do jedzenia.
Beetje zmierza ku drzwiom.
Lebon: *nagle czujnie* Gdzie ją posyłasz?
Piter: Pragnę cię czymś ugościć.
Lebon: A! Idź, idź, slicznotko.
Beetje wychodzi.
Lebon: *siada* Jesteś rymarzem?
Piter: Tak.
Lebon: Więc żyjesz z pracy własnych rąk.
Piter: Naturalnie.
Lebon: To dobrze. Znaczy, że jesteś lud. *Wskazuje palcem na Pitera* Ciebie właśnie wyzwoliłem.
Piter: Wiem o tym.
Lebon: Siadaj. Jesteś taki sam obywatel jak ja. Wolność, równość, braterstwo. A poza tym — mówisz po francusku.
Piter: *siada* Terminowałem w Nantes.
Lebon: *pogardliwie* Lotaryngia. Ja, bracie, jestem z Prowansji. Krzepkie dziewczęta i mocne wino. Nie taki cienkusz jak u was.
Piter: My, Holendrzy, wolimy wódkę. Próbowałeś już naszej wódki, obywatelu?

Lebon: I've told you already—we'll fit in somehow. Anyway it won't be for long. We're moving on in a couple of days.
Piter: *(relieved)* Are you?
Lebon: What did you expect? There are more countries that have to be freed from the tyrants' yoke.
Piter: Sit down, citizen. I'm glad I can offer you my hospitality.
Lebon: I should think so too! *(Tossing hat onto table and standing musket against wall.)*
Beetje: What's he saying?
Piter: He's being billeted with us. Don't worry. Only for a couple of days.
Lebon: *(returning to the table)* Doesn't this sans-culotte know French?
Piter: No.
Lebon: Pity. You ought to teach her. It's the only language it's possible to understand. In a month or two the whole of Europe will be speaking it.
Piter: Beetje, get us something to eat.
(Beetje goes towards the door.)
Lebon: *(suddenly wary)* Where are you sending her?
Piter: I want to get you something to eat.
Lebon: Ah! Go ahead, my lovely.
(Exit Beetje.)
Lebon: *(taking a seat)* So you're a saddler, are you?
Piter: Yes.
Lebon: So you live by the work of your own hands?
Piter: Of course.
Lebon: That's good. That means you're the People. *(Pointing finger at Piter)* It's you I've liberated.
Piter: I know.
Lebon: Sit down. You're a citizen just like me. Liberty, equality, fraternity. And besides, you speak French.
Piter: *(sitting down)* I served my apprenticeship in Nancy.[1]

[1] The original has Nantes but apparently Nancy, the old capital of Lorraine, is meant. *Trans.*

Lebon: Gówno! Wino jest lepsze! Nauczymy was jeszcze je pić. I w ogóle — nauczymy was wielu rzeczy. *Rozsiada się wygodniej* Więc tutaj mieszkasz? No, nieźle. A gdzie śpisz?
Piter: Tutaj.
Lebon: Jak to: tutaj? Na czym?
Piter wskazuje ręką skrzynie pod ścianami.
Lebon: W skrzyniach?
Piter: Tak.
Lebon: Drwisz ze mnie, obywatelu?
Piter: Ależ skąd?
Lebon: Chcesz powiedzieć, że rzeczywiście śpicie w skrzyniach?
Piter: Taki u nas zwyczaj.
Lebon: Biedaku! Więc aż do tego doprowadzili was tyrani!
Piter nie rozumie.
Lebon: Nie martw się! Będziecie jeszcze spali jak ludzie.
Piter: Kiedy nam tak jest dobrze.
Lebon: Bzdura! Nie widziałem jeszcze sankiuloty w skrzyni. Jutro postaramy się wam o łóżka. Verney już to załatwi.
Wraca Beetje. Niesie na tacy butelkę wódki, ser, pieczywo, masło, półmisek zimnego mięsa.
Beetje: Sprzątnij ze stołu, Piter!
Piter zdejmuje ze stołu kapelusz Lebona, bierze w rękę pas, który poprzednio poprawiał.
Lebon: *z aprobatą* Sankiulotka szybko się uwinęła! *Dostrzega pas* Co to jest?
Piter: Pas.
Lebon: Pokaż! *Przymierza pas* Fajny. A sprzączka srebrna?
Piter: Tak. Wyrabia je mój przyjaciel. Sprzedajemy tego nawet dość dużo za granicę. Do Francji szły kiedyś także.

Lebon: *(scornfully)* Lorraine. I'm from Provence, brother. Big girls and strong wine. None of that thin stuff of yours.
Piter: We Dutchmen prefer hard liquor. Have you tried our liquor yet, citizen?
Lebon: Shit! Wine's better! We'll teach you to drink it yet. We'll teach you a lot of things. *(Making himself more comfortable)* So you live here? Not too bad, I suppose. Where do you sleep?
Piter: Here.
Lebon: Here? What do you mean "here"? What on? *(Piter points to the chests by the walls.)*
Lebon: In them boxes?
Piter: Yes.
Lebon: Are you making fun of me, citizen?
Piter: Of course I'm not.
Lebon: You mean to tell me you really sleep in boxes?
Piter: It's a custom of ours.
Lebon: You poor sod! Have the tyrants really ground you down that far?
(Piter does not understand.)
Lebon: Never fear! We'll have you sleeping like human beings yet!
Piter: What if we like it that way?
Lebon: Don't talk rubbish! I've never yet seen no sans-culotte in a box. Tomorrow we'll look for some beds for you. Verney will see to it.
(Beetje returns carrying a tray with drink, cheese, bread, butter and a bowl of cold meat on it.)
Beetje: Clear the table, Piter!
(Piter takes Lebon's hat from the table and picks up the belt he was repairing before.)
Lebon: *(approvingly)* That didn't take you long. *(To Piter, noticing the belt)* What's that then?
Piter: A belt.
Lebon: Show me! *(Tries it on)* Very nice. Is the buckle silver?
Piter: Yes. A friend of mine makes them. We even sell quite a lot of them abroad. At one time they used to go to France too.

Lebon: Bardzo fajny. *Z żalem rozstaje się z pasem, wiesza go na poręczy krzesła* O! Widzę, że morowa przekąska. Skąd to masz?
Piter nie rozumie, patrzy na Lebona.
Lebon: Przecież jesteś lud. A lud nie miał u was co jeść. Żarli tylko bogaci. *Robi powstrzymujący ruch ręką* Nie przecz! Wiem dobrze, że puchliście z głodu. Widziałem na ulicach wasze dzieci.
Piter: Są raczej tłuste.
Lebon: Mają kartoflane brzuchy. Dowódca wszystko nam opowiadał. Mówię ci, nie przecz! Rozumiem, jesteś ambitny, ale przecież wasza bieda nie hańbi! Hańbi tylko tyranów. *Rusza do kąta, w którym stoi jego żołnierski worek*
Beetje: Co on mówi?
Piter: Nie rozumiem. Być może, że zapomniałem już trochę francuskiego.
Lebon: *wraca do stołu z workiem* Bardzo to pięknie, że chciałeś mnie ugościć kosztem własnych wyrzeczeń, ale francuski żołnierz jest francuskim żołnierzem. Pozwól, że dołożę się do tego poczęstunku.
Beetje: *pytająco Piter?*
Piter: Chce podzielić z nami swoje zapasy. Widzisz, jacy oni są serdeczni?
Lebon: *rozwiązuje worek* Chyba nie masz nic przeciwko temu?
Piter: Skoro to ci sprawi przyjemność.
Lebon: Diabelną. Robimy sobie przecież poczęstunek przyjaźni. *Wyjmuje wianuszek kiełbas* Apetyczne, co?
Piter: „Wąskie różki"! Kupiłeś je zapewne u Forringa, cztery ulice stąd.
Lebon: Hę?
Piter: Tylko on wyrabia podobne kiełbaski. To jego specjalność.
Lebon: *bez entuzjazmu* Masz dobre oko, obywatelu. *Wydobywa butelkę wódki*
Piter: Anyżówka! Od starego Lajensa z Portowej.

Lebon: Very nice too. *(Reluctantly parts with belt, laying it over the arm of his chair)* Oho! I see this is a fine meal. Where did you get this?
(Piter does not understand, looks at Lebon.)
Lebon: You're the People, aren't you? And the People here never had anything to eat. Only the rich got food. *(Makes a restraining gesture)* Don't deny it! I know very well that you were swelling up from hunger. I've seen the children in the streets.
Piter: I'd say they're plump.
Lebon: They've got potato-bellies. Our leader told us all about it. Don't deny it, I tell you! You're proud, I know, but after all, your poverty isn't your shame! It puts the tyrants to shame! *(He goes towards the corner where his soldier's knapsack is lying.)*
Beetje: What's he saying?
Piter: I don't understand. Maybe I've forgotten some of my French.
Lebon: *(returning to the table with his knapsack)* It's very good of you to want to feed me while denying yourselves, but a French soldier is a French soldier. Let me make a contribution to the meal.
Beetje: *(inquiringly)* Piter?
Piter: He wants to share his rations with us. You see how open-hearted they are?
Lebon: *(opening knapsack)* You don't mind, I hope?
Piter: If you really want to.
Lebon: I do, damn it. We'll have a little feast of friendship. *(Takes out a string of sausages)* Nice, eh?
Piter: "Lean Horn" sausages! You must have brought them from Forring, four streets from here.
Lebon: Eh?
Piter: He's the only one who makes sausages like that. They're his speciality.
Lebon: *(without enthusiasm)* You've got sharp eyes, citizen. (*Takes out a bottle.)*
Piter: Anisette! From old Lajens in Harbour Road.

Lebon nic już nie mówi, kładzie na stole długą, białą bułkę.

Piter: O, po to musiałeś chodzić aż na drugi koniec miasta. Czy warto było tak się fatygować? Chociaż prawda! Takiego pieczywa, jak Moonse, nie wypieka nikt w całym Einhoven.

Lebon: *zaciął usta; z pasją zanurza rękę jeszcze głębiej i dobywa z dna worka dwie kury; triumfująco Ale skąd są te kury — tego już chyba nie wiesz?*

Piter: Owszem! Tylko matka Vintje hoduje na swej fermie zielononóżki.

Lebon stoi wściekły, z kurami w ręku.

Piter: Sporo musiało cię to wszystko kosztować.

Lebón: *półgębkiem* Tak sobie! *Podchodzi z kurą w każdej ręce do Beetje* W twoje ręce, obywatelko! Podarunek od francuskiego żołnierza. Przyrządź je na jutro w sosie cebulowym, tak jak lubimy z Verneyem.

Z ukłonem wręcza Beetje kury.

Beetje patrzy pytająco na Pitera.

Piter: Zanieś je do kuchni. Prezent.

Beetje: Dla nas?

Piter: Tak. Tylko nie zapomnij — mają być w sosie cebulowym.

Beetje zdziwiona — chce protestować.

Piter: Idź już!

Beetje wychodzi.

Lebon: *wrócił tymczasem do stołu, jest wyraźnie naburmuszony* Strasznie dokładni jesteście w tej Holandii. Nie zdziwiłbym się, gdybyś mi powiedział, z jakiej ulicy pochodzi kurz na moich butach.

Piter: *pogodnie* Nasze miasteczko jest niewielkie. Tu wszyscy się znają.

Lebon: Ale żeby nawet kury poznawać!

Piter: A czy u was tak nie jest, że każdy ma jakąś swoją specjalność? Jeden piekarz wypieka lepsze bułki, drugi gorsze. Po towarze poznajesz właściciela.

Lebon: U nas jest równość!... Chociaż — czekaj! Może masz trochę racji. W

(Lebon says nothing, but lays a long, white loaf of bread on the table.)

Piter: Oh, you must have gone right to the far end of town for that. Was it worth the effort? You're right, though! There's nobody in all Eindhoven who can bake bread like Moonse's.

Lebon: *(tight-lipped, angrily plunging his hand deeper still and pulling out two chickens from the bottom of his knapsack; triumphantly)* And where do these chickens come from? You don't know that as well, do you?

Piter: Why, yes, I do! Only old Mother Vintje breeds those green-legs on her farm.

(Lebon, furious, stands with the chickens in his hands.)

Piter: All that must have cost you a pretty penny.

Lebon: *(muttering)* Not as much as all that. *(Goes up to Beetje with a chicken in each hand.)* Here you are, citizeness! A present from a French soldier. Cook 'em for tomorrow in onion sauce, the way me and Verney like 'em. *(Hands Beetje the chickens, with a bow.)*

(Beetje looks inquiringly at Piter.)

Piter: Take them into the kitchen. They're a present.

Beetje: For us?

Piter: Yes. But don't forget: they have to be done in onion sauce.

(Beetje, surprised, is about to protest.)

Piter: Get on with you!

(Exit Beetje.)

Lebon: *(Having returned to the table in the meantime, clearly displeased.)* You're terribly observant in this country. I wouldn't be surprised if you told me which street the dust on my boots came from.

Piter: *(cheerfully)* This is a small town. We all know each other.

Lebon: But fancy even recognizing the hens!

Piter: Isn't it like that in your country? Everybody having his own speciality? One baker bakes good rolls, another not so

mojej wiosce wystarczy mi pociągnąć jeden łyk, a od razu ci powiem, które wino jest od Molletów, a które z winnic starego Duclos.
Piter: Hodują zapewne różne gatunki winogron.
Lebon: Te same. Ale gruby Duclos dolewa wody. *Rozpogadza się zupełnie* Ach, nasze Baujolais. Masz w kieliszku słońce i zapach. A kolor ma taki, jak usta najpiękniejszej dziewczyny. Gdy siądziesz o zmierzchu przed domem z kubkiem takiego młodego wina, wiesz, bracie, że świat jest piękny i że ludzie są na nim dobrzy. *Marsowo* Poza tyranami, oczywiście! *Spogląda na stół* A tu? Wódka! *Macha pogardliwie ręką*
Piter: Powiem ci coś, obywatelu. Mam w piwnicy butelkę wina.
L*ebon:* *z rezygnacją* Pewnie takie siusiu, jak to u was. Do diabła! Lej już to świństwo!
Piter: Skoro sobie tak życzysz...
Beetje: *wraca* Biedactwa ledwo dyszą. Włożyłam je do szaflika. Dałam im wody, ziarna. Może ożyją.
Lebon: Co ona mówi?
Piter: Kury są na wpół zdechłe. Może byś je od razu. *Wskazuje bagnet Lebona*
Lebon: Ja? *Gwałtownie* Nie! Czekajcie z tym na Verneya. *Ruch głową w stronę Beetje* Albo ona ... *Szybko* Lej tę gorzałkę!
Piter nalewa wódkę do kubków.
Lebon: *Czekaj no! Wyciąga rękę po butelkę Pokaż!*
Piter: Nazywa się ratafia.
Lebon: *Aha! Ogląda butelkę — odstawia ją na stół*
Piter: *podnosi kubek* Za wolność, obywatelu!

good, and you recognize the baker by his wares.
Lebon: We have equality! … Hold on though! Maybe you've got a point. In my village I only have to take one sip to tell which wine comes from Mollet and which comes from old Duclos's cellars.
Piter: I expect they grow different kinds of grape.
Lebon: No, they're the same. But fat Duclos waters it down. *(Cheering up completely)* Ah, our Beaujolais! You have the sun in your glass, and what a bouquet! And it's the colour of the lips of the loveliest girl. When you sit yourself down in front of your house of an evening with a mug of that young wine, you know the world's a beautiful place, brother, and the people in it are good. *(Grimly)* Except for the tyrants, of course! *(Looking at the table)* And what do you have here? Liquor! *(Flaps hand contemptuously)*.
Piter: I'll tell you something, citizen. I have a bottle of wine in the cellar.
Lebon: *(with resignation)* Like piss, I expect, like all the wine here. To hell with it! Pour us some of that muck!
Piter: I will if you like …
Beetje: *(returning)* The poor things are hardly breathing. I've put them in the wash-tub and given them some corn and water. Perhaps they'll recover.
Lebon: What's she saying?
Piter: Those chickens are half dead. Maybe you could kill them straight away. *(Points to Lebon's bayonet.)*
Lebon: Me? *(Sharply)* No! Wait for Verney. He'll see to it. *(Nods towards Beetje)* Or her … *(Quickly)* Pour us some of that grog.
(Piter fills the mugs.)
Lebon: Hold it! *(Reaches for the bottle)* Let's have a look!
Piter: It's called ratafia.
Lebon: Aha! *(Studies bottle, then stands it on table.)*
Piter: *(raising mug)* Here's to freedom, citizen!

Lebon: Za wolność! *Trzyma kubek w ręce* Wypij!
Piter patrzy zaskoczony na Lebona.
Lebon: No, pij!
Piter: A ty?
Lebon: *niedbale* Mam zwyczaj zaczynać od drugiego kieliszka.
Piter pije.
Lebon: *W porządku. Nalewa Piterowi Równość i braterstwo! Jednym haustem wychyla zawartość swego kubka Tfu! Chwyta kawałek mięsa* z *półmiska.*
Piter: Smacznego!
Lebon: Co to za głupia pieczeń? Ani czosnku, ani cebuli.
Piter: U nas tak się jada.
Lebon: Okropność. *Nagle czujnie* Kto przyrządzał to mięso?
Piter: Moja żona.
Lebon: *spogląda na Beetje, siedzącą sztywno na skrzyni pod prawą ścianą A sankiulotka dlaczego nie dotrzymuje nam kompanii?*
Piter: Beetje nie pije alkoholu. Zresztą u nas jest zwyczaj, że gdy mężczyźni siedzą za stołem...
Lebon: *ucina* Zły zwyczaj. Od wczoraj jest u was równouprawnienie.
Piter: Ale ona nie lubi wódki.
Lebon: To polubi! Skoro jesteś sankiulotą, powinieneś wiedzieć, że wolna kobieta nie różni się niczym od mężczyzny. *Poprawia się* Poza szczegółami, oczywiście! *Podchodzi z dwoma kubkami do Beetje* Pij, obywatelko!
Beetje patrzy przerażona na Pitera. Piter daje jej znak, by wypiła.
Lebon: Równość i braterstwo! *Pije — odbiera od Beetje kubek, wraca do stołu* Powiedziałem ci, że nauczymy was wielu rzeczy? I nauczymy! Równości, braterstwa! A przede wszystkim — wolności!
Piter: *Tego nie trzeba nas uczyć. Lebon spogląda na Holendra.*

Lebon: To freedom! *(Holding mug in hand)* Drink up!
(Piter looks in amazement at Lebon.)
Lebon: Go on, drink!
Piter: What about you?
Lebon: *(casually)* I usually start with the second glass.
(Piter drinks.)
Lebon: That's better. *(Fills Piter's mug)* To equality and freedom! *(Drains his mug at one gulp.)* Ugh! *(Grabs a piece of meat from the bowl.)*
Piter: Bon appétit!
Lebon: Call this roast meat? No garlic or onion?
Piter: That's the way we eat it.
Lebon: Terrible. *(Suddenly wary)* Who cooked it?
Piter: My wife.
Lebon: *(glancing at Beetje, who is sitting stiffly on the chest by the right wall)* Why isn't the sans-culotte drinking with us?
Piter: Beetje doesn't drink alcohol. Besides, it's our custom that when men are at the table …
Lebon: *(interrupting)* That's a bad custom. As from yesterday you have equal rights here.
Piter: But she doesn't like alcohol.
Lebon: Then she'll get to like it! If you're a sans-culotte, you ought to know that a free woman is no different from a free man. *(Correcting himself)* Except for a few details, of course! (*Approaching Beetje, with a mug in each hand)* Drink, citizeness!
(Beetje looks at Piter in horror. Piter motions to her to drink.)
Lebon: To equality and fraternity! *(Drinks, takes Beetje's mug, and returns to the table)* Didn't I tell you we'd teach you a lot of things? And so we will! We'll teach you equality and fraternity! And above all—liberty!
Piter: We don't have to be taught that.
(Lebon glances at the Dutchman.)

Piter: Nie słyszałeś o patriotach batawskich? Nie słyszałeś o Dendelsie? My wiemy, co to wolność. Kochamy ją całym sercem.
Lebon: Chrzanisz! Możesz wiedzieć, co to dziewczyna i kochać ją jak szalony, ale żyć z nią — o, to, bracie, zupełnie inna sprawa. Tego się trzeba nauczyć.
Piter: Mało znasz jeszcze nasz kraj. W osiemdziesiątym piątym przepędziliśmy Orańczyka.
Lebon: *jedząc* To był tyran?
Piter: *powściągliwie* Poniekąd.
Lebon: *jedząc* W takim razie dobrzeście zrobili.
Piter: Widzisz.
Lebon: Niby co widzę?
Piter: Że potrafiliśmy żyć w wolności.
Lebon: Bzdura! Jak mogliście żyć w czymś, czego nie było? My wynaleźliśmy wolność! Wiesz, że stworzyliśmy nową epokę?
Piter: Wiem.
Lebon: Tak? A powiedz: którego dziś mamy?
Piter: *zdziwiony* Szesnastego lutego tysiąc siedemset dziewięćdziesiątego trzeciego roku.
Lebon: A gówno! Dziś jest siedemnasty pluviose'a pierwszego roku Republiki! I co? Nie wiesz nawet, kiedy żyjesz, a chcesz mi wmówić, że wiesz, jak żyć! *Klepie Pitera po ramieniu* Pij, obywatelu! To wszystko przyjdzie!
Beetje: Co on mówi?
Piter: *ogłupiały* Mówi, że wszystko przyjdzie.
Lebon: Równość i braterstwo! *Wychyla kubek — zagryza kiełbaską* Nareszcie! Kiełbaski macie przynajmniej podobne do naszych.
Piter: *z dystrakcją* Kiełbaski? A, tak! Niektórzy nazywają je nawet „francuskie".

Piter: Haven't you heard of the Batavian Patriots? Haven't you heard of Daendels? We know what liberty is. We love it with all our hearts.
Lebon: Rubbish! You can know what a woman is, and love one to distraction, but living with her, brother—that's something completely different. That's something you have to learn.
Piter: You don't know our country very well yet. In 1785 we threw out the Prince of Orange.
Lebon: *(chewing)* Was he a tyrant?
Piter: *(with restraint)* In a manner of speaking.
Lebon: *(chewing)* Then you did the right thing.
Piter: So you see …
Lebon: See what?
Piter: That we managed to live in freedom.
Lebon: Nonsense! How could you live in something that didn't exist? *We* discovered freedom! Do you know that we have created a new era?
Piter: Yes.
Lebon: You do? Then tell me: what's the date today?
Piter: *(surprised)* February the sixteenth, 1793.
Lebon: Bullshit! It's Pluviose the sixteenth of the First Year of the Republic! See? You don't even know *when* you're living, and you want to tell me you know *how* to live! *(Slaps Piter on the shoulder)* Drink up, citizen! You'll get used to it.
Beetje: What's he saying?
Piter: *(dazed)* He says we'll get used to it.
Lebon: To equality and fraternity! *(Drains mug, chews on sausage)* At last! At least you have sausages like ours.
Piter: *(distractedly)* Sausages? Oh, yes. Some people actually call them French sausages.

Lebon: *z pełnymi ustami* Mają rację. Wszystko, co dobre, to francuskie.
Piter: *buntowniczo* No, nie przesadzaj. My też mamy niezłe rzeczy.
Lebon: *z pełnymi ustami Na przykład?*
Piter: *na chybił trafił, wskazuje stół Sery! Słyną na cały świat.*
Lebon: *z pełnymi ustami* Najlepsze sery wyrabiają w Normandii.
Piter: Miałeś kiedy w ręku holenderskie płótno?
Lebon: Najcieńsze płótna przędą tkacze z Lyonu.
Piter: A sukno? Wysyłamy je nawet do Anglii.
Lebon: *krztusi się Dokąd?*
Piter: *zdziwiony* Do Anglii.
Lebon: Radzę ci, obywatelu, zapomnij nawet nazwy tego kraju! *Podnosi kubek* Równość i braterstwo!
Wraca do jedzenia — peroruje, wywijając nożem Anglię zniszczymy. Właściwie tak jakby już jej nie było. Rozpoczynamy ścisłą blokadę. Ani uncja towaru nie wpłynie do portów przeklętej łotrzycy!
Piter: *z zainteresowaniem* Jesteś tego pewien?
Lebon: A jakeś ty myślał?
Piter milczy zafrasowany.
Lebon: Czemu tak siedzisz? Może żal ci wrogów republiki?
Piter: Skąd! Tylko widzisz... Prinsen, który kupował moje pasy — miał licznych nabywców w Anglii.
Lebon: *jedząc* Skończone!
Piter: *na wpół do siebie* Trudno. Miasta pruskie też bardzo chwalą nasze wyroby.
Lebon: Chyba wiesz, że Prusy są w wojnie z Francją.
Piter: W takim razie Rosja...
Lebon: Tyranka Katarzyna nie jest przyjaciółką wolności.

Lebon: *(with mouth full)* They're right. Everything that's good comes from France.
Piter: *(rebelliously)* Now don't exaggerate. We have some quite good things too.
Lebon: *(with mouth full)* What, for example?
Piter: *(at random, pointing at the table)* Our cheeses! They're famous all over the world.
Lebon: *(with mouth full)* The best cheeses are made in Normandy.
Piter: Have you ever held Dutch cloth in your hands?
Lebon: The finest cloth comes from Lyons.
Piter: What about our woollens? We even send them to England.
Lebon: *(choking)* To where?
Piter: *(taken aback)* To England.
Lebon: I advise you, citizen, to forget the very name of that country! *(Raising mug)* To equality and fraternity! *(Returns to his food, brandishing knife while speaking)* We'll destroy England.
We'll leave it as if it had never existed. We'll impose a tight blockade. Not a single ounce of freight will sail into the ports of that damned villainous country.
Piter: *(with interest)* Are you sure?
Lebon: Why? What did you think?
(Piter maintains an awkward silence.)
Lebon: Why are you sitting so quietly? Not sorry for the enemies of the Republic, are you?
Piter: Not a bit! But you see … Prinsen, who used to buy my belts, had a lot of customers in England.
Lebon: *(eating)* That's all over!
Piter: *(half to himself)* Too bad. The Prussian towns also praise our wares highly.
Lebon: Don't you know that Prussia's at war with France?
Piter: In that case Russia …
Lebon: The tyrant Catherine's no friend of liberty.

Piter: Ależ, obywatelu! Musimy przecież gdzieś sprzedawać nasze towary. Holandia żyje z handlu.
Lebon: *Tak? Wesoło, jakby obwieszczał najlepszą nowinę Nie martw się! My wszystko kupimy!*
Piter: Wy?
Lebon: *dumnie* Mogę cię zapewnić! Dowódca nam mówił. A skoro on mówił, to murowane.
Piter: W istocie — murowane?
Lebon: Znowu te głupie pytania?
Piter: *podnosi kubek — słabo* Wolność i braterstwo.
Lebon: *uradowany* O! Pijesz już jak prawdziwy republikanin.
Beetje: Czemuś tak pobladł, Piter?
Piter: *niedbale* Czekaj! *Do Lebona* I płacić będziecie ... asygnatami?
Lebon: Oczywiście! Widzisz, co to znaczy żyć w nowej epoce? Zamiast brudnego złota arystokratów, dostaniecie pieniądze wolnego ludu.
Piter: *jeszcze słabiej* Równość i braterstwo!
Lebon: Jedność i niepodzielność!
Piją
Piter: *niepewnie* Słuchaj, obywatelu! Dobrze żyjesz ze swoim dowódcą?
Lebon: Z Lebasem? Lepiej nie można!
Piter: Poradź mu, żeby Francja nie kupowała pasów u Prinsena. Są piekielnie drogie.
Lebon: Nie bój się! Republika jest bogata. W Paryżu nadrukowaliśmy tyle asygnat, że można za nie kupić całe Niderlandy.
Piter: Cło na granicy jest wysokie. To wam się nie opłaci.
Lebon: Zniesiemy cło! A zresztą — w ogóle zniesiemy granicę!
Piter: Jak to zniesiecie?
Lebon: Po prostu. Zniesiemy i już! Wcielimy was do Francji.
Piter: Niemożliwe!
Lebon: Dla Republiki nie ma rzeczy niemożliwych. Wspaniałomyślność

Piter: But citizen! We have to sell our wares somewhere. Holland lives by trading.
Lebon: Does it? *(Gaily, as if announcing good news)* Don't worry! We'll buy everything!
Piter: You?
Lebon: *(proudly)* I can assure you! Our leader told us. And if he told us, it's guaranteed.
Piter: Guaranteed? Really?
Lebon: Are you still asking silly questions?
Piter: *(raising mug; feebly)* To liberty and fraternity.
Lebon: *(delighted)* That's the spirit! Now you're drinking like a true republican!
Beetje: Why have you turned so pale, Piter?
Piter: *(casually)* Hold on! *(To Lebon)* And will you pay in … paper money?
Lebon: Of course! See what it means to live in the new era? Instead of the aristocrats' grubby gold you'll receive the free people's money.
Piter: *(even more feebly)* To equality and fraternity!
Lebon: To unity and indivisibility!
(They drink.)
Piter: *(uncertainly)* Tell me, citizen: are you on good terms with your leader?
Lebon: With Lebas? Couldn't be better!
Piter: Tell him France shouldn't buy belts from Prinsen. They're an awful price.
Lebon: Never fear! The Republic is rich. We've printed enough paper money in Paris to buy up the whole of Holland.
Piter: The duty at the border is high. It won't be worth your while.
Lebon: We'll abolish the duty! Come to that, we'll abolish the border!
Piter: What do you mean—abolish it?
Lebon: Just what I say. Abolish it once and for all! We'll unite you with France.
Piter: That's impossible!
Lebon: Nothing's impossible for the Republic. The generosity of a free people is unlimited. Just ask—the National

wolnego ludu jest nieograniczona. Poprosicie — Konwent zatwierdzi — i wcielimy.
Piter: A jeśli nie poprosimy?
Lebon: Bzdura! Nie było jeszcze takiego wypadku. Ledwo wyzwolimy jakiś kraj — natychmiast prosi o przyłączenie. *Liczy na palcach* Sabaudia, Nicea, Nadrenia. Ostatnio wcieliliśmy Belgię. No co? Nie cieszysz się, że będziesz w rodzinie wolnych narodów?
Piter: *słabo* Owszem.
Lebon: Wy, Holendrzy, macie chyba wodę w żyłach! To się nazywa „cieszyć"? W Sabaudii ludzie na ulicach tańczyli i klaskali w ręce!
Piter z beznadziejną miną klaszcze trzy razy w dłonie.
Beetje: Co robisz, Piter?
Piter: *blado* Cieszę się.
Lebon: Tak, to rozumiem! Równość i braterstwo! *Wychyla kubek* Zobaczysz, jak teraz zażyjecie. Będziecie mieli Konwent, kluby, przyślemy wam gilotynę. Wiesz, co to gilotyna?
Piter chce odpowiedzieć.
Lebon: Kładź głowę! No, kładź, powiadam! *Przemocą przyciska głowę Pitera do stołu, robi ręką ruch opadającego noża* Ciach! *Gestem kata podnosi za włosy głowę Holendra* Oto głowa podłego arystokraty! Patrzcie na głowę wroga ludu! *Wlepia pijany wzrok w twarz Pitera* Jesteś wrogiem ludu? Odpowiedz... Nie! Masz poczciwe oczy. A poza tym jesteś rymarzem. *Puszcza włosy Pitera — wskazuje na pas* Pokaż! *Piter podaje pas.*
Lebon: Wiesz co? Zamienimy się! Bierz mój! *Odpina sprzączkę pasa* Pamiątka po żołnierzu wolności! Będziesz mógł pokazywać wnukom pas człowieka, który cię wyzwolił. *Chwyta kubek* Twoje zdrowie! *Przypomina sobie — sztywno* Równość i braterstwo! *Pije.*

Convention will approve—and you'll be incorporated.
Piter: What if we don't ask?
Lebon: Rubbish! There's never been a case like that yet. The moment we liberate any country, it asks to be incorporated. *(Counting on his fingers)* Savoy, Nice, the Rhineland. Recently we've annexed Belgium. Well? Aren't you glad to be joining the family of free peoples?
Piter: *(weakly)* Yes.
Lebon: You Dutchmen must have water in your veins! You call that being glad? In Savoy the people danced in the streets and clapped their hands!
(Piter claps his hands three times. His expression is hopeless.)
Beetje: What are you doing, Piter?
Piter: *(feebly)* Being glad.
Lebon: That I understand! To equality and fraternity! *(Drains mug)* You'll see what a life you'll have now! You'll have your own Convention, your clubs, and we'll send you a guillotine. Do you know what a guillotine is?
(Piter is about to reply.)
Lebon: Bow your head! Come on, head down, I said! *(Forces Piter's head down onto the table and brings his hand down like a falling blade)* Chop! *(Lifts the Dutchman's head by the hair, in gesture of executioner)* See here the head of a rotten aristocrat! See the head of an enemy of the People! *(Fixes drunken eyes on Piter's face)* Are you an enemy of the People? Answer me … No! You have honest eyes. And besides, you're a saddler. *(Letting go of Piter's hair, points to his belt)* Show me that!
(Piter hands belt to him.)
Lebon: You know what? We'll swap! Take mine! *(Undoes his belt buckle)* A memento from a soldier of freedom! You'll be able to show your grandchildren the belt of the man who liberated you. *(Grasping mug)* Your health! *(Stiffly, remembering his duty)* To equality and fraternity! *(Drinks.)*

Piter siedzi ogłupiały z pasem Lebona w ręku.
Beetje: Zabrał ci pas?
Piter: *potrząsa głową Zamienił.*
Lebon: Czemu siedzisz, jakbyś kij połknął? Wkładaj go na brzuch! Jest już twój! *Chce włożyć Piterowi pas* Albo czekaj! Masz rację! Pas, który dźwigał bagnet wyzwoliciela, jest zbyt cenny, by trzeszczeć na byle czyim kałdunie. Wieszaj go na ścianie! Pierwszy w mieście będziesz miał ołtarzyk wolności. Twoi sąsiedzi zzielenieją z zawiści! *Rozgląda się, dostrzega na ścianie krzyż* Co to? Wierzysz w Boga?
Piter: Tak.
Lebon: Od dzisiaj masz przestać wierzyć. Boga wymyślili księża. A księża są wspólnikami arystokratów.
Piter: *chmurnie* Wiem. Mają wielkie posiadłości. Ściągają podatki. Uciskają lud.
Lebon: O, brawo! Zaczynasz mówić jak prawdziwy sankiulota.
Piter: Ale to u was. U nas nie ma księży.
Lebon spogląda na Pitera.
Piter: Są ubodzy pastorzy.
Lebon: Bzdura! Skoro są tyrani, to muszą być księża! Z kim spiskowaliby arystokraci? Chcesz wywrócić całą teorię rewolucji? No, dawaj ten pas! *Rusza ku ścianie* Zaraz ci wszystko urządzę!
Beetje: *zrywa się ze skrzyni Piter!*
Piter: Zostaw krzyż!
Lebon: *sięga po krzyż* A gówno! Właściwie powinna tu wisieć czapka wolności, ale nim ją zdobędziesz, wystarczy...
Beetje dopada Lebona, odrywa mu ręce od krzyża.
Lebon: *zaskoczony, spogląda na dyszącą Beetje — przenosi spojrzenie na Pitera* Czego ona chce? Może myśli, że chcę wam zabrać ten kawałek żelaza? Przecież to nawet nie srebro! *Do Beetje*

(Piter sits in a daze, with Lebon's belt in his hand.)
Beetje: Has he taken your belt?
Piter: *(shaking head)* No, swapped it.
Lebon: Why are you sitting like that, like you'd swallowed a ramrod? Put it round your belly! It's yours! *(Makes to put the belt on Piter)* Hold on though! You're right! The belt that held the liberator's bayonet is too precious to hang on just anybody's gut. Hang it on the wall! You'll be the first in this town to have an altar of freedom. Your neighbours'll turn green with envy! *(Looking round, noticing a cross on the wall)* What's that? Do you believe in God?
Piter: Yes.
Lebon: As from today you'll stop believing. God is the invention of the priests. And the priests are in league with the aristocrats.
Piter: *(gloomily)* I know. They have great estates. They collect taxes. They oppress the People.
Lebon: Bravo! Now you're talking like a real sans-culotte.
Piter: But that's in your country. We don't have priests here.
(Lebon glances at Piter.)
Piter: We only have poor pastors.
Lebon: Rubbish! If you have tyrants you must have priests! Who would the aristocrats conspire with? Are you trying to stand the whole theory of revolution on its head? Here, give me that belt back! *(Steps towards the wall)* I'll fix that for you right away!
Beetje: *(jumping up from the chest)* Piter!
Piter: Don't touch that cross!
Lebon: *(reaching for the cross)* Don't talk shit! The bonnet of freedom ought to hang here, but until you get it, this will do …
(Beetje springs at Lebon and pulls his hands away from the cross.)
Lebon: *(astonished, looks at Beetje, who is breathing hard, then at Piter)* What does she want? Does she think I want to take away your piece of scrap-iron? It's not even silver! *(To Beetje)* I won't take it

Nie zabiorę tego! Nie bój się! *Znów sięga do krzyża.*
Beetje chwyta go mocno rękami za ramiona.
Piter: *wstaje* Powiedziałem ci, żebyś go zostawił!
Lebon: *przytrzymywany ramionami Beetje, patrzy na Pitera; innym tonem Co to? Sprzeciwiasz się woli ludu? Powiedz, żeby mnie puściła! Strząsa z siebie ramiona Beetje — z pochyloną jak do ataku głową idzie w stronę stołu Więc to tak? Jesteś w spisku tyranów? Ile ci dali pieniędzy? Chwyta Pitera za koszulę na piersiach Gadaj!*
Piter: Czyś oszalał, obywatelu? Wiesz przecież, że jestem zwykłym rzemieślnikiem.
Lebon: *nie puszcza koszuli Pitera — wciąż tym samym tonem* To nic nie znaczy! Arystokraci potrafią przekupywać!...
Szelest w sąsiedniej izbie.
Lebon: *gwałtownie odwraca głowę Kto tam jest?*
Brzęk spadającego naczynia.
Lebon: *przytrzymuje Pitera za koszulę Siedź tu! Na palcach rusza ku ścianie. Chwyta karabin. Beetje i Piter z przerażeniem śledzą ruchy sierżanta. Ten z gotowym do strzału karabinem zmierza ku prawym drzwiom. Rozwiera je kopnięciem W imieniu Republiki! Tkwi przez chwilę w progu — niknie za drzwiami.*
Z warsztatu dochodzi przerażone gdakanie.
Lebon: *staje w drzwiach — nie od razu* Przeklęte kury! *Nieszczerze się śmieje* He, he... No, czemu tak wybałuszasz gały? Nie masz się czemu dziwić. Żołnierz wolności musi być czujny. Zewsząd czyhają nań niebezpieczeństwa. Ty nic nie wiesz, ale nam mówił dowódca. *Zniża głos — namiętnie* Arystokraci są wszędzie! Podsuwają zatrute jedzenie, poją zatrutą

away! Don't worry! *(Reaches for the cross again.)*
(Beetje seizes him firmly by the arms.)
Piter: *(rising)* I told you not to touch it!
Lebon: *(with Beetje gripping his arms, looks at Piter; in changed tone)* What's this? Are you opposing the will of the People? Tell her to let go of me! *(Shakes off Beetje's grasp; with head lowered as if to charge, steps towards the table)* So it's like that, is it? Conspiring with the tyrants, are you? How much do they pay you? *(Seizes Piter by his shirt-front)* Tell me!
Piter: Are you out of your mind, citizen? You know I'm just an ordinary craftsman.
Lebon: *(still holding Piter by the shirt; in same tone)* That don't mean a thing! The aristocrats can buy anyone! …
(Rustling sounds in next room.)
Lebon: *(turning head sharply)* Who's in there?
(Sound of pan falling.)
Lebon: *(holding Piter by the shirt)* Stay here! *(On tiptoe steps towards the wall. Snatches up his musket. Beetje and Piter follow the sergeant's movements with horror. With his musket at the ready he makes towards the right door and kicks it open)* In the name of the Republic! *(Stands for a moment in the doorway, then disappears through it.*
Frightened clucking sounds from workshop.)
Lebon: *(reappearing in doorway; not at once)* Blasted hens! *(With hollow laugh)* Ha, ha … Well then, what are you staring at? There's nothing to be surprised at. A soldier of freedom has to be vigilant. Danger lurks on every hand. You don't know, but our leader told us: *(lowering voice, with feeling)* the aristocrats are everywhere! They poison food and drink and bribe the most honest people. Anybody can be an enemy—even you! *(Putting his arm round Piter's neck)* Don't be offended! I know you're my friend, you're one of the People. Drink, citizen! *(Drains mug)* Do you think it's easy to be a liberator? When we entered

wódką, przekupują najpoczciwszych ludzi. Każdy może być ukrytym wrogiem — nawet ty! *Obejmuje Pitera za szyję* Nie obrażaj się! Wiem, ty jesteś mój przyjaciel, jesteś prawdziwy lud. Pij, obywatelu! *Wychyla kubek* Myślisz, że to tak łatwo być wyzwolicielem? Kiedyśmy wkraczali do Antwerpii, ludzie obsypywali nas kwiatami, wznosili przepisowe okrzyki, całowały nas najpiękniejsze dziewczęta. A w niecały tydzień potem, kiedy powinni byli jeszcze bardziej się cieszyć, bo właśnie przyłączyliśmy ich do Republiki — w jakiejś ciemnej uliczce obrzucono mnie jajami. I to zgniłymi w dodatku. Kto to zrobił? Lud? To zrobili arystokraci. Arystokraci i ich pachołkowie. *Uderza pięścią w stół* Ale koniec już z nimi! Wkrótce zwycięży wolność! Tyrani pójdą na gilotynę! Wszyscy! Co do jednego! Marat żądał stu tysięcy głów? Zetniemy dwieście! I trzysta! Tyle, ile będzie potrzeba! Będziemy tańczyć z nimi wokół drzewa wolności, będziemy śpiewać Carmagnolę! Umiesz śpiewać Carmagnolę? Tylko nie gadaj, że macie swoje pieśni. Będziesz śpiewał Carmagnolę i już! *Śpiewa i tańczy*

Przyrzekła swoim pani tron, *bis*
Zadławić Paryż z wszystkich stron, *bis*
Lecz taki był jej zysk,
Że lud ją rąbnął w pysk.
Tańczmy więc Carmagnolę,
Wiwat śpiew, wiwat śpiew!
Tańczmy więc Carmagnolę Wiwat śpiew, armat śpiew!

Porywa za ramiona Pitera — ciągnie go za sobą w taniec

A, ça ira, ça ira, ça ira,
Arystokraci na latarnię!
A, ça ira, ça ira, ça ira,
Arystokrato, bierz cię kat!...

Tańczysz, obywatelu, jak wół! Wnet przyjdzie Verney! Razem cię nauczymy! Odsuwaj ten przeklęty stół! Wolność

Antwerp the people showered us with flowers, calling out their welcome to us, and the loveliest girls kissed us. And less than a week later, when they should have been even more pleased because we'd just annexed them to the Republic, I had eggs thrown at me in a dark back-street, And rotten eggs at that. Who did it? The People? No, it was the aristocrats. The aristocrats and their lackeys.

(Bringing fist down on table) But their day is over! Soon freedom will triumph! The tyrants will go to the guillotine! All of 'em! Every last one! Marat demanded a hundred thousand heads. We'll cut off two hundred thousand! Three hundred thousand! As many as it takes! We'll dance round the Tree of Freedom with them and sing the Carmagnole! Do you know the Carmagnole? Now don't tell me you've got your own songs. You'll sing the Carmagnole, and that's final! *(Singing and dancing)*

The Queen to all her courtiers vowed *(Twice)*
The Paris mob would soon be cowed, *(Twice)*
But instead as things turned out
The People whacked her in the snout.
So let's dance the Carmagnole!
Vive le son! Vive le son!
Let's dance the Carmagnole!
Vive le son du canon!

(Catching Piter by the arms and drawing him into his dance.)

Ah, ça ira, ça ira, ça ira!
String the lords up on the lamp-posts!
Ah, ça ira, ça ira, ça ira!
Lords and ladies to the rope!

You dance like a cow, citizen! Verney'll be here in a minute. We'll teach you together! Push back that damned table! Freedom needs space! *(Pushing table aside)* And to hell with that old box! *(Runs to the chest Beetje has been sitting on)* Out of the way, citizeness! Out with the old order! Long live the new order! *(Pushes the chest forward, straight towards the door.)*

potrzebuje przestrzeni! *Odpycha stół na bok* I do stu diabłów z tą skrzynią! *Podbiega do skrzyni, na której dotąd siedziała Beetje* Dalej, obywatelko! Precz ze starym porządkiem! Niech żyje nowy ład! *Sunie skrzynię do przodu, wprost na drzwi*

Piter: Tarasujesz, obywatelu, wyjście.

Lebon: Sankiulota zna tylko jedno wyjście: zwyciężyć lub umrzeć! Ale my zwyciężymy! *Idzie ku stołowi* Zobaczysz, że zwyciężymy! Właściwie jużeśmy zwyciężyli. Republika jest niepokonalna! *Porywa ze stołu butelkę, podnosi ją, nieruchomieje.*

Słychać muzykę wojskową.

Lebon: Słyszysz? To idą nasi! Poznaję marsza! Mój pułk, dziewiąty pułk. *Zbutelką w ręce podbiega do okna* Patrz! Wchodzą na placyk. Generał Dumouriez na białym koniu! ... Za nim cały sztab! ... Będą zasadzać wam Drzewo Wolności! Widzisz naszego generała? Niech żyje Republika! ... Sztandar! *Przykłada dłoń do czoła* Ale idą! Bagnety jak srebrny grzebień. Patrz! Tak się trzyma krok! ... Niech żyją dzieci wolności! Niech żyją pogromcy tyranów! ... Chcesz? Przyłączymy się do nich. Będą tędy przechodzić. Wpierw okrążają miasto... Och, idą chłopcy jak diabli... Ci teraz to strzelcy konni... Naprzód, po nowe zdobycze! Precz z ladacznicą Anglią! Niecny Koburgu — drżyj! Niech żyje Jedna i Niepodzielna! *Podnosi butelkę — nie pije — do Pitera* Przynieś wina! Wypijemy za zwycięstwo ludu.

Piter: *stoi obok Lebona* Wchodzą już w zaułek.

Lebon: To nic! Zdążymy wypić, nim wrócą. No, idź! Na co czekasz?

Piter: Ale ludzi!

Piter: You're blocking the way, citizen.

Lebon: A sans-culotte knows only one way: triumph or death! And we'll triumph! *(Going to table)* We'll triumph, you'll see! Actually, we've triumphed already. The Republic is invincible! *(Snatches bottle from table, raises it and freezes into immobility.*

Martial music is heard.)

Lebon: Do you hear that? That's our lot coming! I know that march! That's my regiment, the Ninth! *(Runs to window, bottle in hand)* Look! They're coming into the square. General Dumouriez on his white horse! … And his whole staff behind him! … They're going to plant a Tree of Freedom for you! You see our general? Long live the Republic! … The flag! *(Saluting)* And they're still coming! Bayonets like a crest of silver! Look! See how they keep in step! … Long live the children of liberty! Long live the vanquishers of the tyrants! … If you like we can go and join them. They'll be passing this way. First they'll march round the town … There! Those lads are going like demons! … Those are the mounted fusiliers … Onward to new conquests! Down with whoring England! False Coburg, tremble in your shoes! Long live the One and Only Indivisible Republic! *(Raising bottle—not drinking; to Piter)* Bring me some wine! We'll drink to the People's victory.

Piter: *(standing next to Lebon)* They're coming down the street already.

Lebon: Never mind! We'll have time for a drink before they come back. Go on! What are you waiting for?

Piter: What a lot of people!

Lebon: Sankiuloto! Chcę wina! *Obejmuje Pitera za szyję* Jesteś moim przyjacielem czy nie?
Piter patrzy na Beetje.
Lebon: Czego się boisz? Głupi! Zostaje pod moją opieką!
Piter: Ale...
Lebon: Idź, powiadam!
Piter, ociągając się, zmierza ku drzwiom. Dźwięki marsza zaczynają się oddalać.
Beetje: *z przerażeniem* Wychodzisz, Piter?
Piter: Tylko do piwnicy. Chce wina. Posłałbym ciebie, ale nie znajdziesz. *W drzwiach* Nie lękaj się. Zaraz wrócę. *Wychodzi*
Lebon: Co on ci mówił? Prawda. Nie rozumiesz po francusku. Trudno! Wypijemy po holendersku. *Nalewa wódkę do kubków.*
Muzyka zupełnie nacicha.
Lebon: *podchodzi do Beetje* Czemu uciekasz? Chcę z tobą wypić za wolność. *Gestykulując* Ja cię oswobodziłem. Ty jesteś oswobodzona. Równość i braterstwo! *Wychyla kubek* Nie pijesz? Zła jesteś na mnie? Rzeczywiście! Posprzeczaliśmy się o ten krzyż. Ale tak trzeba, obywatelko! Wierz mi! To wcale nie jest takie proste. Ja także trochę się boję. Z Bogiem nigdy nie wiadomo. A nuż jest? Ale nasz dowódca mówi, że nie ma. W razie czego — on będzie odpowiadał!... No, wypij! Ładna jesteś jak cholera. Przypominasz trochę moją Madelaine. Tylko Madelaine ma ciemniejsze włosy i jest bardziej od ciebie przy kości... Co ona tam teraz robi? Czy naprawiła chałupę? A może śpi z rudym Rene od Faucoltów? Tak, blondyneczko! Niełatwo jest uszczęśliwiać innych, kiedy ma się jeszcze nie wszystko
w porządku u siebie!... *Sięga do kieszeni* Masz! Chowałem to dla Madelaine, ale taka jesteś do niej podobna... *Podaje*

Lebon: I want some wine, sans-culotte! *(Putting his arm round Piter's neck)* Are you my friend or aren't you?
(Piter looks at Beetje.)
Lebon: What are you afraid of, stupid? She'll be under my protection!
Piter: But …
Lebon: Go on, I tell you!
(Piter goes reluctantly towards the door. The sound of the march begins to fade.)
Beetje: *(aghast)* Are you going out, Piter?
Piter: I'm only going to the cellar. He wants some wine. I'd send you, but you wouldn't be able to find it. *(In doorway)* Don't worry. I'll be back in a minute. *(Exit.)*
Lebon: What did he say? Oh yes, you don't understand French. Pity! Let's have a Dutch drink. *(Pours ratafia into mugs. Music fades completely.)*
Lebon: *(approaching Beetje)* Why are you running away? I want to drink to freedom with you. *(Gesticulating)* I've liberated you. You're liberated. To equality and fraternity! *(Drains mug)* Aren't you drinking? Are you mad at me? Really! We had a disagreement about that cross. But it's got to be done, citizeness, believe me! Although it's not easy. I'm a bit afraid myself. You never quite know with God. Maybe he does exist. But our leader says he doesn't. If there's any trouble, he'll answer for it! … Come on now, drink! You're a damned lovely woman! A bit like my Madeleine. But she's got darker hair, and a bit more meat on her … What's she doing now, I wonder? Has she fixed up the house? Or maybe she's in bed with that ginger René Faucolt. Yes, my little blonde! It's not easy to make others happy when you still haven't got your own affairs straight! … *(Reaches into pocket)* Here! I was keeping this for Madeleine, but since you look so much like her … *(Hands Beetje a large brooch)* Go on, take it! I hope you won't ask me how much I paid, the way your husband does. War is war, my little one. A soldier's only a soldier … Here, I'll pin it

Beetje dużą broszę No, bierz! Mam nadzieję, że nie będziesz pytać, tak jak twój mąż, ile za to zapłaciłem. Wojna jest wojną, moja mała. Żołnierz jest tylko żołnierzem... Daj! Przypnę ci. Nie uciekaj. Przecież nie chcę ci zrobić nic złego. Prawdziwy sankiulota nie robi tych rzeczy w skrzyni, pocałuję cię tylko. W policzek. To nie sprawia przyjemności, ale taki jest przepis. „Pocałunek braterstwa", rozumiesz? No daj! Nie wyrywaj się! Przecież nie będę za tobą ganiał po izbie! ... *Przytrzymuje Beetje* A, mam cię! Teraz już mi nie umkniesz. Raz buzi z lewej, raz z prawej.

Beetje z całych sił odpycha od siebie Lebona.

Lebon: Nie chcesz? Nie chcesz pocałunku braterstwa? Ńo, przecież cię nie ugryzę! Nie wyrywaj się, mówię! Dawałem już rady nie takim jak ty! ...

Beetje: *krzyczy rozpaczliwie Piter!*

Lebon: Cicho! Pomyślałby kto, że cię gwałcę! No, daj się pocałować, do diabła!... *Szamoce się z Beetje* Nie lubię tych rzeczy przemocą...

W progu staje Piter. Dostrzega zmagających się ze sobą Lebona i Beetje. W paru skokach dopada sierżanta. Szarpnięciem odrywa go od żony.

Lebon: To ty? Powiedz jej...

Piter uderza Lebona pięścią w twarz.

Lebon: Zwariowałeś?

Piter: *Draniu! Zamierza się ponownie*

Lebon: *chwyta Pitera za rękę* Co? Bijesz francuskiego żołnierza? *Zmaga się z Holendrem* Więc tak... Więc jesteś w spisku tyranów...

Piter: Na pomoc, ludzie! Na pomoc!

Lebon: *dyszy* Wołasz... arystokratów?... Stoją, czekają na schodach?... Nic z tego! Precz z tyranami! *Dobywa bagnetu — zadaje cios. Piter pada na podłogę. Przeraźliwy krzyk Beetje.*

on you. Don't run away. I'm not going to do you any harm. A true sans-culotte doesn't do these things in boxes. I'll just give you a kiss. On the cheek.

Not for my own pleasure—just because that's the rule: the Kiss of Brotherhood. Understand? Come here, then! Don't wriggle out! I'm not going to chase you round the room! … *(Catches her)* There! Got you! Now you won't get away. Once on the left cheek, once on the right.

(Using all her strength, Beetje pushes Lebon away.)

Lebon: Don't you want to? Don't you want a Kiss of Brotherhood? I won't bite you! Don't struggle, I tell you! I've cracked tougher nuts than you in my time! …

Beetje: *(crying out desperately)* Piter!

Lebon: Quiet! Anyone'd think I was raping you! Come on now, let me give you a kiss, damn it! … *(Struggling with Beetje)* I don't like having to use force...

(Piter appears in the doorway and sees Lebon and Beetje wrestling. In two bounds he reaches the sergeant and wrenches him away from his wife.)

Lebon: That you? Tell her …

(Piter punches Lebon in the face.)

Lebon: Are you crazy?

Piter: You louse! *(Aims a second punch.)*

Lebon: *(grabbing Piter's hand)* What's this? Striking a French soldier? *(Grapples with the Dutchman)* So that's how it is … So you're in league with the tyrants …

Piter: Help! Help!

Lebon: *(panting for breath)* Are you calling the aristocrats? … Are they standing waiting on the steps? … We'll have none of that! Down with the tyrants! *(Draws his bayonet and stabs Piter, who falls to the floor. Beetje screams in terror.)*

Lebon: *w oczach szaleństwo* Milcz! *Zatyka Beetje usta* Milcz, dziwko, słyszysz? Wiem: chcesz, aby mnie zabili! Czają się teraz na schodach... w rękach zatrute sztylety! Ale to wam się nie uda! Cicho bądź... Ni pary z gęby! *Potrząsa zemdloną Beetje* Milcz!...
Pukanie do drzwi. Lebon puszcza Beetje, która opada na skrzynię. Zwrócony w lewo, z bagnetem w ręku — nasłuchuje. Powracająca muzyka wojskowa.
Pukanie powtarza się. W progu staje Verney, wysoki, gruby Bretończyk. Pod każdą pachą ściska po parę butelek wina.
Verney: *na widok pokoju zatrzymuje się jak wryty Co tu się dzieje?*
Lebon patrzy przez chwilę nieprzytomnie na kolegę, powoli opuszcza bagnet — przenosi wzrok na nieruchome ciała Pitera i Beetje.
Verney: Lebon!
Lebon stoi nieruchomo, odwrócony tyłem.
Verney: *zbliża się na palcach do Lebona — szeptem Zabiłeś ich?*
Lebon: *wciąż odwrócony — cicho* Nie wiem... Nic nie rozumiem... Wszak było wszystko w porządku...
Nasilające się dźwięki marsza.
Lebon: ***zwraca błędny wzrok na kolegę, bezradnie*** Verney! Jak to się stało? Przyszliśmy ich wyzwolić...
Muzyka głośna, huk bębnów: wojska przechodzą już pod oknami.

Kurtyna

Lebon: *(wild-eyed)* Shut up! *(Covering Beetje's mouth)* Shut up, you slut! Do you hear? Ah, you want them to kill me, do you? They're waiting on the steps for me now … with poisoned daggers in their hands! But you won't get away with it! Be quiet! … Not a murmur! *(Shaking Beetje, who has fainted)* Be quiet!
(Knock at door. Lebon lets go of Beetje, who collapses onto the chest. He turns to the left, bayonet in hand, and listens. Martial music heard returning. The knock is repeated. Verney, a tall, fat Breton, appears in the doorway, holding several bottles of wine under each arm.)
Verney: *(seeing the state of the room, stands stock-still)* What's going on here?
(Lebon looks uncomprehendingly at his comrade for a moment, then slowly lowers his bayonet and turns his gaze to the motionless bodies of Piter and Beetje.)
Verney: Lebon!
(Lebon stands still with his back to him.)
Verney: *(approaching Lebon on tiptoe; whispers)* Did you kill them?
Lebon: *(still with his back to him, softly)* I don't know … I don't understand … Everything seemed to be all right …
(Sounds of march grow louder.)
Lebon: *(turns his wild eyes to his comrade; helplessly)* Verney! How did this happen? We came here to liberate them …
(Loud music, crash of drums; the army passes under the windows.)

Curtain

CONTRIBUTORS

Conrad Bauer has a Bachelor's degree in Chinese language and history from Columbia University and a Master's degree in Chinese Language and Literature from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He teaches high school Mandarin at the Taipei American School.

Hinda Ena Burstin is an award-winning translator of Yiddish poetry, and a bilingual (Yiddish and English) writer and researcher. Her current research project involves locating and translating 1920s Yiddish women's poetry. She coordinates the Jacob Kronhill Program in Yiddish Language and Culture at the Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation at Monash University, where she is a lecturer in Yiddish language, literature and culture. She is passionate about embracing, and celebrating, difference.

Katrina Hayes completed a Master of Translation at the Australian National University, where she now works as the Project Manager of a sociolinguistic research project and as a tutor in the Spanish language program. She graduated with first class honours from her BA (Languages) in Spanish and Arabic from Sydney University. She has studied and worked in Spain over a number of years, and hopes to return to the Spanish-speaking world in the near future.

Peter Hodges has a background in French that dates back to the early 1970s and 1980s when he moved from Australia to Montreal where his passion for the French language developed. He has subsequently travelled extensively in the French-speaking countries of the Middle East and Africa, completed an undergraduate degree and a Master's degree in French literature, and more recently a Master's degree in Applied Linguistics and a PhD in translation theory and literary translation. Peter divides his time between the north coast of New South Wales and the village of Sigoulès in south-west France.

Haoran Huang has worked as a writer and translator in China and Australia. He has a degree in linguistics and is currently completing PhD studies in comparative literature at the University of Adelaide. Haoran also teaches English to Chinese translation at TAFE SA and is an avid photographer who invests his spare time in the darkroom.

Rosanne Menacho: "I grew up in the Yarra Valley, which is where I met Murrundindi. After finishing school, I studied a Bachelor of Arts and Primary Education at Monash University and worked as a classroom teacher. Later on, I came back to study a Master of Interpreting and Translation Studies, translating between Spanish and English. I love indigenous cultures and Latin American cultures and want to work with indigenous people there and in Australia to promote their knowledge, culture and leadership in the wider community."

Murrundindi: "I've been working in schools now for the last 35 years, teaching in primary, secondary, university, and also teaching in childcare and kindergarten. My main mission is that everybody learns about the local Indigenous cultures throughout Australia, that they learn about their local people before they learn about another group or another tribe in Australia. I love what I'm doing, I love getting my message out there about peace and harmony and respect among all cultures."

Virginie Pfeiffer is a postgraduate student at Monash University in Melbourne, where she is doing a Master of Translation Studies. She is particularly interested in literary translation and is involved in translating plays and writing essays about literary translation. She also has experience working as a project manager for a translation company and enjoys working as a professional translator. She is considering undertaking a PhD on the translation of children's literature.

Jun Tang is Associate Professor of Translation Studies in the School of Foreign Languages, Southeast University, China. She is the author of over forty articles (in English and Chinese) and two books (in Chinese) on Translation Studies. Her English articles have been published by international peer-reviewed journals such as *META*, *Perspectives*, *Target* and *The European Journal of English Studies*. She also serves as a peer reviewer for five international journals.

Angela Tiziana Tarantini (MA Languages, MA Foreign Literatures) is a PhD candidate in Translation Studies at Monash University in Melbourne. Her PhD project focuses on theatre translation: specifically, on the interaction between the verbal, the suprasegmental, and the nonverbal component of a theatrical utterance in translation. Before starting her PhD, she worked as Teaching Associate, and as Adjunct Professor of English in many universities in Italy.

Nynke van der Schaaf was born in the Netherlands and learned to speak, read and write in Dutch. Her family migrated to Australia when she was ten years old. At university she studied languages, gaining a Master of Arts in German Language and Literature from Victoria University, Wellington. She taught French, German and English, then went on to become a bookseller. She established a bookshop in the Adelaide Hills and ran it for 26 years. Having sold the business, she now pursues her interest in literary translation.

Kevin Windle is an Emeritus Fellow in the School of Literature, Languages and Linguistics at the Australian National University in Canberra. His major publications include *The Oxford Handbook of Translation Studies* (jointly edited with Kirsten Malmkjær, 2011) and the monograph *Undesirable: Captain Zuzenko and the Workers of Australia and the World* (2012). In 2014 he was awarded the inaugural AALITRA Translation Prize (Prose), and in 2015 second prize in the John Dryden competition.

Amanda B. Zamuner is a teacher and translator. She holds an MA in British Cultural Studies and English Language Teaching from the University of Warwick. She has lectured on literary translation and currently lectures in cultural studies, mainly at the National University of La Plata in Argentina. She has been a research scholar in translation, literature and culture at centres and universities in Spain, Canada and the UK.