The AALITRA Review

A JOURNAL OF LITERARY TRANSLATION

Vol 19, December 2023

AALITRA

The AALITRA Review

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- book reviews of major Translation Studies publications
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Published by
Australian Association for
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2023

Chinese Crime Fiction in English Translation: Readers' Reception of *The Golden Hairpin*

BEIXI LI
University of Bristol

CAROL O'SULLIVAN
University of Bristol

Abstract

Chinese crime novels are beginning to join the surge of crime fiction being translated into English, which we have seen in the last twenty years. Despite extensive comparative research on Chinese literature and its English translations, there has been little research on its reception. This is a significant omission in the case of genre fiction, which traditionally attracts a wide readership. Our study aims to address this gap, exploring the reception of Chinese crime fiction translated into English through a case study of *The Golden Hairpin* (2018) by Cece Qinghan, translated by Alex Woodend. Adopting a qualitative content analysis approach and using the software Nvivo, we analyse ninety-eight reviews of the book from Goodreads and Amazon. English readers comment on a range of aspects of the book including genre, content (plot, characters, and writing), difficulty in reading, access to Chinese culture, translation, sequels and adaptations, and format. Reflection on the quality of the translation was fairly frequent. Some readers felt a considerable sense of cultural distance, so paratextual support is important for translated Chinese fiction. The existence of an audiovisual adaptation had a positive effect on reader interest. The lack of resolution in the book, which is the only one in the series to be translated so far, was frequently commented on.

Introduction

Translated literature is a crucial facet of the "Chinese culture going global" policy (Yu 86-7), which advocates for the export and translation of Chinese cultural products abroad. State entities, publishing houses, and translators have collaborated to gain more international recognition for Chinese literature. For example, the Panda Series of translated fiction was launched by Gladys and Xianyi Yang in 1981 (Geng, "Gift-Giving" 59; Lee 562). In recent years, the Chinese government has rolled out further initiatives to encourage the global circulation of Chinese literature, including the China Book International Program, the Classic China International Publishing Project, and the Chinese Contemporary Works Translation Project (Yun Wu 65; J. Wang, *A History* 146).

There is a long tradition of translating classical Chinese literature, but relatively little contemporary literature from China was being translated (Harman 16; Kneissl 204). This situation has improved in recent decades (e.g. with the literary success of Nobel-Prize-winning authors Mo Yan and Gao Xingjian) (Lee and Dutrait; Lovell; Zhang and Lingenfelter, Klein, Zhang and Wang 18, Yun Wu 285). Novels in genres such as science fiction and martial arts have also gained visibility. Cixin Liu's *The Three-Body Problem* (2014), translated by Ken Liu, was awarded a Hugo in 2015 (Dean; You Wu 56; Y. Wang 59), and there has been a steady flow of translations of martial arts fiction by Jin Yong (Y. Wang 111; Zhang 111).

Chinese crime fiction is under-represented among translated crime fiction in the anglophone book market. Starting in the early 2000s (France; Seago and Lei 87), there was a

surge in sales of translated crime fiction in the UK, almost all of it from Europe. This heralded a wider boom in the sales of translated fiction (Stougaard-Nielsen 386). Meanwhile, crime fiction in general has been gaining in popularity; in 2017, it outsold general and literary fiction for the first time in the UK (Stougaard-Nielsen 386). Perhaps partly because of these positive market conditions, Chinese crime fiction has begun to appear in English translation in the past few years, with titles such as *Death Notice* by Zhou Haohui (2018) and *Bad Kids* by Zijin Chen (2022).

Little is known, however, about the reception of this literature. If Chinese literature is translated but not embraced by the general public, the project of reaching the global market will only partly have been achieved. As a result, it is critical to explore the reception of Chinese translated works by their intended audience. This article, which draws on the first author's doctoral work, situates itself within this broader project. The article adopts a case study approach to look at readers' comments on Cece Qinghan's *The Golden Hairpin*, translated by Alex Woodend. A corpus of ninety-eight reviews from Goodreads and Amazon is analysed to understand how the book was received by English-speaking readers. The study aims to identify factors which may impede readers' enjoyment of the book and considers the implications for the translation and dissemination of contemporary Chinese literature.

1. Reader reception and Chinese literature in English translation

Work on reception of translated fiction in Translation Studies (TS) is still at a relatively early stage. There have been calls to look more at the role of readers in the international circulation of fiction: as Brigid Maher puts it (177), "circulation from one language and culture to another involves […] not only translators but also editors, publishers, marketers, scholars, critics and, of course, readers" (see also Geng, "Gift-Giving" 59). Such calls have met with a limited response. One significant intervention is by Leo Tak-hung Chan, whose 2010 book *Readers, Reading and Reception of Translated Fiction in Chinese* covers a variety of literary genres and acknowledges the shift from "reception" as the preserve of professional critics to reception by the "general reader". He looks, for instance, at the reception of Chinese translations of the Harry Potter books on "websites, blogs and forums" (134). Chan's work is the earliest example we have found in TS of a researcher looking at online readers' reviews.

There has been very little work on the reception of translated crime fiction, and on the reception of literature translated from Chinese. Qiang Geng comments that for a long time "the issue of reception of translation was barely considered [by the organizations producing outbound translations], resulting in a failure to promote Chinese literature globally" (Z*hongguo* 5). Scholarship on the translation of Chinese fiction has tended to focus on translation strategies and agents of translation (Harman; Zhang). Scholarship on the translation of crime fiction has acknowledged the difficulty of transposing "thick" cultural context. Norms may vary from language to language: Brigid Maher and Susan Bassnett observe that "the dominant strategy in translating crime fiction is domestication" (59), while Jean Fornasiero and John West-Sooby argue on the basis of a case study of Australian crime fiction into French that "French crime fiction now allows a place for the foreign that was in the early days of the Série Noire systematically denied" (219). This section will situate our study in relation to the broader field of reader reception through online reviews, and in relation to what has been published in translation studies on related topics.

Reader reception covers many different possible approaches and methods. As Ika Willis (n.p.) has observed, it has often been "identified with one particular strand of thought, the "reception aesthetic" or "reception theory" of the Konstanz School". Chan's work draws heavily on literary-critical and historical approaches and looks, for instance, at publishers' marketing strategies ("Historical" 126-131). Today, reception studies draw on "multiple methodologies and approaches including semiotics and deconstruction; ethnography,

sociology and history; media theory and archaeology; and feminist, Marxist, black and postcolonial criticism" (Willis). The shift of focus from the perspectives of professional critics and scholars to those of everyday readers has been facilitated by the accessibility of book reviews through platforms like Goodreads and Amazon. Goodreads reviews are "inevitably written by a much broader sample of the public than 'professional' reviews are" (Stinson and Driscoll 95). Some scholars have made a strong distinction between the two types of reviews. Jiankai Wang ("Zhongguo" 18) classifies the readership of English-translated works into "professional" readers (critics and scholars), and ordinary readers. In *History of Overseas Reception of English-Translated Contemporary Chinese Literature*, Wang (261) comments that professional readers tend to analyse classical Chinese literature from a literary perspective, while "ordinary" readers engage with English translations to gain a deeper understanding of Chinese social realities (261). In the past, online book reviews have been considered "a defective version of literary criticism" (Rebora et al.) but it has been argued that "lay reviews are better than professional reviews in showing the effect of the book on the reader, since users feel no need to be objective" (Rehfeldt, cited in Rebora et al.). We have reservations about making too sharp a distinction between "lay" and "professional" reviews; after all, many Goodreads reviews "mimic" professional reviews (Stinston and Driscoll 110) and, as will be seen in section 5, some Goodreads readers are accessing review copies in a way which would once have been restricted to "professional" critics. We agree, however, that reviews from sites such as Goodreads offer valuable insight into the ways readers frame their opinions of translations.

In Translation Studies, there is a long tradition, going back to Nida's concept of dynamic equivalence (cf. Wang and Humblé 759), of assuming that we can imaginatively project ourselves into readers' responses to a translation. Susan Bassnett claims that "one of the major lines of enquiry that has opened up within Translation Studies since […] the 1970s is the question of the unpredictability of text reception" (149); but her main theoretical point of reference is polysystem theory, and her argument depends heavily on an analysis of the content and framing of texts, rather than on evidence from readers. More sociologically-based studies of reader responses have, however, proliferated in recent years, often analysing reviews from Goodreads and Amazon. These sites have become a new force in contemporary book culture (Driscoll and Rehberg Sedo 248). We looked at eight studies which take an empirical approach to looking at what Leo Tak-Hung Chan calls the "real", rather than the "hypothetical" reader ("Historical" 117):

- Angela d'Egidio's 2015 study of reader reviews of Camilleri's *La forma dell'acqua*/*The Shape of Water*, translated into English by Stephen Sartarelli, and Stephen King's *Joyland*, translated into Italian by Giovanni Arduino;
- Xiuli Liang's 2015 study of reviews selected English translations of Chinese literature, which compares these reviews to reviews of work originally written in English about China;
- Feng Wang and Philippe Humblé's 2019 study of reviews of Anthony Yu's English translations of *Journey to the West*;
- Jia Miao and Xiaoyan Yu's 2019 study of Amazon reviews of Mai Jia's *Decoded* (2014), translated into English by Olivia Milburn and Christopher Payne;
- Mi Zhang and Zhiwei Wang's 2020 study of Goodreads reviews of the English translation of Jin Yong's *A Hero Born* translated by Anna Holmwood;
- Jianwei Zhang and Wenjun Fan's 2022 translation reception study of the classical Chinese novel *Hong Lou Meng*;
- Yanqui Cui and Yang Bai's 2023 study of reviews of Jiang Rong's *Wolf Totem* (2008), translated by Howard Goldblatt;

- Xuemei Chen's 2023 study of reader response to the paratexts of eleven editions of E.B. White's *Charlotte's Web* in Chinese.

We will outline some of the key features of these studies here.

Goodreads and Amazon are by far the most-mined sources. D'Egidio analyses reviews from Amazon (453 reviews), Goodreads (144 reviews) and the Italian site Anobii (100 reviews). Liang's study analyses reviews of nineteen English translations of Chinese STs on Goodreads and twelve on Amazon. Miao and Yu analyse 141 Goodreads reviews of *Decoded*. Zhang and Wang examine 1280 Goodreads comments on *A Hero Born*. Zheng and Fan examine a corpus of Goodreads reviews of translations of *Hong Lou Meng* consisting of 406 text reviews and 2030 ratings. Cui and Bai analyse 226 Amazon ratings and 152 Amazon reviews of *Wolf Totem*. Wang and Humblé analyse a total of 137 Amazon reviews. Chen, who is looking at reviews of Chinese translations, uses Douban and the book discussion forum Xianxian Shuhua, affiliated to the online forum Tianya. Of some thousands of reader responses in total, she analyses eighty-one discussion threads about the paratexts of the books, across both platforms.

A range of methods were used for analysis, and space does not allow us to conduct a detailed methodological comparison of these previous studies, but they include a number of findings relevant to our study. D'Egidio comments that in general "the American and British reviewers commented more on the stylistic and linguistic aspects of the translation […] than the Italians did because they found the language difficult" (80). Zhang and Fan (12) found that "character names pose a significant challenge for English-language readers' of *Hong Lou Meng*, and that paratextual support was important. They conclude that readability is "undoubtedly the most important textual feature" (12). Cui and Bai read the readers' reviews against the publisher's paratext and found the publisher's framing "effective but not fully decisive […] the audience could freely choose the aspects they wished to react to". Chen finds that adjustments to the paratexts of the editions of *Charlotte's Web* have an observable effect on the book's reception. Cui and Bai quote a 2006 study about the effect of consumer reviews on Amazon and Barnes & Noble which notes that "an incremental negative review is more powerful in decreasing book sales than an incremental positive review is in increasing sales" (15). This speaks to one of the main focuses of our study, which is on barriers to understanding or enjoyment of Chinese crime fiction: reviews which mention these not only reflect readers' difficulties in engaging with the book, but may also put other readers off reading it.

2. The novel

The Golden Hairpin [簪中录 1, Zan Zhong Lu] is the first volume in a popular Chinese crime fiction series set in Ancient China by Qinghan Cece [侧侧轻寒, Cece Qinghan]. It began in 2014 as a webnovel, a hugely popular format in China. The novel achieved millions of clicks on webnovel platforms such as Jinjiang Literature City and went on to be published in book form by Jiangsu Phoenix Literature and Art Publishing in 2015. Four volumes in the series have been published to date in China. Amazon Crossing published Alex Woodend's English translation of *The Golden Hairpin* in 2018. The story is set in the ninth century during the Tang Dynasty. It centres on a female sleuth named Huang Zixia. She is accused of murdering her family and forced to disguise herself as a eunuch. With the help of Li Shubai, Prince of Kui, she uses her skills and intelligence to solve criminal cases in the hope of clearing her name. The novel was selected for analysis because of the comparatively large number of reviews, and because the expected TV adaptation had attracted considerable interest.

3. Methodology

In this section, we will discuss the reasons why we selected Amazon and Goodreads as sources of reviews, how we collected and filtered the reviews, and how we used Nvivo to carry out the

thematic analysis.

3.1 Selecting the platforms

Nonprofessional reader reviews 'are significant for researchers because they provide access to a kind of reading experience that has previously been elusive' (Driscoll and Rehberg Sedo 250). Chen observes that:

> online comments tend to report polarized views (both positive and negative). In most cases, readers simply do not comment on a text unless they are very happy or unhappy with it. Readers who post their opinions on social media represent only a tiny subset of readers, and these data may thus provide a limited picture of the audience. That said, these naturally occurring archived data can lend empirical insight that is readily accessible and that can be used as a starting point for further investigation.
>
> (5-6)

Both Amazon and Goodreads are established and rich sources of reader reviews (cf. d'Egidio 70). Amazon reviews are linked to book purchase; Goodreads is a reader-centred site. Zheng and Fan excluded Amazon from their study so that their corpus would not be "contaminated by extra factors of the book as a commodity, such as its delivery time, price, and printing quality", arguing that "such extra factors are relevant to consumption studies but should be controlled for when studying readers' reception of a translated work's content" (314). However, we are interested not just in readers' reception of the translated content of *The Golden Hairpin*, but also in the general market appeal of Chinese crime fiction in translation. The material aspects of the reading experience that might turn up in Amazon reviews were thus also of interest.

3.2 Compiling the corpus

A total of 111 reviews were collected. The cut-off date was 31 July 2023. We eliminated eight reviews of non-English versions. Three reviews were duplicates (an identical or very similar review was posted on both Goodreads and Amazon). In these cases, we retained the Goodreads version only. We did not include comments on reviews, because they were few and brief. Our final corpus consisted of forty-nine reviews from Goodreads and forty-nine reviews from Amazon.

3.3 Data analysis

We adopted thematic analysis to examine the reviews using Nvivo 12 Pro. Nvivo provides researchers with a set of tools to examine qualitative data, uncovering insights that might remain obscured otherwise (Jackson and Bazeley; Braun and Clarke 78). Following the fundamental phases of thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 87) and integrating the features of Nvivo software, a five-step analytical approach was adopted. Reviews of *The Golden Hairpin* were selected from Goodreads and Amazon and formatted into an Excel file. After screening out reviews that did not meet the criteria (see Section 3.2), the documents were imported into Nvivo. The reviews were coded inductively and grouped into eight themes reflecting readers' understanding of and engagement with *The Golden Hairpin*: (a) general impression of the book; (b) mentions of genre; (c) content, including plot, characters and writing; (d) difficulty in reading; (e) access to Chinese culture; (f) translation; (g) anticipation of sequels and adaptations, (h) formats (e-book, audiobook, etc.). Within these themes a second and a third level of coding were applied where needed (see Appendix).

4. Findings and discussion

We will discuss these themes individually from the perspective of how they shed light on the book's reception by English-speaking readers. See Appendix for a more extensive range of examples. While these reviews were openly available on the web at the time of writing, for reasons of privacy we will not use reviewers' usernames in our discussion.

4.1 General impression of the book

The Golden Hairpin has a rating of 4.4 out of 5 on Amazon, based on 319 ratings, and 4.07 stars on Goodreads, based on 1005 ratings (both as of 27 August 2023). These break down as follows (Table 1):

Star ratings	**No. of ratings (Amazon)**	**% (Amazon)**	**No. of ratings (Goodreads)**	**% (Goodreads)**
5 stars	199	61%	366	36%
4 stars	77	25%	412	40%
3 stars	24	8%	171	17%
2 stars	14	5%	42	4%
1 star	5	1%	14	1%
Total	319		1005	
Average	4.4 out of 5		4.07 out of 5	

Table 1. Ratings for The Golden Hairpin on Amazon and Goodreads

The ratings suggest that the books have generally been positively received, though we note the much higher preponderance of five-star reviews on Amazon. We had three codes under "general impression of the book": positive, negative and mixed. Fifty-two reviewers had a positive impression (e.g. "I binged the book in two sittings. Read it way into the night to see how it would end"). Ten reviewers had a negative impression (e.g. "Poor translation, full of anachronisms. So many plot holes you could drain spaghetti. Unsatisfactory resolutions. The book was erroneously presented as featuring a prodigy girl detective and a way to learn some Chinese culture and history. Nope"). Seven reviewers gave mixed reviews.

4.2 Mentions of genre

The English edition of *The Golden Hairpin* is explicitly presented as a crime novel. The blurb on the back says of the protagonist that "Solving murders has made her indispensable. Being accused of one has made her notorious". On Amazon, the book has been categorized into "Crime, Thriller & Mystery". Analysis of the reviews show that this genre categorization has been accepted easily by readers. On Goodreads, *The Golden Hairpin* is tagged by readers as "mystery", "thriller", "detective" and "crime".

Nine readers compare the heroine, Huang Zixia, to well-known detectives from Anglophone crime fiction including Sherlock Holmes (7), Judge Dee (1) and Hercule Poirot (1) (e.g. "imagine if Sherlock Holmes was a girl in ancient China", and, "this is the first book in a series of Sherlock Holmes or Hercule Poirot like novels set in ancient China" or "think Imperial Chinese court meets Sherlock Holmes meets Bones"). There are mentions of other crime writers such as Agatha Christie (1), Conan Doyle (1); and other crime dramas such as Charlie Chan (1) or the Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew (1). Readers have also compared the structure of this novel to other detective novels. For example:

> The structure is very Sherlockian – short stories of cases basically, except thankfully NOT in first person. The cases themselves are more Christie than Doyle – it's more grounded and less fantastical (let's face it, some of Sherlock's clues are

> pretty ambiguous and requires a pretty fantastical leap of logic to interpret it the way the detective did
> Ancient China comes to life in *The Golden Hairpin* in a way that reminded me of Robert van Gulik's Judge Dee novels.

Stinson and Driscoll (107) have described Goodreads reviews as "exercises in self-positioning within an interpretive community". Reviewers in our corpus present themselves as genre experts with phrases like "Sherlockian"; "more Christie than Doyle". The mentions of Judge Dee and Charlie Chan suggest that readers are coming to these translations already "primed" with existing popular representations of Chinese detective films and fiction. The Judge Dee novels, originally written in English, have in common with *The Golden Hairpin* that they are set in the Tang Dynasty, but though they are inspired by the Chinese literary tradition of court narratives, they are themselves pseudotranslations (Seago and Lei 90). One reader comments that crime is a less common genre for a Chinese novel in translation, calling the book "a very welcome change to the masses of cookie cutter over the top romances or wuxias".

4.3 Mentions of content (plot, characters and writing)

Forty-three readers mentioned the plot, characters or writing style. Opinions on the writing style fell into two camps: some readers thought the pace was too slow: "the pacing is long and dragged out"; by contrast others found that "the writing is fun, fast-paced and full of good humour".

Eleven reviewers summarized the general content of the novel. For example:

> *The Golden Hairpin* has a young female protagonist Huang Zixia who was a child prodigy at solving criminal cases. Unfortunately, her family was murdered by poisoning, she is a fugitive when we first encounter her as she is the main suspect. Inadvertently, she enters the carriage of the Prince of Kui and gets roped into helping him solve imperial criminal cases in exchange for his help in clearing her name.

Some readers complimented the author's portrayal of the protagonist's characteristics and behaviour in the book:

> I've fallen in love with Huang Zixia.. so young, innocent and beautiful, yet so clever, intelligent with powers of deduction second to none.

These may be the kind of reader who mimics the norms of professional book reviewing (Stinson and Driscoll 110). Such reviews assume a readership because one of their purposes is to guide others' reading choices (Driscoll and Rehberg Sedo 254).

4.4 Difficulty in reading

One of the hypotheses underlying this research was that the lack of traction of Chinese crime fiction in the anglophone market (so far, at least) may be due to factors which make the books less accessible to readers. One of our main codes was therefore "difficulty in reading". Readers mentioned difficulties relating to names (10 reviews), the impact of the translation (8), unfamiliarity with Chinese culture (4), anachronistic language (3), spelling, grammar or lexical errors (2), and paratext (2).

The biggest challenge for readers seems to have been the characters' names. There are over forty characters in this novel. Although the names were given in their transliterated pinyin forms, ten readers mention problems with remembering or distinguishing between unfamiliar

names. While the translator of *The Golden Hairpin* provides a character list at the end of the book (287-289), it may be impractical for readers to consult it frequently. It should be noted that it is not only readers of Chinese fiction who struggle with names; d'Egidio also found that Anglophone readers of Camilleri "found the presence of a high number of Italian names confusing and difficult to remember" (80).

Eight readers remarked on how the translation impacted their reading experience. These comments will be considered together with the other comments on the translation in section 4.6.

A couple of readers spotted typos and other errors (e.g. "the climax of the Kindle version of the book has a bunch of typos, incorrect word choices and incorrect character attribution that makes an already complex plot even harder to get through").

If one is unfamiliar with the culture of a source-language nation, reading in translation can produce a certain level of (positive or negative) culture shock, as several reviews remarked:

> So for more Western audiences than I, especially those who haven't watched at least one episode of any Chinese/Taiwanese/Korean period drama, this book may be somewhat jarring.
> A little difficult for non-Chinese mystery fans...The only problem I had with it was many of the clues related on having a background in Chinese culture I just don't have.

Paratext plays a crucial role in ensuring reader comfort, as Zhang and Fan also found in their study. The translator has incorporated a character list at the end of the book, not present in the Chinese original, to enhance English readers' comprehension of character relationships. One reader wished that the translation had provided "a glossary or footnotes explaining some terms, musical instruments, and titles" to help with their reading. Another regretted the lack of an introduction, saying that "it may have proven helpful if the translator had provided a bit of an introduction? I know I found that helpful in the translation of Anna Karenina that I read – and would revisit that intro often as I found myself lost in the reading".

The paratext provided is not unproblematic, as pointed out by one reviewer who cautions, "warning: the list of characters at the end of the book actually contains the main spoiler of the plot". In a genre where suspense and mystery are paramount, such a spoiler is likely to diminish the reader's engagement.

4.5 Access to Chinese culture

The appreciation of foreign literature is deeply intertwined with one's familiarity with the cultural, social and historical context of the country it originates from. This connection was highlighted by a reader who remarked, "It might be difficult to read if you're not familiar with the historical Chinese setting since it's a translation of a Chinese book", but it's also clear that some (16) readers came away feeling they had improved their knowledge of Chinese culture (e.g. "I also learned so much about the culture" or "I loved how much detail is given to the historical backdrop of the story as it gave me a glimpse of what life might have been like in Ancient China").

Some readers position themselves as already having a good, and sometimes critical, awareness of Chinese culture, such as the reader who wrote:

> To read Chinese novels you must put your assumptions aside. Just as Russian novels do not have the same structure and goals as European or North American novels (which themselves have many variations), Chinese novels are based on a different aesthetic. If you are to appreciate them, you must embrace these

> differences […] there is no avoiding the wooden plotting and somewhat stilted dialogue that are artifacts of Chinese style.

4.6 Translation

Twenty-six reviews, in other words more than a quarter of the corpus, mention the translation. This is a bit less than the "more than 40%" of readers in d'Egidio's study who commented on the translation (72). Reader reviews of translations were coded as: positively affirmative, critical, and implicitly critical. Thirteen readers praise the translation and the translator. In two reviews, the identity of the translator is highlighted:

> Alex did an excellent job in translating. He captured the essence of Qinghan Cece's intentions. […] It was not a boring read thanks to the author and Alex as a translator. I hope he translates more chinese fictional books in the future. He is one of the best translators I've come across (And I read A LOT of translated material).

> Alex Woodend's translation from Mandarin reads fluently and conveys that sense of other that makes books set in such different worlds and eras so appealing.

These reviews emphasize how a positive perception of the translation significantly enhances the reading experience, bridging cultural gaps and addressing the intricacies of the source language.

While most of the reader responses to the book itself were positive (see section 4.1), the impression that readers have of the translation is equally balanced between negative (13) and positive (13). The translation is described as "a little janky in places"; "stiff in some places"; "wobbled and was a bit awkward"; "rough around the edges"; "poor translation, full of anachronisms". It should be noted that readers often don't point out specific translation issues (after all, they are unlikely to be able to compare the original and the translation), but some go into some detail about why they have a negative impression of the translation. For example:

> I think the book suffered from poor translation. There were multiple places in the book where sentences didn't make sense, incorrect pronouns were used about characters (making it hard to follow along), and typos or repeated words were used. This made the book a challenge at times.

Some readers who are dissatisfied with the book seem uncertain whether the translation is at fault (e.g. "maybe my problem was partly a result of the translation" or "I don't know if it was the translation that didn't help things"). We considered these comments in light of Stinson and Driscoll's discussion of "difficult literature" and how reviews on Goodreads negotiate interpretive challenges. Stinson and Driscoll argue that "the difficulty of the Swan Book becomes an interpretive challenge for this reading community, which produces a rhetorical mode of 'readers helping readers'" (108), but we did not find evidence of this happening in our corpus; it may be that the fact that the text is a translation forecloses some of the collaborative interpretive energies of the reading community.

4.7 Anticipation of sequels and adaptations

We were interested to see that a majority of readers (49) mention anticipation of various kinds as being a factor in their experience of reading *The Golden Hairpin*. This broke down into five sub-codes: the desire to read the next book in the series, to watch the TV adaptation, to read more works by the same author, to read more works by the translator, and to read the original Chinese-language version.

As we said above, the Chinese version of *The Golden Hairpin* runs to four volumes, and this translation is the first in the series. Thirty-nine readers mentioned further volumes, most of whom were enthusiastic: "I hope the rest of the novels in this series also get translated"; "I need the other three translated!". A significant minority of these, however, expressed frustration that they had got to the end of the book and not found a resolution of the plot. We note that the English edition of the book does not make clear that it is the first in a series. The information that it is book one of four is only available in the original Chinese-language title on the copyright page. Readers said things like: "I really hate the fact that we don't have translations for other books in this series"; "Never ever become invested in a series that wasn't fully translated"; "I absolutely loved this book and was really disappointed to find out Amazon have only commissioned the translation of the first of a four-book series! It's too cruel to leave readers hanging, desperate to find out the Prince and the 'eunuch's' next mysterious case. Amazon please please please translate the next three books!!". While most readers frame their disappointment in terms of anticipation, it is also worth considering that in Chinese, the book is not necessarily meant to be read as four separate free-standing volumes; in bookshops, it is available as a set of four, rather than the individual volumes which would be more common in English-language crime series. There may be a sense here in which generic expectations vary between Chinese and English. It is to be hoped that further volumes of *The Golden Hairpin* will be released in due course.

Adaptations for theatre, cinema, TV, or videogames can often influence and foster the success of literary texts (Pesaro 4). One reader mentions that they "read [The Golden Hairpin] to find out the ending of the manga" adaptation (unfinished to date). A big-budget TV adaptation was filmed in 2020 by New Classics Media, but the project was shelved in 2021 and it is not certain if or when it will be released. The prospect of a TV adaptation was attractive to six readers of *The Golden Hairpin*: "*The Golden Hairpin* is going to be adapted into a China produced drama, which is how it initially attracted my attention"; "worth reading and I'm looking forward to the television adaptation". In the case of this book, a television series may bring the historical context to life, allowing Western readers to 'see' Chinese literature more visually. Should Chinese film and television adaptations of Chinese detective novels be released with English subtitles and made available to a wider anglophone audience, they could be important vectors in promoting the novels across the English-speaking world.

Five readers expressed a desire to read more English translations of this author: "I would happily read more from this particular author though"; "I wish Amazon had more of this author's works". One reader hoped that the translator could "translate more Chinese fictional books in the future".

4.8 Format

Some readers in our corpus were reading in multiple formats, including ebooks and audiobooks. Some were reviewing on the basis of advance copies provided by, for example, Netgalley, a website which makes available digital galley proofs to reviewers. One reviewer mentioned "Goodreads Kindle Copy Win". Another reader commented that the book was "available through Kindle Unlimited and I felt like it was worth it as part of my subscription". One review expressed concern about the quality of the ebook, reporting "a bunch of typos, incorrect word choices and incorrect character attribution that makes an already complex plot even harder to get through". Upon examination, we found these errors were also in the print edition. The observation reminds us how careless copyediting and proofreading can impact readers' comprehension and enjoyment, but we also wondered whether readers may be more inclined to expect errors in ebook formats than in print.

It was clear that readers were considering their options when deciding what format to buy; one reader "bought the ebook and the audiobook and mainly listened to it". Another reader

judged that the book was “tolerable on Audible”:

> I basically could not keep track of the characters and was lost with all the ‘information’. However, since I was listening on Audible, I made it to the end. I do not think I would have stayed with it (until the end) if I had been reading the book. At times, I read along as I listened to Audible, and the written word was completely different than the text in the book. Audible was much more descriptive, and it had sentences that were not even in the printed version. I cannot even imagine trying to read this.

We have not checked the text against the audiobook, but the fact that the reader was reading two versions simultaneously and found them inconsistent does have potential implications for publishers’ strategies for publishing across multiple formats. Such hybrid reading practices indicate that readers may combine formats for a more multimodal reading experience.

The inclusion of a NetGalley review copy showcases the role of digital platforms in facilitating advanced reader access to books. This reflects a growing emphasis on digital review copies as a means of promoting literary works and generating early feedback.

Conclusions

Overall, we found the data on reader response to the book very rich. In this article we have focused on what we felt were the most important themes, but the data would have the potential for further analysis.

For us, the most significant findings included the intertextual and transmedia aspect. This book was, for many readers, part of an expanded reading experience which potentially included the next volumes in the series, or the manga adaptation of the book, or the TV adaptation.

Second, translators and publishers should consider the difficulties of English readers with unfamiliar cultural elements such as names of characters, which came up several times in our corpus and has also in other studies. While many readers seemed to find this historical crime novel engaging and readable, several found the language of the translation too modern and, as a result, jarring. This suggests that further research on readers’ expectations around style and register in the translation of Chinese fiction could be useful.

Our study also shows that the fact of a text being a translation can be a complicating factor for readers, who may not be sure what impact the translation has on their enjoyment, or lack of it. We felt that online reviews could be very interesting to study further to understand what the comments made by readers say about public perceptions of, and understanding of, literary translation.

Our study indicates further directions for research on Goodreads reviews. For instance, one of the features we did not look at is tagging. Goodreads allows readers to navigate to other reviews by the same reviewer; this material could be mined to consider what readers are reading more widely: other crime fiction; translated literature; China-related content, to name just a few related aspects.

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Theme	Subtheme	Examples from Goodreads	Examples from Amazon
General impression of the book	Positive	I really, really like this series. I loved the mystery and the slow buildup of the relationship between the two protagonists. This is such a delightful read. *The Golden Hairpin* is a wonderful read from the characters to the background of historical China. The length of this novel is relatively short so it was a quick entertaining read. A really wonderful book. This book was fabulous. This was a fun book.	I binged the book in two sittings. Read it way into the night to see how it would end.
	Negative	Poor translation, full of anachronisms. So many plot holes you could drain spaghetti. Unsatisfactory resolutions. This book was erroneously presented as featuring a prodigy girl detective and a way to learn some Chinese culture and history. Nope. I'm really disappointed. I wanted to really like this book, but oof. I wanted to like this book but found myself dissatisfied at the end.	Not my thing
	Mixed	I'm not sure what I thought of this one. It started well, but maybe the juxtaposition of modern language and behavior with traditional culture failed to keep me engaged.	I can't give this 5 stars because while it is a good locked room mystery, I didn't enjoy the story as much.
Mentions of genre	Comparison with other detectives	Imagine if Sherlock Holmes was a girl in ancient China This is the first book in a series of Sherlock Holmes or Hercule Poirot like novels set in ancient China and the main character is a very smart girl. I just kept imagining it as a TV drama series (think imperial Chinese court meets Sherlock Holmes meets Bones).	
	Comparison with other crime fiction	The structure is very Sherlockian – short stories of cases basically, except thankfully NOT in first person. The cases themselves are more Christie than Doyle – it's more grounded and less fantastical (let's face it, some of Sherlock's clues are pretty ambiguous	

Theme	Subtheme	Examples from Goodreads	Examples from Amazon
		and requires a pretty fantastical leap of logic to interpret it the way the detective did – which is a thing that Pratchett took great joy in pointing out). Ancient China comes to life in *The Golden Hairpin* in a way that reminded me of Robert van Gulik's Judge Dee novels.	
	Mentions of other crime writers	The structure is very Sherlockian – short stories of cases basically, except thankfully NOT in first person. The cases themselves are more Christie than Doyle – it's more grounded and less fantastical (let's face it, some of Sherlock's clues are pretty ambiguous and requires a pretty fantastical leap of logic to interpret it the way the detective did – which is a thing that Pratchett took great joy in pointing out).	
	Mentions of other crime drama		At times the story was far fetched and the detective work was sillier than that of the Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew, but I stuck with it to see what would happen to the two main characters. Cross of Charlie Chan and Sherlock Holmes.
Mentions of content	Plot	*The Golden Hairpin* has a young female protagonist Huang Zixia who was a child prodigy at solving criminal cases. Unfortunately her family was murdered by poisoning, she is a fugitive when we first encounter her as she is the main suspect. Inadvertently, she enters the carriage of the Prince of Kui and gets roped into helping him solve imperial criminal cases in exchange for his help in clearing her name.	
	Characters	I've fallen in love with Huang Zixia.. so young, innocent and beautiful, yet so clever, intelligent with powers of deduction second to none. In Li Shubai, the Prince of Kui she find an able and powerful partner, who protects her and gives her the opportunity to solve the crimes with full concentration.	
	Writing style	If I had to choose a complaint, it would be that the pacing is long and dragged out. And that it left on quite the cliffhanger! I found it really slow, though the big reveal was great.	

Theme	Subtheme	Examples from Goodreads	Examples from Amazon
		Okay, so this book is SLO'. That's not a deal breaker for me, but it's slow and the wiring style is bizarre. The writing is fun, fast paced and full of good humour.	
Difficulty in reading	Names	The names were a bit overwhelming and difficult to track. The names are a little overwhelming but if you ignore the side cast, it's an easy sail. There is a reason I avoid reading books based in China. Too many names, too many characters, tough to remember and a complicated plot. There were times when I found it a little confusing to keep track of all of the characters and their relationships, but that was to be expected when many of the characters had similar surnames.	I'll be honest, I struggled keeping names straight and who everyone was, which isn't the author's fault. but the numerous characters with unfamiliar names (at least to the Western reader) led to some confusion at times.
	Impact of translation	But I think the book suffered from poor translation. Maybe my problem was partly a result of the translation. However, the way the story played out (maybe it was just a poor translation) was not appealing to me.	
	Unfamiliarity with Chinese culture	So for more Western audiences than I, especially those who haven't watched at least one episode of any Chinese/Taiwanese/Korean period drama, this book may be somewhat jarring. But! give me more Tang content, yes.	A little difficult for non-Chinese mystery fans. I enjoy a good mystery and historical fiction so my husband suggested this book to me. The only problem I had with it was many of the clues related on having a background in Chinese culture I just don't have. So it was very frustrating as a mystery buff to try to actually solve the mystery as you went along.
	Anachronistic language	I only wish that the language of the novel had been more fitting for the setting of the story. It started well, but maybe the juxtaposition of modern language and behavior with traditional culture failed to keep me engaged.	
	Spelling, grammar or lexical errors	Also the climax of the Kindle version of the book has a bunch of typos (Ji Nu instead of Jin Nu), incorrect word choices (humility instead of humiliation) and incorrect character attribution (Wang Lin instead of Wang Yun) that makes an already complex plot even harder to get through.	

Theme	Subtheme	Examples from Goodreads	Examples from Amazon
	Paratext	Warning: the list of characters at the end of the book actually contains the main spoiler It may have proven helpful if the translator had provided a bit of an introduction? I know I found that helpful in the translation of Anna Karenina that – read - and would revisit that intro often as I found myself lost in the reading.	The only qibble I have Is that I would have loved a glossary or footnotes explaining some terms, musical instruments, and titles.
Access to Chinese culture	Impression of Chinese culture	A sweeping back in a time of China dynasties. An interesting glimpse of Chinese history. I also learned so much about the culture at that time in history. I loved how much detail was given to the historical backdrop of the story as it gave me a glimpse of what life might have been like in Ancient China (albeit with some liberties taken for the sake of making this an exciting tale)!	
	Familiarity with Chinese culture	It might be difficult to read if you're not familiar with the historical Chinese setting since it's a translation of a Chinese book.	
Translation	Positive	Alex Woodend's translation from Mandarin reads fluently and conveys that sense of other that makes books set in such different worlds and eras so appealing.	Alex did an excellent job in translating. He captured the essence of Qinghan Cece's intentions. I was thrilled, I felt suspense, I understood the character's motivations clearly, and I laughed out loud. It was not a boring read thanks to the author and Alex as a translator. I hope he translates more chinese fictional books in the future. He is one of the best translators I've come across (And I read A LOT of translated material). Mr. Woodward's heroic effort to translate between these languages and novelistic traditions makes the book emotionally accessible to western readers Excellent Translation! The translation from the Chinese is really good. It was a good translation.....especially by a man....there were a few areas in the book that had a woman translated it

Theme	Subtheme	Examples from Goodreads	Examples from Amazon
			would have been a little different, but all in all, a good translation.
	Negative	The translation was a little janky in places. The book is full of charming Chinese expressions and descriptions but the translation is rough around the edges. Poor translation, full of anachronisms. I think the book suffered from poor translation. There were multiple places in the book where sentences didn't make sense, incorrect pronouns were use about characters (making it hard to follow along), and typos or repeated words were used. This made the book a challenge at times. Maybe my problem was partly a result of the translation.	Translation is stiff in some places and the book ends abruptly. At times, the translation wobbled and was a bit awkward. No doubt some things were lost in translation. I don't know if it was the translation that didn't help things.
Anticipation of sequels and adaptations	Desire to read the next book in the series	I hope the rest of the novels in this series also get translated. I need the other three translated! I'm at a loss for words. Just ... I need the other three. I really hate the fact that we don't have translations for other books in this series. Never ever become invested in a series that wasn't completely translated.	I really really reeaaaallly want to read the rest, I was so upset when I realized it wasn't the whole story. I was disappointed with the ending though, of course I wanted to see the Prince and heroine together romantically but I guess that's another story hopefully coming soon. Sadly, this is only 1 out of the 4 books to this series translated to English. I wonder why they didn't finish translating the rest of the series? Would love to find out the mysteries. I absolutely loved this book and was really disappointed to find out Amazon have only commissioned the translation of the first of a four book series! It's too cruel to leave readers hanging, desperate to find out the Prince and the "eunuch's" next mysterious case. Amazon please please please translate the next three books!! I hope there will be a sequel because the remaining mystery case of the heroines family being killed remains unsolved right to the end. Cliffhanger ending. The only bummer is that the book is only part of a bigger story. Now

Theme	Subtheme	Examples from Goodreads	Examples from Amazon
			reading the Chinese version of it and finishing up. So, I wonder if there are translations for the rest of the story? This can become a trilogy or quartet. 'Unfortunately, it's only the first of 4 books. I hope all will be translated soon. Upset there is not volume 2 to see where these characters go next!
	Desire to watch the TV adaptation	*The Golden Hairpin* is going to be adapted into a China produced drama, which is how it initially attracted my attention. Worth reading and I'm looking forward to the television adaptation.	I bought this book because of the announced filming of the Chinese television drama based on this novel with Yang Zi and Kris Wu. Normally I watch the drama and read the book it's based on after, 99% of the time I like the drama adaptation than the book.
	Desire to read more works by the same author		I hope to read further works by Qinghan CeCe. I would happily read more from this particular author though. I loved it all and look forward to an English translation of other of this author's works. I wish Amazon had more of this author's works.
	Desire to read more works by the translator		Loved it, want more from CeCe translated by Alex please! Alex did an excellent job in translating. He captured the essence of Qinghan Cece's intentions. I was thrilled, I felt suspense, I understood the character's motivations clearly, and I laughed out loud. It was not a boring read thanks to the author and Alex as a translator. I hope he translates more chinese fictional books in the future. He is one of the best translators I've come across (And I read A LOT of translated material).
	Desire to read the original Chinese-language version		I wanted to read the original version.
Format	E-book	Goodreads Kindle Copy Win This is available through Kindle Unlimited and I felt like it was worth it as part of my subscription. Also the climax of the Kindle version of the book has a bunch of typos (Ji Nu instead of Jin Nu), incorrect word choices (humility instead of	I received a review copy of "The Golden Hairpin" by Qinghan CeCe translated by Alex Woodend (AmazonCrossing) through NetGalley.com.

Theme	Subtheme	Examples from Goodreads	Examples from Amazon
		humiliation) and incorrect character attribution (Wang Lin instead of Wang Yun) that makes an already complex plot even harder to get through.	
	Audiobook		Tolerable on Audible.[…] However, since I was listening on Audible, I made it to the end. I do not think I would have stayed with it (until the end) if I had been reading the book. At times, I read along as I listened to Audible, and the written word was completely different than the text in the book. Audible was much more descriptive, and it had sentences that were not even in the printed version. I cannot even imagine trying to read this. I bought the ebook and the audiobook and mainly listened to it.

Kafka and Borges: A Case of Plagiarism in Translation

GERARDO PIÑA
Escuela Nacional de Lenguas, Lingüística y Traducción, UNAM

Abstract
By now, it is common knowledge among many Spanish literary translators that the translation of Franz Kafka's *Die Verwandlung* signed by Jorge Luis Borges was an act of plagiarism. However, this translation has not been assessed (as to my knowledge). In this article, I will critique that translation using Lance Hewson's model of translation criticism, since the plagiarism itself has been proved by other scholars.

In his book, *An Approach to Translation Criticism,* Lance Hewson shows the advantages and disadvantages of some models of translation criticism and proceeds to propose his own model. He discusses the models of Leuven-Zwart, Cees Koster, Amin Paul Frank, Katharina Reiss, and Antoine Berman among others. Then, he proposes a series of steps to carry out a critique of a literary translation. The first is to collect all possible and relevant information about the source text (ST), the author, and the translator. This first step is then divided into six parts:

1. It is necessary to obtain basic information on the ST, from its publication to the available editions. If possible, the reviewer should consult the edition used by the translator. Relevant information about the author and other works, if applicable, should also be included.
2. Consider whether this is the first time this ST has been translated, what other languages it has been translated into, and what reception it has had (e.g. is the translation in question completely new or is it based on a previous translation? If the latter, what was the reception of that other translation?).
3. If possible, the reviewer should obtain relevant information about the translator. As Antoine Berman (73-4 *apud* Hewson 25) has stated, it is important to know the translator's linguistic and cultural background, as well as his or her other translations and publications.
4. Interpretations are not only derived from the ST, but also from the surrounding context. This includes paratextual and peritextual elements of the ST and previous translations (i.e. the front and back covers, the introduction, bibliography, editors' notes, translators' introductory or footnotes, and so on). The analysis of the translation begins by building a picture of the framework that metaphorically surrounds both the ST and the TT.
5. If a critical apparatus exists, says Hewson, it can be of great help to the translation critic in constructing his or her framework of analysis. Reviews of early translations can be of great use, as can any text that gives an account of the reception of the ST or of previous translations. Theoretically, it is possible to determine the place of the work in the culture of departure as well as in the culture of arrival in order to create possible strategies of interpretation.
6. The last aspect of information gathering is related to an overview of the macrostructure of the texts. A first analysis will allow the reviewer to point out possible future discrepancies between the ST and the TT that may not be perceptible at the micro level. This analysis may include whether the work has been divided into chapters, as well as the structure of chapters and paragraphs, for example (Hewson).

The second step in the methodology is to develop a critical framework. The third step is the analysis at the *micro* and *meso* levels. Analysis at the macro level constitutes the fourth step. The macrostructural level is a postulate constructed by the critic; it is a projection of the results obtained in the analysis of the previous levels (micro and meso). At this stage, it is already possible to elaborate a hypothesis about the type of translation this is by analysing the various effects that have been recorded previously and assigning one of the four possible translation categories to the work: "divergent similarity", "relative divergence", "radical divergence" or "adaptation". From this it must be determined whether it is an "adequate interpretation" or a "false interpretation". For the fifth step, Hewson discusses the selection of a corpus. The verification (or refutation) of the hypothesis constitutes the sixth step in the form of conclusions.

I have chosen Hewson's model to analyse the first of the three parts into which the text of Franz Kafka's *Die Verwandlung* is divided, in a translation that Borges claimed as his own, under the title *La metamorfosis* (The Metamorphosis). Thus, the first step in such a model is to provide sufficient information about the author, the work, and the translator to establish a context for the critique. Due to the enormous number of interpretations and studies on this work by Kafka, I will limit myself to present the essential data to give priority to the analysis of the first part of the story.

Franz Kafka (1883–1924) wrote *Die Verwandlung* (known in Spanish as *La metamorfosis*) at the end of 1912 and was published in 1915. This story is about how Gregor Samsa faces an absurd fate when he wakes up one morning to discover he has been transformed into a "giant insect". Gregor seems to have isolated himself from his family even before his physical transformation; his family, for their part, seem quite comfortable in allowing Gregor to support them all financially. While he works all the time, his sister takes violin lessons, his mother does not seem to do much, and his father sits in an armchair reading the newspaper. It is only when Gregor turns into an insect that they must take care of themselves again and, once more, they have to exclude Gregor. Gregor dies because of the abuse and neglect from his family. This story appears as a constant theme in Kafka's work: the conflicts in the relationship between children and parents (particularly between the son and the father). This theme is present in his story "Das Urteil" ("The Trial") of 1912 and in his *Brief an den Vater* (Letter to his Father) published in 1919, among other texts. Parallel to the theme of filial conflicts, the theme of power is also present. Kafka wrote from various angles about the individual in the face of power (the power of the family, of the state, of bosses, etc.).

Jorge Luis Borges (1899-1986) was one of the most important authors of the twentieth century in the Spanish language. His collections of short stories, essays and poems have been recognized as masterpieces by many critics, scholars, and readers around the world. His work as a literary translator, however, has not produced the same consensus. Borges published a Spanish translation of *Die Verwandlung* in 1945 and, for a long time, it was thought that he had made that translation and that it had been the first Spanish translation of that story. In the following, I will show that none of these assertions are true and then I will analyse the translation at the micro and meso levels proposed by Hewson. My thesis is that it is a translation that presents a pompous style in Spanish (absent in the German text), which eliminates important subtleties and creates exaggerations, unnecessary ambiguities or dramatic situations that do not appear in Kafka's text. Furthermore, the Spanish register in the translation clearly belongs to a Spanish, not a Latin American translator. The consequences of those decisions (lexical, semantic, etc.) taken by the translator have affected the reception, exegesis, ponderation, and analysis of Kafka's work in Spanish-speaking countries since – at least – 1945. As Cristina Pestaña states, the repercussions of Borges's "translation" of what is probably the

most widely read story by one of the most widely read authors of the twentieth century are not few:

> Certainly, Borges's translation is one of the best-known Spanish versions of Franz Kafka's work, both because of its antiquity and, above all, because of the figure Jorge Luis Borges represents within Hispanic literature. So, it is not difficult to understand that this translation has been considered by many later translators of this work, whether Spanish or American, as a 'guide-text' on which to rely for the development of their own translations into Spanish of *Die Verwandlung.*
>
> (Pestaña)[1]

Borges spoke on many occasions about Kafka and about his translation of *Die Verwandlung*. In an interview with Osvaldo Ferrari, the latter asks him: "Since this journey through France begins, then, Borges, and since it begins with Kafka as well, I would like us to talk about him. I don't know if you already have an idea about how you are going to present the subject there; naturally, you have written about Kafka many times...", to which Borges replies:

> Yes, but I will do my best not to plagiarize myself (he laughs), since it is better to plagiarize others and not to plagiarize oneself. In any case, that is what I have always done, I prefer to plagiarize others [...] Kafka would become the great classic writer of this, our tormented century. And possibly he will be read in the future, and it will not be well known that he wrote at the beginning of the 20th century, that he was a contemporary of expressionism, that he was a contemporary of the First World War. All that can be forgotten: his work could be anonymous, and perhaps, in time, it will deserve to be so. That's the most a work can hope for, isn't it? Well, and that can be achieved by few books [...] Kafka's work is already part of the memory of humanity.
>
> (Borges & Ferrari, Diálogos)

It is significant that the subject of plagiarism causes the Argentine author to laugh and then argue that the context of the Czech writer's work could be forgotten and even be anonymous. This disdain for plagiarism, possibly shielded by the fact that Borges knew himself to be a very important writer, is usually shared by many of his readers and scholars who have, in effect, attributed characteristics to this anonymous translation of *Die Verwandlung* that it does not have; they have celebrated it, or used it, as an example of a good translation, only because it had Borges's signature. The Argentinian's conclusion: "Kafka's work is already part of the memory of humanity" seems flattering, but it also shows a desire to see Kafka's work free of his authorship, as it happened with the author of the translation of *Die Verwandlung* that Borges passed off as his own for decades. It is also relevant that when talking about "his" translations, Borges mentions Leonor Acevedo, his mother, frequently:

> Did I like translating poetry more than Kafka or Faulkner? Yes, much more. I translated Kafka and Faulkner because I was committed to doing so, not for pleasure. Translating a story from one language to another does not produce great satisfaction. Regarding prose translations, I remember an interesting case. My mother translated a book by D. H. Lawrence entitled *The Woman Who Rode Away* as *La mujer que se fue a caballo*, which is longer than in English but I think it is correct.

[1] All translations in this article have been made by me unless it is indicated otherwise.

(Borges, Problemas de la traducción)

Something similar happens in a conversation between Borges and Ernesto Sabato:

> Sabato: "By the way, Borges, I remember something that caught my attention some time ago in your translation of Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*..."
>
> Borges: (*Melancholic*) Well, my mother did it... I helped her.
>
> Sabato: But it's in her name. Besides, what I want to tell you is that I found two phrases that made me laugh because they were Borgesian, or so they seemed to me.
>
> (Borges & Sabato, Diálogos)

It is difficult to know what Borges meant when he said that the translation of *Orlando* by Virginia Woolf was made by his mother, as it is tempting to think that this statement is a joke. On the other hand, Sabato finds "Borgesian" traits in that translation in an attempt to legitimize Borges as the author of that translation and to celebrate it. In his *Autobiographical Essay*, as in several interviews, Borges gives an account of the fundamental role his mother played not only in his work as a literary translator, since she was the one who made the translations that he signed as his own, but also as the one who fostered his literary career:

> I inherited from my mother her quality of thinking the best of people and also her strong sense of friendship. My mother has always had a hospitable mind […] After my father's death […] she tried her hand at translating William Saroyan's *The Human Comedy* in order to compel herself to concentrate. The translation found its way into print, and she was honored for this by a society of Buenos Aires Armenians. Later on, she translated some of Hawthorne's stories and one of Herbert Read's books on art, and she also produced some of the translations of Melville, Virginia Woolf, and Faulkner that are considered mine. She has always been a companion to me–especially in later years, when I went blind–and an understanding and forgiving friend. For years, until recently, she handled all my secretarial work, answering letters, reading to me, taking down my dictation, and also traveling with me on many occasions both at home and abroad. It was she, though I never gave a thought to it at the time, who quietly and effectively fostered my literary career.
>
> (Borges & Di Giovanni, The Aleph and Other Stories 1933-1969. Together with Commentaries and an Autobiographical Essay)

It seems that, with time, Borges chose to recognize his mother's authorship when speaking of the translations he signed, but this was not enough for such authorship to be confirmed in a professional manner (the translations attributed to him are still published to this day under his name). Regarding "his" translation of *Die Verwandlung* Borges says:

> I translated the book of short stories whose first title is *The Transformation* and I never knew why everyone decided to call it *The Metamorphosis*. It's nonsense, I don't know who came up with the idea of translating that word from the simplest German. When I worked on the text, the editor insisted on leaving it that way because it had already become famous and was linked to Kafka.
>
> (Borges, Un sueño eterno)

Beyond Borges's statements regarding his mother's participation as translator of the works he signed as his own, and which could be taken as humorous remarks by the author, there are textual marks that denote that whoever translated *Die Verwandlung* in the edition published in 1945 signed by Borges, was someone from Spain, not from Latin America. In 1998, Fernando Sorrentino had spoken about this in an article:

> The simple reading of the text indicated two things to me: 1) the translation did not belong to Borges, and 2) it did not belong to any Argentine translator either: there was a significant number of features that made it look like it belonged to a Spanish translator, and perhaps a bit old-fashioned in taste. For example: a) Use of enclitic pronouns; b) Use of non-Argentine lexicon or turns of phrase; c) Use of the pronoun *le* as a direct object.
>
> (Sorrentino)

These textual marks pointed out by Sorrentino went unnoticed by a great number of readers (experts or not) for more than fifty years. It seems unbelievable that no one, at least, suspected that Borges' translation did not "sound" Latin American. This silence, as well as the absence of a rigorous critique of the translation, could be explained more by the very fact of Borges's signature than by professional disinterest. That is to say, it seems that the mere fact that a text is signed by an important writer is enough to see in it characteristics and merits that it does not have. However, it is possible that someone, without much echo at the time, noted that the translation did not seem to have been made by Borges, because he ended up recognizing this at a certain point, as Sorrentino registers it:

> J.L.B.: Well: that is due to the fact that I am not the author of the translation of that text. And a proof of that – besides my word – is that I know some German, I know that the work is entitled *Die Verwandlung* and not *Die Metamorphose*, and I know that it should have been translated as The Transformation. But, as the French translator preferred – perhaps saluting Ovid from afar – *La métamorphose*, here we slavishly did the same. That translation must be – it seems to me from some twists and turns of phrase – by some Spanish translator. What I did translate were the other stories by Kafka, which are in the same volume published by Losada publishing house. But, for the sake of simplicity – perhaps for purely typographical reasons –, it was preferred to attribute to me the translation of the whole volume, and an anonymous translation that may have been lying around was used.
>
> (Borges, *apud* Sorrentino)

Borges acknowledges that he is not the author of the main translation of the book and that its authorship is unknown, years later this would be verified by Cristina Pestaña, the Spanish philologist who discovered the plagiarism with irrefutable evidence that we will detail shortly.

The second step proposed by Hewson to make a critique of a literary translation consists in creating a critical framework. It therefore seems important to me to present the testimonies that demonstrate Borges's plagiarism, because in this way the textual analysis of a part of the translation can be seen in its proper context. That is to say: a) it is not an analysis of something that Borges wrote and b) it inevitably questions the interpretations that have been made of this translation by considering it as part of the corpus of the Argentine author's translations.

Spanish philologist Cristina Pestaña discovered that the translation of *Die Verwandlung* signed by Borges matched a translation published twenty years earlier in *Revista de Occidente*. In 1999, Pestaña described how she found that the 1945 translation, published in Spain (supposedly for the first time in the peninsula) matched an earlier one, from 1925:

> Moved by the interest aroused by the existence of, a priori, the first translation of *The Metamorphosis* in Spain, I went to the Fundación Ortega y Gasset in order to obtain the 1945 version. To my surprise, I noticed the existence of another translation of *Die Verwandlung*, older and dated 1925, a year after Franz Kafka's death. This translation was published in two parts in the magazine itself. The first of them in issue XVIII and the second part in issue XIX of the same magazine. The name of the translator does not appear in the magazine either; it simply states that the author of the text is Franz Kafka. Comparing the one and the other, that of 1945 and that of 1925, it is easy to reach the conclusion that both translations are identical and that, therefore, the translator is the same.
>
> (Pestaña)

Regarding the identity of the translator, "for Don José Ortega, son of Ortega y Gasset and director of the *Revista de Occidente* and of the Editorial Revista de Occidente from 1943, the possible translator of the work was a woman: Margarita Nelken," says Pestaña. It is not possible to corroborate this information because the magazine's archives were destroyed during the Spanish Civil War. Once Pestaña compared the translation "by Borges" with that of 1925 (and, therefore, with that of 1945), "the results are more than surprising: both texts are absolutely identical, there is no difference whatsoever". Thus, Pestaña states: "Taking into account the absolute coincidence of the texts, it did not seem exaggerated to use the term 'plagiarism' to designate the translation signed by Borges". At the end of her article, Pestaña offers the following hypothesis:

> The hypothesis that I ventured to launch from the above premises is the following: Surely, Borges, as a contributor to the *Revista* and still residing in Buenos Aires at that time periodically received this publication and possibly read the 1925 text, since, as we have said above, in 1924 he published an article of his in the *Revista de Occidente*. In 1936 the Spanish Civil War broke out; in 1938 the war was practically over. Borges, aware of the chaotic situation of the time, who knows of the loss of the archives and the end of the *Revista de Occidente*, takes advantage of the situation, because it is most likely that he jealously guarded that 1924 translation in Buenos Aires.
>
> (Pestaña)

Although it is impossible to corroborate this hypothesis, it seems to me quite plausible. And, in any case, what I wanted was to establish the context of the translation in order to give way to its textual analysis. Let this conclusion from Pestaña's article be used to close this section:

> Considered one of the greatest works of Universal Literature, *The Metamorphosis*, *Die Verwandlung* in German, is one of the works of the Czech writer Franz Kafka best known to Spanish-speaking readers. But what the general public ignores is that this little work was translated for the first time into Spanish in 1925, possibly by Margarita Nelken for *Revista de Occidente*, ahead of the first English and French translations of Kafka, and, most surprisingly, the writer Jorge Luis Borges never translated the work.
>
> (Pestaña)

Borges only partially acknowledged this plagiarism; on the other hand, we may never know if it was Margarita Nelken who translated *Die Verawandlung* into Spanish, published anonymously in 1925.

To continue with the model proposed by Hewson for literary translation criticism, let us now consider a micro- and meso-level analysis of the translation of Franz Kafka's *Die Verwandlung* in question. For reasons of space, the present analysis is limited to the first of the three parts into which this story is divided. At times, the errors are of meaning; at others, the words chosen have no referent in the German text; and, finally, at other times the translator's decisions lack an aesthetic justification (e.g. phonetic images, puns, etc.). These errors have an impact on the voices of the characters (at times Gregor sounds banal in his remarks or the mother seems overly dramatic at key moments). This, in turn, affects the possible interpretations that can be derived from this translation by attributing registers, tones, etc. that are not present in the German text.

Über dem Tisch, auf dem eine auseinandergepackte Musterkollektion von Tuchwaren ausgebreitet war –Samsa war Reisender– hing das Bild, das er vor kurzem aus einer illustrierten Zeitschrift ausgeschnitten und in einem hübschen, vergoldeten Rahmen untergebracht hatte. Es stellte eine Dame dar, *die mit einem Pelzhut und einer Pelzboa versehen*, aufrecht dasaß und einen schweren Pelzmuff, in dem ihr ganzer Unterarm verschwunden war, dem Beschauer entgegenhob. (Kafka, Gesammelte Werke in zwölf Bänden)	*Presidiendo* la mesa, sobre la cual estaba esparcido un muestrario de paños —Samsa era viajante de comercio—, colgaba una estampa ha poco recortada de una revista ilustrada y puesta en un lindo marco dorado. Representaba esta estampa una señora tocada con un gorro de pieles, *envuelta en una boa también de pieles*, y que, muy erguida, esgrimía contra el espectador un amplio manguito, asimismo, de piel, dentro del cual desaparecía todo su antebrazo. (Kafka & Borges, La metamorfosis)

The use of the verb *presidir* at the beginning of the paragraph is an unnecessary addition, which manifests the ostentatious style of the translator. A recurrent style as we will see from more examples, and which is absent completely in Kafka's text. The idea of a lady *envuelta en una boa también de pieles* is not only a case of radical divergence and of false interpretation (Hewson's terminology), but it is also meaningless.

Gregors Blick richtete sich dann zum Fenster, und das trübe Wetter –man hörte Regentropfen auf das *Fensterblech* aufschlagen– machte ihn ganz melancholisch.	Gregorio dirigió luego la vista hacia la ventana; el tiempo nublado (sentíase repiquetear en el *cinc del alféizar* las gotas de lluvia) infundióle una gran melancolía.

The *cinc del alféizar* has no referent in the German text; one could say "antepecho" (sill) or "panel" of the window. This is a case of addition and relative divergence. "Infundióle" reflects the Spanish from Spain of the translator.

Wenn ich mich nicht wegen meiner Eltern zurückhielte, *ich hätte längst gekündigt*, ich wäre vor den Chef hin getreten und hätte ihm meine Meinung von Grund des Herzens aus gesagt. *Vom Pult hätte er fallen müssen!*	Si no fuese por mis padres, *ya hace tiempo que me hubiese despedido*. Me hubiera presentado ante el jefe y, con toda mi alma, le habría manifestado mi modo de pensar. *¡Se cae del pupitre!* Que también tiene lo

Es ist auch eine sonderbare Art, sich auf das *Pult* zu setzen und von der Höhe herab mit dem Angestellten zu reden, der überdies wegen der Schwerhörigkeit des Chefs ganz nahe herantreten muß.	suyo eso de sentarse encima del *pupitre* para, desde aquella altura, hablar a los empleados, que, como él es sordo, han de acercársele mucho.

The sentence "ya hace tiempo que me hubiese despedido" creates an unnecessary ambiguity; it allows the interpretation that it would be the boss who would have fired Gregor. "Hace tiempo que habría renunciado", for example, would leave no such ambiguity. On the other hand, "¡Se cae del pupitre!" is a case of radical divergence, since the verb in Spanish is in present tense and in German it is a conditional conjugation. The same tense should be followed in Spanish. It would have been better: "Se caería del escritorio de solo pensarlo/al escucharme, etc." *Pult* means desk (escritorio) in this context; "pupitres" are the desks that small children use at elementary school.

Es war halb sieben Uhr, und die Zeiger gingen ruhig vorwärts, es war sogar halb vorüber, es näherte sich schon dreiviertel. Sollte der Wecker nicht geläutet haben? Man sah vom Bett aus, daß er auf vier Uhr richtig eingestellt war; gewiß hatte er auch geläutet. Ja, aber *war es möglich, dieses möbelerschütternde Läuten ruhig zu verschlafen?*	Eran las seis y media, y las manecillas seguían avanzando tranquilamente. Es decir, ya era más. Las manecillas estaban casi en menos cuarto. ¿Es que no había sonado el despertador? Desde la cama podía verse que estaba puesto efectivamente en las cuatro; por lo tanto, tenía que haber sonado. Mas ¿era posible seguir durmiendo *impertérrito a pesar de aquel sonido que conmovía hasta a los mismos muebles?*

The adjective "impertérrito" is completely outside the narrative register. It is too formal a word. "Ruhig" could be translated in this context as "tranquilo" (quiet), "en calma" (calm), etc. In fact, in the same paragraph, the translator has translated "...die Zeiger gingen ruhig vorwärts" as "…las manecillas seguían avanzando *tranquilamente*." (...the hands continued to move *quietly*). The sentence: "a pesar de aquel sonido que conmovía hasta a los mismos muebles" (despite that sound that moved even the furniture itself) results in a false interpretation, since "conmover" means "to move" in the sense of pitying someone. The idea, in the German text, is that one cannot sleep peacefully because of the noise made by the hands of the clock. One more thing: "verschlafen" is a complicated verb to translate. However, in this context it would mean "dormitar" (to doze). "Seguir durmiendo" means to keep on sleeping. This would account only for a divergent similarity in Hewson's terminology.

Und selbst wenn er den Zug einholte, ein Donnerwetter des Chefs war nicht zu vermeiden, denn der Geschäftsdiener hatte beim Fünfuhrzug gewartet und die Meldung von seiner Versäumnis längst erstattet. Es war eine Kreatur des Chefs, *ohne Rückgrat und Verstand*.	Además, aunque alcanzara el tren, no por ello evitaría la filípica de su amo, pues el mozo del almacén, que habría bajado al tren de las cinco, debía de haber dado ya cuenta de su falta. Era el tal mozo una hechura del amo, *sin dignidad ni consideración*.

The verb "gewartet" (waited) has been translated as "bajado" (descended). "Ohne Rückgrat und Verstand" means "sin agallas ni cerebro" (no mind and no backbone) and it has been translated as "sin dignidad ni consideración". Both examples reflect a false interpretation since they change the meaning of the narrative. In both examples, we talk about radical

divergences: to wait for a train and to descend from a train are two completely different actions. To have dignity and to have courage are also quite different things.

Das wäre aber äußerst peinlich und verdächtig, denn Gregor war während seines fünfjährigen Dienstes noch nicht einmal krank gewesen. Gewiß würde der Chef mit dem *Krankenkassenarzt* kommen, würde den Eltern wegen des faulen Sohnes Vorwürfe machen und alle Einwände durch den Hinweis auf den *Krankenkassenarzt* abschneiden, für den es ja überhaupt nur ganz gesunde, aber arbeitsscheue Menschen gibt.	Pero esto, además de ser muy penoso, infundiría sospecha, pues Gregorio, en los cinco años que llevaba empleado, no había estado malo ni una sola vez. Vendría de seguro el principal con el *médico del Montepío*. Se desataría en reproches, delante de los padres, respecto a la holgazanería del hijo y cortaría todas las objeciones alegando el dictamen del *galeno*, para quien todos los hombres están siempre sanos y sólo padecen de horror al trabajo.

Krankenkassenarzt refers to a health insurance physician. To avoid the cacophony of "Vendría de seguro el principal con el médico del seguro" ("Seguro" is repeated twice in this sentence) there could be a substitution of "de seguro" for "seguramente", "sin duda", and so on. Although this is not a mistake in translation, it makes reading less fluid in Spanish. On the other hand, Kafka repeats the same term (*Krankenkassenarzt*) in this sentence, and the translator has chosen to replace it with "galeno" (an informal way to refer to a doctor in Spain) without any justification. This decision affects the register of the text, because it takes away the formality and specificity of the term in German.

Wollte er eines einmal einknicken, so war es das erste, daß es sich streckte; und gelang es ihm endlich, mit diesem Bein das auszuführen, was er wollte, so arbeiteten inzwischen alle anderen, wie freigelassen, in höchster, schmerzlicher Aufregung.	Y el caso es que él quería incorporarse. Se estiraba; lograba por fin dominar una de sus patas; pero, mientras tanto, las demás proseguían su libre y dolorosa agitación.

In this paragraph there is an error of meaning (an adaptation according to Hewson's terminology) in the translation: "Wollte er eines einmal einknicken" means "If he wanted to bend one of them [the legs]" and the translator has opted for: "And the fact is that he wanted to join in". The rest of the sentence changes substantively with respect to the German text. This is clearly another case of radical divergence and of false interpretation, according to Hewson's terminology, as it has been applied throughout this analysis.

Das größte Bedenken machte ihm die Rücksicht auf den lauten Krach, den es geben müßte und der wahrscheinlich hinter allen Türen wenn nicht Schrecken, so doch Besorgnisse erregen würde. *Das mußte aber gewagt werden*.	Únicamente hacíale vacilar el temor al estruendo que esto habría de producir, y que sin duda daría origen, detrás de cada puerta, cuando no a un susto, por lo menos, a una inquietud. *Mas no quedaba otro remedio que afrontar esta perspectiva*.

The first part of this sentence is an example of the pompous tone or register that abounds in the text and it adds unnecessary information. ("Mas no quedaba otro remedio que afrontar esta perspectiva".) The change of tone is a change of register too. Kafka's language is not pompous; actually, Kafka showed a great sense of humour in many of his texts (including Die

Verwandlung) by the means of a direct language. This tone conversion made by the translator affects how Kafka is received and appreciated by Spanish-language readers. These decisions make Kafka look as a pompous writer when he is not.

"Das ist jemand aus dem Geschäft«, sagte er sich und erstarrte fast, während seine Beinchen nur desto eiliger tanzten. *Einen Augenblick* blieb alles still.	"De seguro es alguien del almacén" —pensó Gregorio, quedando de pronto suspenso, mientras sus patas seguían danzando cada vez más rápidamente. *Un punto*, permaneció todo en silencio.

Augenblick means "momento" or "instante", not "punto". This reflects a relative divergence, since the reader can deduce that the translator's intention is probably "momento". Nevertheless, this ambiguity is unnecessary. Other similar errors can be seen a little further on:

Warum war nur Gregor dazu verurteilt, bei einer *Firma* zu dienen, wo man bei der kleinsten Versäumnis gleich den *größten* Verdacht faßte?	¿Por qué estaría Gregorio condenado a trabajar en una *casa* en la cual la más mínima ausencia despertaba inmediatamente las más *trágicas* sospechas?

Firma should be translated as "compañía" or "empresa", not "casa" (house). This is, once more, a case of false interpretation. *Größten* means major, and it has no connotation of tragedy. Therefore, "trágicas" is an addition that makes for an adaptation. All these cases of adaptations, radical divergences and false interpretations are at the micro and meso levels, so they accumulate throughout the text and result in an unsatisfactory translation.

»Haben Sie auch nur ein Wort verstanden?«, fragte der Prokurist die Eltern, »*er macht sich doch wohl nicht einen Narren aus uns?*«	—¿Han entendido ustedes una sola palabra? —preguntaba éste a los padres—. *¿No será que se hace el loco?*

What the attorney is asking can be translated as "¿No nos estará tomando el pelo?", "¿No se estará burlando de nosotros?" ("Isn't he just pulling our leg?", "Isn't he just making fun of us?", etc. The translator's decision: "¿No será que se hace el loco?" accounts for a relative divergence. What is important in this elocution is that the procurator points out Gregory's mocking intention towards them, which is absent in the translation.

Er war noch mit jener schwierigen Bewegung beschäftigt und hatte nicht Zeit, auf anderes zu achten, da *hörte* er schon den Prokuristen ein lautes »Oh!« ausstoßen –es klang, wie wenn der Wind *saust* und nun sah er ihn auch, wie er, der der Nächste an der Türe war, die Hand gegen den offenen Mund drückte und langsam zurückwich, als vertreibe ihn eine unsichtbare, gleichmäßig fortwirkende Kraft. Die Mutter –sie stand hier trotz der Anwesenheit des Prokuristen mit von der Nacht her noch aufgelösten, hoch sich sträubenden Haaren– *sah zuerst*	Y aún estaba ocupado en llevar a cabo tan difícil movimiento, sin tiempo para pensar en otra cosa, cuando *sintió* un "¡oh!" del principal, que sonó como suena el *mugido* del viento, y vio a este señor, el más inmediato a la puerta, taparse la boca con la mano y retroceder lentamente, como impulsado mecánicamente por una fuerza invisible. La madre —que, a pesar de la presencia del principal estaba allí despeinada, con el pelo enredado en lo alto del cráneo— *miró primero a Gregorio*, juntando las manos, avanzó luego dos pasos hacia él…

mit gefalteten Händen den Vater an, ging dann zwei Schritte zu Gregor hin…	

Three cases of false interpretation stand out in this fragment. The first is the translation of the verb *hören* as "sentir", because it means "escuchar" (to listen). The second is the "mugido" (moo) of the wind. The verb that Kafka uses is *sausen* which, having the wind as its subject, it translates as "silbar" (whistle). The third false interpretation consists in affirming that the mother sees Gregor first, when it is Gregor's father. ("Sah… *den Vater* an".)

Gerade an der gegenüberliegenden Wand hing eine *Photographie* Gregors aus seiner Militärzeit, die ihn als Leutnant darstellte, wie er, die Hand am Degen, sorglos lächelnd, Respekt für seine Haltung und Uniform verlangte.	En el lienzo de pared que daba justo frente a Gregorio, colgaba un *retrato* de éste, hecho durante su servicio militar, y que le representaba con uniforme de teniente, la mano puesta en la espada, sonriendo despreocupadamente, con un aire que parecía exigir respeto para su indumento y su actitud.

This case of radical divergence (i.e. the decision to use "retrato" [portrait] instead of "fotografía" [*Photographie*]) creates, again, unnecessary ambiguities. By 1914, the year in which Kafka wrote this story, the difference between a photograph and a painted portrait was very relevant, as it referred to a technology that was little used at the time.

Sie aber, Herr Prokurist, Sie haben einen besseren Überblick über die Verhältnisse als das sonstige Personal, ja sogar, ganz im Vertrauen gesagt, einen besseren Überblick als der Herr Chef selbst, *der in seiner Eigenschaft als Unternehmer sich in seinem Urteil leicht zuungunsten eines Angestellten beirren läßt*.	Pero usted, señor principal, usted está más enterado de lo que son las cosas que el resto del personal, incluso, y dicho sea en confianza, que el propio jefe, *el cual, en su calidad de amo, se equivoca con frecuencia respecto de un empleado*.

The error in this fragment is another case of adaptation and false interpretation. This has to do with the responsibility that Gregor places on the boss of both (of the attorney and of himself) with respect to the prejudices and opinions that he forms of his employees. The text literally reads: "el propio jefe […] *puede ser fácilmente engañado* en perjuicio de un empleado". (the boss himself […] *can easily be misled* to the detriment of an employee). Gregor points out that the boss can be deceived and does not mention that this happens "frequently," as it has been translated into Spanish.

Aber der Prokurist hatte sich schon bei den ersten Worten Gregors abgewendet, und *nur über die zuckende Schulter hinweg sah er mit aufgeworfenen Lippen nach Gregor zurück*. Und während Gregors Rede stand er keinen Augenblick still, sondern verzog sich, ohne Gregor aus den Augen zu lassen, gegen die Tür, aber ganz allmählich, als bestehe *ein geheimes Verbot*, das Zimmer zu verlassen.	Pero, desde las primeras palabras de Gregorio, el principal había dado media vuelta, y contemplaba a aquél por encima del hombro, *convulsivamente agitado con una mueca de asco en los labios*. Mientras Gregorio hablaba, no permaneció un momento tranquilo. Retiróse hacia la puerta sin quitarle ojo de encima, pero muy lentamente, como si *una fuerza misteriosa* le impidiese abandonar aquella habitación.

The German text does not state that the attorney general was "convulsivamente agitado" (convulsively agitated) nor does it speak of a "mueca de asco" (grimace of disgust). These additions result in adaptations and false interpretations. What he says is that the procurator only looked at Gregor over his shoulder and with raised lips. On the other hand, Kafka speaks of "una prohibición secreta" (a "secret prohibition") of going out of the room; not of "una fuerza misteriosa" (a mysterious force). One more case of false interpretation.

In the following passage, there is an element that does not appear in the German text and that gives the story a dramatic tone that it does not have.

Drüben hatte die Mutter trotz des kühlen Wetters ein Fenster aufgerissen, und *hinausgelehnt drückte sie ihr Gesicht weit außerhalb des Fensters in ihre Hände*.	La madre, por su parte, a pesar del tiempo desapacible, había bajado el cristal de una de las ventanas y, *violentamente inclinada hacia afuera*, cubríase el rostro con las manos.

Another case of false interpretation can be found here when the translator chose to render "kühl" as "desapacible". "Kühl" means "frío" o "fresco" (cool). There is also the addition of "violentamente inclinada" (violently tilted). This is an adaptation used to create a dramatic effect that is absent in the German text and alters the directness of Kafka's style (as mentioned before). What the text literally says is: "Allí, la madre había abierto una ventana a pesar del frío y, al asomarse, presionó la cara contra sus manos por fuera de la ventana" (There, the mother had opened a window despite the cold and, leaning out, pressed her face against her hands on the outside of the window).

Wenn sich Gregor nur hätte umdrehen dürfen, er wäre gleich in seinem Zimmer gewesen, aber er fürchtete sich, den Vater durch die zeitraubende Umdrehung ungeduldig zu machen, und jeden Augenblick drohte ihm doch von dem Stock in des Vaters Hand der *tödliche Schlag* auf den Rücken oder auf den Kopf.	¡Si siquiera hubiera podido volverse! en un dos por tres se hubiese encontrado en su cuarto. Pero temía, con su lentitud en dar la vuelta, impacientar al padre cuyo bastón erguido amenazaba *desplomarle o abrirle la cabeza*.

The translator added the adjective "erguido" (upright) to "bastón" ("Stock" in German and "stick" in English) creating another false interpretation. At the same time, there is an omission regrading "den Rücken" (the back). Some reference about it as "sobre la espalda" or "de espaldas" would be expected. On the other hand, the blow that Gregor fears to receive from his father is a mortal blow (*tödliche Schlag*); he does not only fear that his father will throw him down but that he will also split his head open. This is a case of omission and of relative divergence. Finally, we have one more case of false interpretation and another of relative divergence which creates, one more time, an unnecessary ambiguity:

Vielmehr trieb er, als gäbe es kein Hindernis, Gregor jetzt unter *besonderem Lärm* vorwärts; es klang schon hinter Gregor gar nicht mehr wie die Stimme bloß eines einzigen Vaters; *nun gab es wirklich keinen Spaß mehr*, und Gregor drängte sich –geschehe was wolle– in die Tür.	Como si no existiese para esto ningún impedimento, empujaba, pues, a Gregorio con *estrépito creciente*. Gregorio sentía tras de sí una voz que parecía imposible fuese la de su padre. *¡Cualquiera se andaba con bromas!* Gregorio —pasase lo que pasase— se apretujó en el marco de la puerta.

The noise that the father uses to lead Gregor to his room is a "ruido particular" (particular noise) (*besonderem Lärm*), not an "estrépito creciente" (increasing clamor). Then there is a case of adaptation ("¡Cualquiera se andaba por bromas!") (Anyone would play jokes!), which is completely out of the register of the text and that takes away the intention of the narrative voice, since it does not justify the meaning and tone. The German text says: "Now, really, it was no longer a joke".

As we have seen after this micro- and meso-level analysis of the first part of the anonymous Spanish translation of *Die Verwandlung* published in 1925, the style of the German text (a sober, direct style with very precise descriptions) becomes pompous in Spanish. Likewise, we have shown ambiguities in the Spanish text that are not intentional in the German text. Moreover, they could have been avoided and, in turn, contribute to a dramatism that is also absent in Kafka's text.

To use the vocabulary proposed by Hewson, it seems to me that this translation presents a problem of "false interpretation". There are cases of "relative divergence", "adaptations", and "radical divergence", as we have seen. Although the translation preserves the essentials of the plot of Kafka's story, the tone and register are changed; and these, as in any literary text, are fundamental, since they are part of the expression of the work.

By way of conclusion – the last step in Hewson's method to elaborate a critique of a literary translation – it seems to me that the analysis presented here corroborates the hypothesis put forward in the third step: on the one hand, the fact that the authorship of this translation has been attributed to Jorge Luis Borges affects our way of reading and analysing it and that, in itself, has important effects on the interpretation of Kafka's tale. On the other hand, the micro and meso level decisions made by the translator also affect in an important way our perception of the Kafkaesque tale by attributing to it the characteristics already mentioned. The translation influences not only literary studies with an interest in the work of Kafka, Borges, or both, but also discursive or rhetorical genre studies, for example. Finally, the fact that Borges gave very little importance to his own plagiarism for many years contributed to our not knowing who made this translation. Unfortunately, his or her name will very likely remain in oblivion.

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Translating poetry-in-prose: the 'sound of emotional sense' in Philippe Jaccottet's *Truinas: le 21 avril 2001*
Paper presented at the *Translating Poetry Symposium with CO.AS.IT*

JUDITH BISHOP
La Trobe University

Introduction

Philippe Jaccottet, a revered Swiss Francophone poet, died at the age of 95 in 2021. Jaccottet's *Truinas: le 21 avril 2001 (Truinas: 21 April 2001)* was published by La Dogana in 2004. In this short but emotionally complex book, Jaccottet describes the burial of his close friend, the contemporary poet and fellow admirer of Friedrich Hölderlin, André du Bouchet. Despite Jaccottet's despairing assessment of his effort, having worked on *Truinas* for three years and then, he says, abandoning, rather than completing it, *Truinas* bears many of the technical and emotional hallmarks of his most exquisite poetry. Yet this is poetry that is rendered in a prose style. To distinguish this lyrical style from prose poetry, I call it *poetry-in-prose*. Poetry-in-prose is made possible by Jaccottet's deft use of certain resources of visual and auditory prosody that are common to both poetry and prose. In this article I will argue for the importance of retaining certain aspects of the visual and auditory prosody of the original in the translation, in order to keep faith with what I have called, adapting Robert Frost's renowned phrase, the "sound of emotional sense" in *Truinas*.

I translated the whole of *Truinas* in 2006. I was encouraged in this work by a note from the eminent translator Richard Howard, which added to my appreciation of Jaccottet's prose as poetry "by any other name". Writing as Poetry Editor of *Western Humanities Review* in 2005 to accept my translation of another of Jaccottet's poems-in-prose, "Les pivoines" ("Peonies"), Howard remarked: "I think "Peonies" is not only the best translation of Jaccottet I've ever seen, but a wonderful poem besides…". I had earlier published a translation of a chapter of Jaccottet's book *Rilke* titled "L'accomplissement" ("Fulfilment"), in *Agenda* (U.K.) in 2006. Rilke, like Jaccottet, is a poet of perceptive interiority who takes the shifting arcs of emotional sense and shapes them exquisitely in language. I was drawn to the deep resonance that Rilke's life and poetry had for Jaccottet. Yet Jaccottet's prose, even more than the verse, had always intrigued me for its undulating sentences, their questing and questioning lyricism, and their movement through emotional tension and release. Lacking the time and resources to seek publication, I did not publish my translation of *Truinas* in whole or in part. John Taylor subsequently published his translation of *Truinas* in 2018. Taylor has become the most dedicated translator of Jaccottet's late prose works, most of which bear the imprint of the lyrical style discussed in this article.

The emotional sense of existence

Philippe Jaccottet appeared with other post-World War II poets and artists in the literary magazine *L'Éphémère,* whose title points to a preoccupation with the ephemeral or transient. Jaccottet had an affinity with these poets and artists, urgently attuned as they were to the existential anxieties of the period immediately following the war. They included Yves Bonnefoy, Jacques Dupin, André du Bouchet and Paul Celan. Jaccottet also knew and admired the Swiss Italian sculptor Alberto Giacometti, whose gaunt, existential figures and sketches are an almost desperate attempt to access the living force behind the human figure and the human gaze, and whose ghostly sketch of a human figure featured on every cover of *L'Éphémère*. Each of these poets and artists foregrounded ideas of existence, being, presence, absence and death. Their work is charged with the emotions elicited by these ideas. It is often their glimpses

of a deeper dimension of reality, mediated by the external world, which generate the emotions they record. The materiality of existence is foregrounded, too, as an untranslatable presence, to be gestured at in language using deictics, the category of words that "point" to something from our own perspective, such as *this* and *that*, *here* and *there*, and *you* and *me*. André du Bouchet writes about this in a poem:

> on ne s'aperçoit pas que *cela* n'a pas été traduit
>
> [one doesn't notice: *that* has not been translated]
>
> (Du Bouchet 108)

Certain of Giacometti's sculptures, such as 'L'homme au doigt' (Man pointing), from 1947, explore the same idea. Jaccottet, too, uses deictics to point to what exists beyond the text, whether in the writer's mind or in the world. Their triangulation of the speaker, the world, and the text is as essential to Jaccottet's poetics as it is to Du Bouchet's. They appear often in Jaccottet's poetry-in-prose, including *Truinas,* as in the following passage.

Original text	My translation	John Taylor's translation
Ce saupoudrage de neige sur toutes choses: cette rencontre, ou la première ou la dernière, en début ou en fin de saison—une surprise—, des prairies et de la neige, des feuillages et de la neige; la découverte de toutes les choses autour de nous comme rafraîchies par cette sorte de plumage sans poids, cette surprise—comme si un très grand oiseau en effet avait effleuré un instant le sol, cette touche légère, fraîche, presque immatérielle—virginale, je crois qu'on peut, qu'on doit le dire aussi («Le vierge, le vivace et le bel aujourd'hui »).	This powdering of snow across all things: this meeting, the first or the last, at the opening or the closing of the season—a surprise: the prairies and snow, leafy branches and snow: to discover how everything about us seemed refreshed by a kind of weightless plumage—this surprise: indeed, as if a great bird had touched the earth briefly with its wing, this light touch, cool, and all but immaterial—virginal: I believe one can, one must describe it so ("The virgin, bright and beautiful today").	The sprinkled snow over all things: the encounter, either the first or the last, at the beginning or at the end of the season—a surprise—, snow and meadows, snow and foliage; the discovery of all things around us as if they were freshened by a sort of weightless plumage, the surprise—as if a very big bird had swooped down and grazed the ground for an instant, the light touch, fresh, even immaterial—virginal, as I think one can and must say ("The virgin, vivid, and lovely today").

(Jaccottet 1206; relevant phrases are underlined).

Jaccottet is always *en passage*, underway. As he moves through time and space, he points to what he sees, and hears, and understands. He also gestures to singular events in his own mind and body, such as the feeling of surprise in this passage. It is important both for the emotional and the existential sense of the text that these gestural words, the deictics, are translated by the same in English; yet this is not consistently the case in the translations that Taylor has chosen, as in the example given here, where deictic *this* (or *that*) is replaced by the definite article *the.*

Why "poetry-in-prose"?

Though it is written in visual prose lines and paragraphs, *Truinas* shows a concentrated use of certain language resources that are common to poetry and prose, especially prosody (the musical structures of language) and deixis, as shown above. Jaccottet uses the many sonic and visual dimensions of prosody to communicate the imperatives of his vision as a poet. Prosody is not *what* is said, or the conventional form that is used to say it, but rather, *how* it is said. As

the musical structure of language, prosody sits above the level of words and phrases, just as musical structures such as key signatures and dynamics sit above, so to speak, the individual notes and bars in a musical score. The two tables below illustrate different aspects of prosody, many of them shared between poetry and prose. I have underlined the shared resources that are clearly deployed by Jaccottet in *Truinas*.

The first, auditory prosody, is what is typically meant by prosody. Used as a cover term for auditory structures above the level of the word, it can include the resources of intonation. The second, visual prosody, is my formulation of similar functions at work in the visual dimension of the written work. Visual prosody has subtle effects also in the auditory domain, such as the slight pause in reading associated with a paragraph or stanza break. Both auditory and visual prosody are relevant to Jaccottet's poetry-in-prose. Both prosodies engage the sensory perceptions of the listener and/or reader, who, following the prosody of the work, mirrors its transformations in their own body, and in doing so, may experience emotions through an empathetic transfer from the work.

Auditory prosody *(how the mind is directed to pay attention to some words and groups of words more than others through sound)*	
Poetry	**Prose**
Accented syllables (extra emphasis on specific words) Metre (regular or irregular moments of patterns of stressed/ unstressed syllables) / Syllable count	Accented syllables (extra emphasis on specific words) Metre (irregular moments of patterns of stressed/ unstressed syllables)
Tension and release (non-final non-falling intonations leading to a final falling intonation)	Tension and release (non-final non-falling intonations leading to a final falling intonation)
Pauses (at stanza breaks / line breaks / punctuation) Intonational contours (question / exclamation/ statement etc.)	Pauses (at paragraph breaks / punctuation) Intonational contours (question / exclamation/ statement etc.)
Enjambment (the line ends but the sentence continues) Rhyme and part-rhyme (regularly or irregularly occurring within and at the end of lines) Assonance & alliteration	Rhyme and part-rhyme (irregularly occurring within sentences) Assonance & alliteration

Table 1: Some resources of auditory prosody in poetry and prose

Visual prosody *(use of the page space, how the eye and mind are directed to move or to pause between words)*	
Poetry	**Prose**
Line start / end / length	*'In prose the poet gives up the meaning-making powers of the line-break.'* (Lehman 48)
Spaces within lines / Spread of lines across the page	
Punctuation & capitalisation / Typographic variations (italics, character spacing) / Dashes & brackets / Sentence beginning / ending / length	Punctuation & capitalisation / Typographic variations (italics, character spacing) / Dashes & brackets / Sentence beginning / ending / length
Stanza breaks	Paragraph breaks

Table 2: Some resources of visual prosody in poetry and prose

Translating the "sound of emotional sense"

As a translator, I have a strong affinity for the prosodic resources of language, having studied these at the doctoral level, and deployed them in my own poems. I find myself drawn to the delicate movements of emotional meaning which these resources enable, allowing the skilled writer to communicate shifts in feeling to the reader just as surely as a musical composer communicates emotional content and relationships through means such as melodic motifs, rests, and dynamics. Philippe Jaccottet exquisitely expressed the emotional sense of existence and presence in his works. The question we must ask as translators is, what does that mean for translating poetry-in-prose works such as these, in a way that holds true to that sense?

In this article I make the case that the "sound of emotional sense" is as important to translate as lexical sense (word meanings), or rhyme, or poetic form. Prosody is what carries the "sound of emotional sense", both in prose and in poetry. Translating Jaccottet's poetry-in-prose means keeping faith with the sound of emotional sense as closely as possible, including its emphases, its repetitions, its fast-paced runs and pauses, and the virtuosic length of its sentences, which so exquisitely build and release emotional tension. Prosody encompasses all of these resources, as well as the rise and fall of the voice, its loudness and its quietness, its strong and weak beats, its dynamics, and its use of the rests, or silences, of white space.

In the remainder of this article, I will offer further examples of my own and John Taylor's translations of passages from *Truinas*. I will describe characteristic aspects of the sound of emotional sense in the book, and I will illustrate the impact of translation on the communication of that sense. In what follows, I have divided these aspects into four broad categories:

1. Searching sentences: the wandering structure of emotional events and their echoes.
2. Walking on air: the prosodic 'tightrope' of long sentences and their arc of tension and release.
3. Lamps in the existential night: urgent and insistent repetitions and parallel structures (anaphora).
4. The sound of emotional white space: isolated sentences and sentence fragments.

Searching sentences: the wandering structure of emotional events and their echoes

Jaccottet's ruminations in *Truinas* recall the motions of a man searching on foot for the source of an echoing sound or a quivering light. But Jaccottet is searching the interior of his life, using

places, people and passages of literature and song as if they were searchlights or lamps turned on in the night of his mind and body:

> …pour ce thème du passage qui m'aura accompagné toute ma vie, et pour la multiplicité d'échos qu'il suscitait en moi…
>
> Échos moins multiples qu'obstinés, entendus dans les profondeurs du cœur…
>
> (Jaccottet 1205)

> […because of this theme of passage which accompanies me through life, and because of the multiplicity of echoes it evokes in me…
> Echoes more stubborn than numerous, heard in the depths of my heart…]
>
> (my translation)

Much of *Truinas* is focused on that interior search for echoes, in which Jaccottet is following the lead of all the connections that bound him to his deceased friend André du Bouchet. This questing movement is essential to the emotional sense of the work. At certain points during the quest, the speaker arrives at a moment of insight, and these halts are as important to the text as the movement between them. Searching has finding as its end-point, even when the finding is always and only provisional, as it is in Jaccottet. The implication for the translator is that where a passage or paragraph in Jaccottet's prose ends – just as where a poem ends or a stanza ends – matters rather deeply. It is a moment of resonance, of cadence, of lingering sound in the mind that can carry a great deal of weight in poetry, and does so in Jaccottet's poetry-in-prose. The sequencing of ideas and emotions in the middle of a passage also matters prosodically, but to a lesser degree.

I have chosen the passage below to illustrate the auditory prosodic impact of where a passage ends, and the fall in the voice and the emphasis that comes with that ending. I have annotated the words that carry the strongest beats with underlining, and with arrows, the rising or falling pitch that, based on the syntactic and intonational structures of each language, is likely to be associated with a certain word.[2] You may notice a different feel to the tentative, wandering movement in each translation. The translation that Taylor has chosen breaks with the musical structure that Jaccottet establishes in his passage. The musical resonance of the passage is changed and does not echo the original ending.

[2] It would be an interesting empirical study to test these annotations for each language with acoustic-phonetic transcriptions of recorded readings across a statistically valid and demographically diverse sample of readers. This is beyond the scope of the present work. For a full-length study of French intonation, see Brechtje Post, 'Tonal and Phrasal Structures in French Intonation', https://www.researchgate.net/publication/243768972_Tonal_and_Phrasal_structures_in_French_Intonation. Accessed 5 December 2023. For a description of English intonation, see Janet Fletcher, 'E-ToBI Intonational Annotation', https://www.alta.asn.au/events/altss2004/course_notes/ALTSS-Fletcher-Prosody.pdf. Accessed 5 December 2023. The arrows in the annotations above indicate both the location of the intonational accents and the expected dominant pitch movement on the syllables marked by the accents.

Original text	My translation	John Taylor's translation
Rien d'étonnant donc, non plus, si, pour prendre congé de lui, un fragment de «Mnemosyne» m'était venu presque immédiatement à la pensée.	No surprise either then, if, for taking leave of him, a fragment of "Mnemosyne" sprang almost immediately to mind.	No surprise either, that a fragment of "Mnemosyne" almost immediately occurred to me for bidding farewell to him.

(Jaccottet 2014: 1204; Jaccottet 2018: 19)

In this passage, the wandering movement of thought ends with an event in the mind ('la pensée', thought) in Jaccottet's version and my own, but 'farewell to him' in Taylor's. Since much of this book, and indeed, Jaccottet's oeuvre, is about the movements and events of the mind, this seems an odd lapse in attention. It matters if a poet such as Jaccottet chooses to end a passage with the word *pensée*. In this position, the word carries the weight of accentual emphasis, falling pitch, and the following silence, which underscore the significant emotional event of this thought.

Walking on air: the prosodic "tightrope" of long sentences and their arc of tension and release

A comma, in English and French alike, is associated with rising or steady, "non-final" pitch in the voice, where a period corresponds to a distinctly falling, "final" pitch (Post; Fletcher). Using the typical French pattern of non-final intonation (in French, *la continuation mineure ou majeure*), a pattern which keeps the pitch of the voice up at the end of each phrase, Jaccottet keeps us up, too, in a literal suspension that we feel with our bodies as much as we understand it with our minds. The task of the translator is not to let us "fall" any sooner than Jaccottet would have it happen; not to break up his often very long sentences for the sake of the English reader's preferences or ability to follow the syntax through its aerial acrobatics, but to follow as closely as possible the movements – including the tensions and suspense – of emotional sense in the original text.

John Taylor's translation of *Truinas* generally follows Jaccottet's prosodic tightrope act quite beautifully. However, there is one instance in the opening paragraph, a very important paragraph, where Taylor's translation lets the reader down too early. The original sentence is long enough to feel the difference it makes to have it broken into two shorter sentences in Taylor's translation. The difference we feel is, again, a difference in musical structure, and that change in the structure seems unmotivated here.

Worse, however, is the impact on emotional sense. The first period in Taylor's version separates the question about saying a few words and the thought of not having the courage to do so, thus breaking the tension of anxiety in the original sentence. Note, too, how ending on *courage,* "courage", makes that word resonate more strongly, due to the confluence of accentual emphasis, falling intonation and following pause in this position. Taylor makes the unfortunate choice to end the passage on "so" instead. Yet, *courage* is, arguably, central to *Truinas*: the courage of existence in the face of death, especially, the death of a most beloved friend. Again, the final word matters, resonating emotionally well beyond this sentence.

Original text	My translation	John Taylor's translation
La veille de l'enterrement d'André du Bouchet, le 20 avril, Marie, sa fille, m'ayant téléphoné pour me demander si je dirais quelques mots à cette occasion, je lui avais répondu n'être pas sûr d'en avoir le courage.	When, on the 20th of April, the day before André du Bouchet was to be buried, his daughter Marie phoned to ask if I'd say a few words on that occasion, I replied that I wasn't certain I had the courage.	It was the 20th of April, on the eve of Andre du Bouchet's burial, when his daughter Marie called to ask if I would say a few words for the occasion. I told her I wasn't sure I would have the courage to do so.

(Jaccottet 2014: 1195; Jaccottet 2018: 1; relevant phrases underlined)

Lamps in the existential night: urgent and insistent repetitions and parallel structures (anaphora)

Jaccottet uses the resources of prosody to make certain words and phrases stand out like lamps in the existential night of his wandering mind. These include repetitions of words and parallel structures or anaphor, both familiar tools of the poet's trade. Repetitions and anaphora are highlighted in the passage below, which bristles with these structures, so strong is the emotion. This is the final paragraph of the book before its postscript, and it has all the intensity of a cry in the night. Its significance in the work makes the sound of emotional sense all the more important to consider when undertaking the translation.

Again, Taylor's translation of this central passage ends on a word other than the one chosen by Jaccottet – *(le) taire*. *Taire* carries the weight of suppression of the "mystery of being" and the emotion it elicits, which desires to erupt as poetic expression – a suppression which Jaccottet the poet cannot, and will not, tolerate. Prosodically, replacing *taire* in the final accented position in the passage with *yourself* risks shifting the emotional emphasis away from the *mystery of being* to the *self* – a shift that is entirely contrary to the sense of the work, which follows the unanticipated advent of existential meaning in and through the world. The self is merely the vehicle for this upsurge of meaning; it, and not the self, is the resonant focus of the emotional sense of this passage.

Original text	My translation	John Taylor's translation
Alors, ayant frôlé du plus intime de soi, si fragile qu'on puisse être, si débile qu'on puisse devenir, quelque chose qui ressemble tant au plus intime du mystère de l'être, comment l'oublier, comment le taire?	Then, however fragile one might be, however feeble one might become, if one has lightly touched, with the most intimate part of the self, something that so closely resembles the most intimate mystery of being: how to forget it, how to quiet it?	And once something that looks so much like the most intimate part of the mystery of being has been grazed with what is most intimate in you—however frail you might be, however moronic you might become—, how can you forget it, how can you keep it to yourself?

(Jaccottet 2014: 1209; Jaccottet 2018: 71; relevant phrases underlined)

The sound of emotional white space: isolated sentences and sentence fragments

In Jaccottet's poetry-in-prose, the single-line paragraph is the visual prosodic equivalent of the single-line stanza in poetry, and he deploys it in very much the same way. The following lines illustrate the point (the translations are my own).

….l'arc à sa plus vive tension. Paroles incandescentes.	…une sorte de gaucherie devant la mort. Sauvage.	… aussi simplement, aussi miraculeusement qu'un ruisseau se fraie un chemin entre les herbes et les cailloux (et il coulait, en effect, plus bas, fidèlement). Une fumée lumineuse.
…. the bow drawn to its highest tension. Incandescent words.	….a kind of clumsiness in the face of death. Wild.	… as simply, as miraculously, as a stream makes its way between grass and stones (and a faithful stream ran, as it happened, lower down). A luminous smoke.

(Jaccottet 2014: 1196; 1207; 1208; Jaccottet 2018: 2; 23; 25; relevant phrases underlined)

In each instance, the single-line paragraph is also a sentence fragment, lacking a verb. It is as though the engine of the sentence, the verb, stalls in these sentence fragments, and the onrush of momentum – the momentum of anxiety and recollection and joy and terror – is quieted. These few words are embraced by the silence and stillness of the white space.

There are several such moments of sparseness in *Truinas*. In an indescribably moving last page of the postscript – a page that we have been prepared for as readers by all the preceding lone lines, with their emotional impact – Jaccottet's prose breaks down into a series of single-sentence paragraphs, petering out to the ravishing final line of the book. This final sentence is separated from the penultimate not by a single line break, but by two. Jaccottet works with the visual prosody of these line breaks as if they were rests, which, added together, create a deeper, more emotionally weighted pause:

Le soleil de la vie qui recule d'un pas, puis de beaucoup de pas.

Je me demande s'il peut encore passer un oiseau dans ce ciel-là.

(Jaccottet 1214)

[The sun of life that takes a step backward, then many steps.

I wonder if a bird can still pass across that sky.]

(my translation)

In Jaccottet's lines, there is a complete condensation of sight and sound – of visual and auditory prosody – to distil an emotional and existential moment. Because of the art with which it is expressed, that moment continues to echo in the heart and the mind. The translator's task is to make her text equally resonant and faithful to the emotional sense of the original work.

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Translating a Poem into a Poem:
Paper presented at the *Translating Poetry Symposium with CO.AS.IT*

PETER BOYLE

I want to start with a couple of disclaimers. The words "poetry" and "translation" are seriously ambiguous. "Poetry" can mean a highly concentrated art form where all the dimensions of language – sound, rhythm, emotion, imagery, tone and meaning – work together to offer us a fresh experience of reality. Henri Michaux described poetry as "a sudden enlargement of the World" (qtd. in Ball xiii), something that deliberately shakes "the congealed and established" (qtd. in Ball xiv). But the word "poetry" can also refer to any of the thousands of poems written everyday all around the world that are fundamentally self-expression with line breaks, mostly quite conventional in sentiments and language. Translating such poems need be no more difficult and is often far easier, than translating a letter, short story or essay. We sometimes call something a poem just by looking at the form it takes on the page. If that's all we mean by a poem, its translation need pose no great difficulty.

My interest is in translating poems that lift far beyond outward form. A poem in the strong sense of the word involves a journey through a musical structure where emotion and thought unite in a way that strikes us as both true and new, irreducible to what we have heard before. Poetry is also strongly performative – its sound dimension comes to the foreground, enacting or inflecting whatever its contents may be. Though there are many kinds of translation, a good translation of such a poem, a poem that really is a "sudden enlargement of the World" (qtd. in Ball xiii), should offer the reader a comparably strong poem in the reader's language. It should give a frisson of artistic pleasure similar to what the original produces in a native speaker. It is quite different from paraphrasing the meaning of the words, which is how the word "translation" is often used.

Over the past twenty-six years I have translated three poets extensively: the Venezuelan Eugenio Montejo, the Cuban José Kozer and French poet René Char. Each of them writes quite different types of poetry, presenting different challenges to a translator. I first encountered Eugenio Montejo's poetry when I met him at the Medellín Poetry Festival in Colombia in 1997. I was struck by his aura as a human being, a profound sense of human goodness, and by what I intuited of his poetry. Back then, apart from five poems translated by Alasdair Reid, Montejo was completely untranslated. I bought his book *El azul de la tierra* in Medellín and, over the next six years, translated some sixty of his poems that became the book *The Trees*. The difficulty with Montejo's poetry is that it can seem extremely flat in English – there is little imagery, the adjectives and metaphors seem to work towards the expected, so it can seem too obvious, old fashioned, romantic. But I believe there is something in the tone and rhythm of the language, a direct simplicity that elevates the best of his poems beyond this. Here is one of the first poems I translated, "The trees":

"Los Árboles"	**"The trees"**
Hablan poco los árboles, se sabe.	The trees speak so little, you know.
Pasan la vida entera meditando	They spend their entire life meditating
y moviendo sus ramas.	and moving their branches.
Basta mirarlos en otoño	Just look at them closely in autumn
cuando se juntan en los parques:	as they seek each other out in public places:
sólo conversan los más viejos,	only the oldest attempt some conversation,
los que reparten las nubes y los pájaros,	the ones that share clouds and birds,

pero su voz se pierde entre las hojas y muy poco nos llega, casi nada.	but their voice gets lost in the leaves and so little filters down to us, nothing really.
Es dificil llenar un breve libro con pensamientos de árboles. Todo en ellos es vago, fragmentario. Hoy, por ejemplo, al escuchar el grito de un tordo negro, ya en camino a casa, grito final de quien no aguarda otro / verano, comprendí que en su voz hablaba un / árbol, uno de tantos, pero no sé que hacer con ese grito, no sé como anotarlo.	It's difficult to fill the shortest book with the thoughts of trees. Everything in them is vague, fragmented. Today, for instance, on the way to my house hearing a black thrush shriek, the last cry of one who won't reach another / summer, I realized that in his voice a tree was / speaking, one of so many, but I don't know what to do with this sharp / deep sound, I don't know in what type of script I could set it down.

(Montejo 22; my translation)

Maintaining a strong rhythmic feel seemed to me vital in this poem. I could have written in the first stanza:

> it's enough to look at them in autumn
> when they get together in parks,
> only the oldest converse,
> those who share clouds and birds,
> but their voice is lost among the leaves
> and very little reaches us, almost nothing.

But, to me, such an approach kills the poem. Montejo's individual voice, his stance towards the world, is intimately bound up with the rhythm, a distinct mix of familiarity and elevation. With Montejo the challenge was not so much understanding what the poem says but getting the tone right.

Born in Havana in 1940, José Kozer is an extremely different poet. His poetry is rich in specific details, often complex, employing a very wide idiosyncratic vocabulary. Many of his poems concern his childhood in a Cuban Jewish family. Here is one of his earlier poems. In it I hear a distinct personality speaking without poetic frills yet with a delightful sense of irony and humour, a tone of voice that lets the implicit sadnesses peek out. I think you will hear how very different it is from Montejo's style and tone (Sylvia is the name of Kozer's sister):

“Te Acuerdas, Sylvia”	**“Remember Sylvia”**
Te acuerdas, Sylvia, cómo trabajaban las mujeres en casa.	Remember, Sylvia, how much the women at home worked.
Parecía que papá no hacía nada.	It seemed that Papa did nothing.

Llevaba las manos a la espalda
inclinándose como
un rabino fumando una
cachimba corta de abedul,
las volutas de humo le
daban un aire misterioso,

He would put his hands behind his back
and lean forward like
a rabbi smoking a short
birchwood pipe, the curls of
smoke giving him an air
of mystery,

comienzo a sospechar que papá tendría
algo de
asiático.

I began to suspect Papa had something
of the Asiatic in him.

Quizás fuera un señor de Besarabia que
redimió
a sus siervos en épocas
del Zar,

Maybe he was a lord of Bessarabia who
freed his serfs
in the time of the
Tsar,

o quizás acostumbrara a reposar en los
campos de
avena y somnoliento a
la hora de la criba se
sentara encorvado
bondadosamente en
un sitio húmedo entre
los helechos con su
antigua casaca algo
deshilachada.

or maybe he was used to resting in the
barley fields and
sleepy at the hour
for winnowing sat
bent over filled
with kindness in a
moist place between
ferns his ancient coat
somewhat
frayed.

Es probable que quedara absorto al
descubrir en la
estepa una manzana.

It’s probable he was absorbed in
discovering an
apple on the steppes.

Nada sabía del mar.

He knew nothing of the sea.

Seguro se afanaba con la imagen de la
espuma y
confundía las anémonas
y el cielo.

Maybe he was struggling with the
image of foam and
confused anemones with
the sky.

Creo que la llorosa muchedumbre de las
hojas de
los eucaliptos lo asustaba.

I think the weeping crowd of
eucalyptus leaves
terrified him.

Figúrate qué sintió cuando Rosa
Luxemburgo se
presentó con un opúsculo
entre las manos ante los
jueces del Zar.

Imagine what he felt when Rosa
Luxemburg appeared
with a tract in her
hands before the
judges of the Tsar.

Tendría que emigrar pobre papá de
Odesa a Viena,

He had to emigrate poor Papa from
Odessa to Vienna,

Roma, Estambul, Quebec, Ottawa, Nueva York.	Rome, Istanbul, Quebec, Ottawa, New York.
Llegaría a La Habana como un documento y cinco pasaportes, me lo imagino algo maltrecho del viaje.	He arrived in Havana as a document with five passports, I imagine him rather battered by his journey.
Recuerdas, Sylvia, cuando papá llegaba de los almacenes de la calle Muralla y todas las mujeres de la casa Uds. se alborotaban.	Remember, Sylvia, when Papa would come home from the stores on Muralla street and all of you women of the house bustled about.
Juro que entraba por la puerta de la sala, zapatos de dos tonos, el traje azul a rayas, la corbata de óvalos finita	I swear he would come in the lounge room door, two-tone shoes, blue striped suit, a very fine polka-dot tie
y parecía que papá no hacía nunca nada.	and it seemed Papa never did anything.

(Kozer, *Stet* 34, my translation[3])

What felt important here was not to get in the way of the poem, to let the English flow naturally.

Most of José Kozer's poems are long and complex, understanding what they mean at various points is not easy. One of my favourites is "Anima for George Oppen". The narrator is travelling by train to Munich while reading a poem by the American George Oppen, a poem that is itself a loose translation of a poem by Buddhadeva Bose, a mystic poem about an apple. Kozer's poem spirals through a range of associations, from apples to Cezanne to Japanese landscapes, while also keeping pace with the train trip of a Jewish poet travelling across Germany. The poem has to link all these things without losing momentum or becoming confusing. The ending, such an important moment in any poem, posed a special problem. In the original "y tras los rieles/ a su encuentro, donde/ las vacas pastan, gran/ novedad" literally "and across the tracks/ at their (or its or his or her) meeting, where the cows graze, great/ newness". How to express that?

"Ánima Por George Oppen"	**"Anima for George Oppen"**
Agreste, y pese a la desproporción de lo agreste, rostro diente de perro, paso la mañana (en tránsito) leyendo a George Oppen.	Rugged and, despite being excessively rugged, a face like jagged rock, I spend the morning (in transit) reading George Oppen.

[3] My translation "Remember Sylvia" is forthcoming in *Selected Poems of José Kozer*, Puncher and Wattmann. Also, this poem was already translated by Mark Weiss in his selection of Kozer's poems, Stet. For my translation, I wanted to keep much closer to the original than Weiss' version, which I recommend readers to access.

Una fruta del tamaño de Buda, no me
atrevo a abrir la
boca, no hay cupo, puede
que de cera puede que de
plomo, fruta de un Bodhisatva,
el poema de George Oppen
basado en un poema de
Buddhadeva Bose, diente
de perro asimismo el rostro
de Oppen, una fruta de piel
lisa, fruncir la flor el ovario
para transformarse en fruto,
tengo la certeza de haber visto
tras el resplandor las manzanas
(rojo amarillo rojo a su sombra)
de Cézanne.

A piece of fruit the size of Buddha, I
don't dare open my mouth,
nothing is bite-size, it might
be wax or lead, fruit of a
Bodhisattva, the poem of
George Oppen based on
a poem of Buddhadeva Bose,
jagged as Oppen's face, a
smooth-skinned fruit, the
flower's ovary wrinkles to
transform into fruit, I know
for certain that in the shining
brilliance I've seen the apples
of Cezanne (red yellow
red in their darkness.)

**There is this guy in the train to
Munich reading my
book of poems**: no se oye
otra voz, momento inmemorial,
se puede oír el ala de una mosca
rozar la roca más dura, posarse
entre la ceniza negra del Fujiyama:
su zumbido incrustarse en la
intimidad del metal (ferroviario):
carbonizarse. Se avanza, no
obstante. Página 94. El tren
ensañado en la velocidad para
alcanzar su destino Oh
Bodhisatva.

*There is this guy in the train to Munich
reading my book of
poems*: no other voice can
be heard, a moment beyond memory,
you can hear a fly's wing
brush the hardest rock, settle
among the black ash of Fujiyama:
its buzzing embed itself into the
intimacy of metal (railway track).
We go forward, nonetheless. Page 94.
The train furiously intent on the
speed
needed to reach its destination
Oh Bodhisattva.

Invocación: George Oppen, luz
concomitante, llévate
a la boca una manzana de
Cézanne (el cuadro
permanecerá intacto: ya
es de inmemorialidad):
dos conos de luz, hambre
unísona (omnímoda)
mastica dodecaedro,
escupe (en cualquier
dirección) tres semillas:
tres semillas, George
Oppen, de tu reverso (estás
muerto): ¿y qué? Apéate.
Kant acaba de besar en la
boca al fámulo. Y en los
cielos Efraín y Esther dos

Invocation: George Oppen, concomitant
light, lift one of Cezanne's
apples to your mouth (the painting
stays intact: already it is beyond
memory): two cones of light, hunger
in unison (one omnimode) chew
the dodecahedron, from your
other side (you are dead):
(in any direction you like) spit
three seeds: three seeds, George
Oppen, and what then? Alight.
Kant has just kissed his servant
on the mouth. And in the heavens
Ephraim and Esther are the gills
of two fish opening on resurrection.
Everything is joined together. I close
the book. Next stop Marienplatz

branquias a la resurrección.
Todo se ensambla. Cierro
el libro. Próxima estación
Marienplatz (solavaya,
Dachau): y tras los rieles
a su encuentro, donde
las vacas pastan, gran
novedad.

(my fingers crossed against you,
Dachau): and beyond the tracks
as I go to meet it, where cows
graze, something extraordinarily new.

(Kozer, *Anima* 194-195, my translation)

While as translator I could ask questions directly of Montejo and Kozer, I only discovered René Char's poetry after his death. In the 1990s, when I began reading Char, only a fairly small part of his work had been translated, so I was translating largely for myself, to understand and experience the poetry. Char's poems are extremely beautiful in sound and imagery, frequently obscure, nearly always irreducible to any one meaning – something I like a lot. While they avoid obvious messages, I believe they always make an intuitive sense. I'm going to read one of Char's prose poems "Mortal Debris and Mozart". One of the challenges with this poem is its very condensed style. In English this can easily become far too abstract, blocking both emotion and meaning. At the close of the second paragraph, for example, it reads literally: "suddenly the allegro, challenge of this sacred refusal, pierces and flows back toward the living, toward the totality of men and women in mourning for the inner homeland who, wandering in order not to be similar, go through Mozart to test themselves in secret". But translating the poem that way short-changes Char: the rhythm has disappeared; little in the English is truly alive or convincing. Here is my final version:

"Débris mortels et Mozart"

Au petit jour, une seule fois, le vieux nuage rose dépeuplé survolera les yeux désormais distants, dans la majesté de sa lenteur libre ; puis ce sera le froid, l'immense occupant, puis le Temps qui n'a pas d'endroit.

Sur la longueur de ses deux lèvres, en terre commune, soudain l'allégro, défi de ce rebut sacré, perce et reflue vers les vivants, vers la totalité des hommes et des femmes en deuil de patrie intérieure qui, errant pour n'être pas semblables, vont à travers Mozart s'éprouver en secret.

--- Bien-aimée, lorsque tu rêves à haute voix, et d'aventure prononces mon nom,

"Mortal debris and Mozart"[4]

At daybreak, just once, the old pink-edged cloud emptied of all things human will drift above distanced eyes in the majesty of its slow freedom; then the cold sets in, an immense occupation, then time which has no place.

Along the line of his two lips, on common ground, suddenly the allegro, defying divine rejection, pierces through and flows back toward the living, toward the totality of men and women in mourning for the inner homeland. Wandering at random to escape their identity, they are on their way, through the medium of Mozart, to probe their own depths in secret again.

--- Beloved, when you dream out loud and by chance pronounce my name,

[4] The translation of this poem "Mortal Debris and Mozart' was published in Verse, Volume 20, Numbers 2 & 3, Department of English, University of Georgia, 2004, page 11.

tendre vainqueur de nos frayeurs conjuguées, de mon décri solitaire, la nuit est claire à traverser.	tender conqueror of our conjugated fears, of my lonely abasement, the night is clear to cross.

(Char, *Commune présence*, 224, my translation)

Last year I revisited Char's poetry. By now most of his poems have been translated and I was interested in seeing what I could do with certain poems that didn't seem to work in English – ones that seemed hopelessly obscure. I do not think any worthwhile poet sets out to be impenetrable, to create a tangle of words only to conceal emptiness. For me translating a poet involves committing to the idea that there is something worthwhile there. When I read the original and Mary Ann Caws' translation of "Envoûtement à la Renardière" (Bewitchment at La Renardière), I had an extraordinary sense of déjà vu: Char, I felt, was talking directly to me of the experience of passionate love followed by irrevocable loss. And yet Caws' translation felt like a barrier erected between this emotional reality and myself. For example, here is Caws' rendering of the poem's close:

> Since memory's roads have cloaked themselves in the unfailing leprosy of monsters I have taken refuge in an innocence where the man who dreams cannot grow old. But am I the one to assume the task of surviving you, I who in this Song of You find myself the most distant of my counterparts.
>
> (Caws 45)

To me there's a stilted quality here, in contrast to the resonance and solemnity of Char's language. Also, I must admit, parts of the original, the second paragraph especially, are so abstract and contorted I can only guess at their meaning. My translation of this poem is in the spirit of Robert Lowell's *Imitations*, taking liberties in order to create a new poem that will work in English. To convey the rhythmic flow of Char's language, its rich, conscious beauty, I recast this prose poem into free verse. I also gave the poem a less obscure title. I also add a subtitle, "After René Char's Envoûtement à la Renardière", to signal that it is an adaptation not a strict translation. Here is my version:

"Envoûtement à la Renardière"	**"Song of You"[5]**
Vous qui m'avez connu, grenade dissidente, point du jour déployant le plaisir comme exemple, votre visage, – tel est-il, qu'il soit toujours, –si libre qu'à son contact le cerne infini de l'air se plissait, s'entr'ouvant à ma rencontre, me vêtait des beaux quartiers de votre imagination. Je demeurais là, entièrement inconnu de moi-même, dans votre moulin à soleil, exultant à la succession des richesses d'un cœur qui avait rompu son étau. Sur notre plaisir s'allongeait l'influente douceur de la	You who've known me, an exploding pomegranate, a dissenter in your clandestine room where daybreak unfurls its secret tapestry of joys, your face, for example – as it is right now, may life hold it forever – its presence so radiating freedom the air's limitless circle where it touches it crumples, fallen open to welcome me. I walk dressed in the beautiful suburbs of your / imagination.

[5] This adaptation/translation will be published in my forthcoming poetry collection *Companions, Ancestors, Inscriptions* (Vagabond Press).

grande roue consumable du mouvement,
au terme de ses classes.
À ce visage, –personne ne l'aperçut
jamais, –simplifier la beauté
n'apparaissait pas comme une atroce
économie. Nous étions exacts dans
l'exceptionnel qui seul sait se soustraire
au caractère alternatif du mystère de
vivre.
Dès lors que les routes de la
mémoire se sont couvertes de la lèpre
infaillible des monstres, je trouve refuge
dans une innocence où l'homme qui rêve
ne peut vieillir. Mais ai-je qualité pour
m'imposer de vous survivre, moi qui
dans ce Chant de Vous me considère
comme le plus éloigné de mes sosies?

And I stay there as one
quite unknown to myself,
caught in your spinning sun-mill,
exulting in the riches of a love
that's shattered the vice that held it.
Over our lovemaking stretched
the great consumable wheel of the sun,
moving in micro-inches
to mark out night's approach.
Nestling below the curve of your face –
its true inwardness till now
invisible even to you – taking in beauty
as the simplest, most everyday fact
/ of this world,
all else reduced to an afterthought. We
/ were
the privileged connoisseurs of our own
singularity, sole experts in extracting
ourselves from the drab weight of living.
And even now that the roads of memory
lie deep under the unforgiving leprosy of
/ monsters
I take refuge in that innocence
where one who dreams can't grow old.
But do I have what it takes
to live with surviving you, I who in this
Song of You think of myself as
a smudged blur at space's most remote
edge, the least likely of my
doppelgangers?

(Char, *Furor and Mystery* 44, my translation)

So now you have read a sample of poems from three very different poets, what general conclusions can I make? First I hope it struck you how they were quite different types of poetry – that I am not translating all of them into one voice, my own voice, and erasing their distinctiveness. At the same time I want to make each poem I translate as strong a poem as I can. (There is, I will admit, a certain tension between these two aims, but it may be a productive tension.) While I try to be faithful to the meaning and only rarely do a version-style translation, accuracy of meaning, or at least closeness of meaning, is only a small part of my aim. I want to bring out in the English poem what I see as the key qualities of the original: in Montejo's case a simplicity and self-exposure, a moral focus that is rhythmically elevated enough to command attention; in José Kozer's case there are so many qualities from poem to poem but surprise, humour, the ability to include the most disparate material and fuse it into an aesthetically pleasing ending; and again rhythmically these are definitely poems meant to be heard, their cadence matters. With Char there is the rich beauty of his language; there's also the intuitive sense of a meaning that is important, often linking beauty, erotic love and resistance to evil. With every Char poem I translated, it felt important to bring out that meaning as clearly as possible, to convey what the poem is pointing towards. Rather than having a message a true poem is a pointing towards what lies beyond words, it's a gesture performed through language

that opens up something about the world or the self in a sudden explosion. A good translation needs to carry across not so much the meaning of the individual words or the poem's specific stylistics but the nature of that gesture. Both Char and Kozer also tend to have wonderful endings to their poems, suddenly taking the poem somewhere new. Finding equivalents in English for these is a delightful challenge.

My main interest has been in translating contemporary poets who are either untranslated or have much of their work untranslated. I translate them because I am excited by their poetry and want to convey that excitement. I imagine my reader not as someone fairly fluent in Spanish or French who reads the original and glances across at the English to get the gist of difficult phrases, though my translations of Montejo or Kozer could be used that way. Returning for a moment to the two concepts of poetry I mentioned at the start of this talk – poetry as a revelatory art form versus poetry as any short piece of writing with line breaks – by translating a poem I am making a claim that this poem belongs in the maybe 10% of poems that qualify as enduring art, as a "sudden enlargement of the World". I want the poem in English to convince on its own terms. I sometimes suspect that Polish and Russian poets have an advantage in that, subconsciously, their translators know their finished poem will stand alone, will be all the reader in English will have to judge the poet by, and so the new poem must pull out all stops to convince us as poetry. To some extent I see translation as advocacy of a particular poet, staking a claim on behalf of their necessity. Neither Montejo nor Kozer nor Char are household names in the English-speaking poetry world. Translating poetry into a new language also means expanding the possibilities of poetry in that language, enabling the translated poet to live on in a different guise. It keeps the poem moving, and so helps it on its journey through the world.

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The Conscience of the Damned, Translating the Mood of Paul Celan: Paper presented at the *Translating Poetry Symposium with CO.AS.IT*

STEPHEN NAGLE
Holmes Institute

Paul Celan (1920-1970) is often cited as the last "modern" poet, as Baudelaire is cited as the first modern poet. Mallarme sits in between. Celan had said his intention was to "think Mallarmé through to the end". Baer (6) suggests that this end is Mallarmé's dark zone, the "absence" left for the reader to interpret, the symbolism which in turn leads us back to Baudelaire. He further supposes that Baudelaire and Celan are both writing about traumatic, singular, historical events or experiences with no precedent or frame of reference. In Baudelaire's case it is the squalor, immorality and fragmentation of the self in the new urban experience of the city. Paul Celan is poetising the unchartered post-Holocaust terrain, bearing witness to the catastrophic events leading to the end of the modern tradition.

In translating "mood", I am aware it can encompass an emotional "state", a "tone" and a "disposition" or "cast of mind"; it can be instructional, it can be "philosophical", it can be "soulful". In Paul Celan's poetry, his mood reflects such a complexity. His disposition includes a vast knowledge of literary, Judaic and Biblical history, deep philosophical inquiry, intense curiosity of the natural world and indelible scars inflicted by the Nazis and the resurgent anti-Semitism of post-war Germany. His poetry shrouds the unspeakable in a rhythmic, sometimes surreal, sometimes erotic wordplay, simultaneously confronting the conscience, and incursive on the unconscious perceptions of his audience. Celan's declaration that his poems are "a message in a bottle", means they are often addressed to an anonymous "other"; the mood then contains a "tone" of speech, which the translator must emulate.

Celan's oeuvre is encounter-oriented and covers the major events shaping European identity in the first half of the twentieth century – World War II, the Holocaust, and Exile. It is also coloured by his influences, ranging from surrealism and existentialism to the European tradition of symbolism and the philosophies of Martin Buber and Martin Heidegger.

Celan was heavily influenced by both Buber and Heidegger. He did, however, arrive at his own theory and practice of poetry independently, but which uncannily mirrored the intent of Buber's dialogical approach and Heidegger's ultimate existentialism of "Dasein" or "Being". Celan's poetry is dialogical; it is addressed to a "du", a "Thou" or "other", which represents a link to another reality, an existential place where Celan was heading in his early poems. He venerated Buber, particularly on account of his translations into German of Hassidic tales from Celan's home. He studied Heidegger intently, but held him accountable for his membership of the Nazi party, and his inability to atone for the Holocaust.

Surrealism in Celan is not the surrealism of the 1920s. It does not contain André Breton's automatic writing and surrender of the mind to unconscious forces. Celan's images can, however, suggest incongruity and ridiculousness, a type of Dadaist absurdity, though they do not provoke laughter and are not witty like the original French surrealists. His imagery is more influenced by the surrealists of the 1940s and 50s from Bucharest and Vienna and are based on past and present reality.

His use of neologisms is powerful and uses incongruous images to create poetic insight. "Aschenblume" (ash flower) has the power to take us to the death-camps where prisoners walked to the gas chambers along paths lined with flowers, a truly surreal image. Other compound words are absurd, which Celan would say questions the meaning of our existence. "Steinatem" (stone breath), for example, an absurd image of a stone which has life. Or "Die Doggen der Wortnacht", (the hounds of the wordnight), which, though without meaning, has

the connotation of danger and aggression. His collection of poems from 1963 entitled "Atemwende" – Breathturn - (*Die Gedichte*, 477), proposes that this is what poetry does, it exists in the turn of a breath. He further coined the word "Atemcrystal" (Breathcrystal) to express the poetic gift, the truth lying in wait for the poet.

For Paul Celan, language was the one "real" thing remaining amongst all the losses of the Holocaust. His poetry, however, deals with fundamental issues which both include and exceed the Holocaust. He is writing in the tongue of the Nazis, so twisted and deformed through propaganda and brainwashing. It is his mother tongue, but also the tongue of his mother's murderers. "Muttersprache, Mördersprache". So, Celan is intent on his absurdities and surreal objects; he is creating his own German language of incongruity, hoping that from its meaninglessness new meanings will arise. He is taking so many liberties with the language, but is asking the reader to read "the dominant gesture of the poem without access to the circumstantial data" (Hamburger, xxxiv). The translator must be both "in tune" and bold enough to perceive the underlying purpose behind his "cast of mind". In addition, Celan was a prolific reader of dictionaries and a knowledgeable botanist, so single words can contain multiple meanings in his poems.

1. Todtnauberg - 1967

A good place to start with Celan's "cast of mind" is in 1967, when he met Martin Heidegger in person for the first time. In his estate, Celan left a wide-ranging collection of Heidegger's works, all extensively annotated. He seems to have taken some affirmation for his own existentialism from Heidegger, whilst concurrently abhorring the philosopher's Nazi-apologist background. Heidegger had been a divisive figure at the outset of the National Socialist government of Germany in 1933 when he took up the rectorship at Freiburg University and became a member of the Nazi party. Although he resigned from the rectorship within one year, he seemed blind to the evils of Nazism and in subsequent years never spoke out against them. He did not resign from the Nazi party until the end of the war.

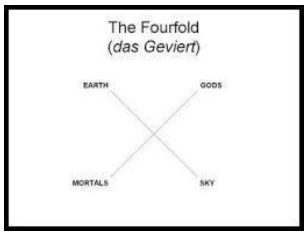
In 1959, Celan had refused to contribute to a collection of writings in honour of Heidegger's seventieth birthday, a) because the publisher assumed he would, and b) because of the association other contributors had with the Nazis. In 1967, Celan was on his way to Frankfurt to visit his publisher and stopped at Freiburg to give a reading of his poems at the university. Heidegger sat in the front row. Celan said later that he was extremely uncomfortable, but that the vigorous applause he received allayed his fears. Maybe he gave Heidegger the benefit of the doubt that he had changed since being rector of Freiburg University in 1933-34. Heidegger reserved the right to "err greatly" but had been a Nazi apologist and remained a party member throughout the war. Celan was passionately opposed to being seen in the company of ex-Nazi sympathisers and refused to have his photo taken with Heidegger.

Celan had, over the years, exchanged books with Heidegger, but had never met him. After the reading, which was attended by 1200 people, Heidegger invited Celan to his mountain retreat in the Black Forest. This was a meeting of the poet and the philosopher, an artist of the German language and a thinker whose philosophy of "Dasein" or "Being" has become a mainstay of Western philosophy. Celan had expected Heidegger to address the consequences of Nazism, but nothing was forthcoming. Celan remonstrated with Heidegger in the car driving back from the mountain, witnessed by Gerhard Neumann, who told Celan that this conversation had "epochal meaning" for him. Celan had hoped that Heidegger would repudiate the resurgence of Nazism in Germany at that time. Celan sent a limited edition of this poem to Heidegger and although Heidegger proudly showed it to friends and acquaintances, he did not respond to Celan. It is significant here that Celan, three years before his death, still played to the conscience of the German people. Remember that the Frankfurt-Auschwitz Trials began

only in 1963, nearly twenty years after World War II. These trials laid bare the failures of de-Nazification, about which Celan was so pre-occupied.

The poem opens with two medicinal herbs, arnica and eyebright, which grow in the Black Forest. They represent Celan's hope for a healing word with Heidegger. The first challenge for the translator is "Sternwürfel", the star on a cube above Heidegger's well. The four-pointed star represents Heidegger's "Fourfold", his universe of Earth, Sky, Gods and Mortals. Should the translation be "star-die", or "star on a dice"? I have chosen "the star" being Heidegger's fourfold, as pictured below, "on a die", being the singular of dice.

Arnika, Augentrost, der Trunk aus dem Brunnen mit dem Sternwürfel drauf,	Arnica, Eyebright, the draught of water from the well, topped with the star, on a die,



The next stanza begins with "In der Hütte", which refers to Heidegger's cabin, his retreat, where he wrote, where he held Nazi functions in the 30s. It is definitely not just a "cabin" – it is *his* hut, so I added the possessive pronoun "his", which is not in the German.

Celan wrote in Heidegger's visitor's book at the hut that he was there with the hope of a heartfelt word with him. He alludes to whoever may have recorded their presence before him; Nazis? "Wessen Namen nahms auf?" is very sharp tongued and could be translated as "Which Nazi Swine put his name here before mine?". The poem refers both to the guest book at "The Hut" and the book of poems we are reading, the line seeking a "word with a thinker" refers to the reader, to you and me.

in der Hütte,	in the hut, his hut
die in das Buch – wessen Namen nahms auf vor dem meinen? –, die in dies Buch geschriebene Zeile von einer Hoffnung, heute, auf eines Denkenden	this into the book - whose name was inscribed before that of mine? - , this in this book a line, written with a hope, the hope, today for a heartfelt,

(un-	spontaneous
gesäumt kommendes)	word
Wort	from a thinker
im Herzen,	

The next lines describe the walk Celan and Heidegger took on the moor. Celan uses the word "Wald*wasen*", where he could have used the word "Wiese", meaning meadow. "Wasen" is an obscure word, meaning "turf" or "sward", or in North Germany "a bundle of faggots", which can be traced to the Latin "Fasces", which is the root of the word "fascist", and was a symbol of a Roman king's power to punish his enemies. A "Wasenmeister" furthermore, is the one in charge of a knackery. This is pure Celan, mixing meanings, but pointing to the horror of war apophatically. The unlevelled "wasen", I have translated as a "greensward", which is rooted in Old English, and then "unlevelled, buried bones" to express the deeper meaning of "Wasen" hiding a knackery, like the unevenly covered mass graves of the Jews.

Then the two "orchis" take a walk, "separately". Orchis comes from the Greek "testicle", so we can read "the two great men, separately". Then the drive down the mountain and the "half-trodden cudgel-bordered paths" on the moor. Heidegger had used "Holzwege", wooden paths, in his writing to mean "paths to nowhere", and Celan borders them now with cudgels.

The references to fascism, the buried bones of the knackery, the cudgels, the revulsion of writing his name after some Nazi in the guest book and the disappointment that Heidegger did not address his concerns regarding the war, all contribute to the mood of this poem. The 'crude talk' indicates, in my interpretation, an angry interchange between the poet and the philosopher. The poem ends in the disappointment of sodden, inclement weather.

Waldwasen, uneingeebnet,	Greensward, unlevelled, buried bones
Orchis und Orchis, einzeln,	Orchid and Orchid, walking, separately
Krudes, später, im Fahren,	Crude talk, later, on the journey
deutlich,	crystal clear
der uns fährt, der Mensch,	He who drove us down, that Mensch
der's mit anhört,	Overheard it all
die halb-	the half –
beschrittenen Knüppel-	trodden cudgel-
pfade im Hochmoor,	bordered paths on the foggy moor
Feuchtes,	Inclement
viel.	Sodden.

(*Die Gedichte*, 286)

A Roman Fasces, a symbol of power

The poem explores the tension between Celan's deep sympathy towards Heidegger's philosophy and revulsion at his politics. Celan is looking for healing, but finds buried bones and wooden paths – "Holzwege", which in Heidegger's parlance are paths through the forest, which can lead to nowhere. Celan is trusting his readers' ability to access this theme without knowing the actual circumstances of the incident.

2. Todesfuge – Death Fugue, 1948

"Todesfuge" is Celan's most famous poem. The rhythm of the poem is like a military march, a repetitive rhythm of the human voice, rising and falling in time. The poem was first published in German in 1948, so the horrors of the war were still fresh. The hypnotic, rhythmic language made a deep impression on the German-speaking world. Celan was deeply suspicious of the continued presence of National Socialism in Germany, and became the conscience of the Germans – as a Jew. He called out the continued open existence of anti-Semitism in Germany and suffered greatly as a consequence.

I have attempted to emulate that rhythm as the mood of the poem. His mood is strident and conjures fear – fear of Germany, fear of marching soldiers. For that reason I have kept "Deutschland" as in German. Calling it Germany would take from the evil connotation of the phrase "der Tod is ein Meister aus Deutschland" (Death is a master from Germany).

Celan does not intend to describe a reality that exists, he is not using metaphors to conjure a poetic reality. He is using a surrealist motif, "black milk" to conjure a mood in the reader's subconscious which transports him or her to the concentration camp. An essential part of Celan's poetry is its surrealism. The depiction of the prisoners digging a grave in the "air", which is followed by the phrase "da liegt man nicht eng', I have translated as "digging a spacious grave in the clouds". One would use "da wohnt man nicht eng" if one were to say "Go and live in the countryside, you will have freedom to move", so I have followed that lead in the surrealist idea of digging a "spacious grave in the clouds".

Todesfuge was anthologised in German school readers and in 1988 was read in the German Parliament on the fiftieth anniversary of Kristallnacht. Celan succeeded through rhythm and surreal images to enter the subconscious of the German people. This is the power of his poetry.

Todesfuge	**Deathfuge**
Schwarze Milch der Frühe wir trinken sie abends	**Black milk of the morn' we drink it at sundown**

wir trinken sie mittags und morgens wir trinken sie nachts
wir trinken und trinken
wir schaufeln ein Grab in den Lüften da liegt man nicht eng
Ein Mann wohnt im Haus der spielt mit den Schlangen der schreibt
der schreibt wenn es dunkelt nach Deutschland dein goldenes Haar Margarete
er schreibt es und tritt vor das Haus und es blitzen die Sterne er pfeift seine Rüden herbei
er pfeift seine Juden hervor läßt schaufeln ein Grab in der Erde
Er befielt uns spielt auf nun zum Tanz

We drink it at midday and every morning we drink it at night
we drink and we drink,
we are digging a spacious grave in the clouds
A man lives in the house where he plays with the serpents he writes
as it darkens he writes to Deutschland your golden hair Margarete
he writes it and stands “fore the house and the stars they are blazing he whistles his hounds to return
he whistles his Jews to present has a grave dug deep in the ground
he orders us now, play on and strike to the dance

Schwarze Milch der Frühe wir trinken dich nachts
wir trinken dich morgens und mittags wir trinken dich abends
wir trinken und trinken
Ein Mann wohnt im Haus der spielt mit den Schlangen der schreibt
der schreibt wenn es dunkelt nach Deutschland dein goldenes Haar Margarete
Dein aschenes Haar Sulamith wir schaufeln ein Grab in den Lüften da liegt man nicht eng
Er ruft stecht tiefer ins Erdreich ihr einen ihr andern singet und spielt
er greift nach dem Eisen im Gurt er schwingts seine Augen sind blau
stecht tiefer die Spaten ihr einen ihr andern spielt weiter zum Tanz auf

Black milk of the “morn we drink you at night
we drink you at daybreak and midday we drink you as evening falls
we drink and we drink
A man lives in the house where he plays with the serpents he writes
as it darkens he writes to Deutschland your golden hair Margarete
Your ashen hair Sulamith we are digging a spacious grave in the clouds
He cries you there dig deeper the soil, you others you sing and play
He seizes his belted iron and draws it his eyes are blue
You there plunge deeper your spades and you others, play on to the dance

Schwarze Milch der Frühe wir trinken dich nachts
wir trinken dich mittags und morgens wir trinken dich abends
wir trinken und trinken
ein Mann wohnt im Haus dein goldenes Haar Margarete
dein aschenes Haar Sulamith er spielt mit den Schlangen
Er ruft spielt süßer den Tod der Tod ist ein Meister aus Deutschland
er ruft streicht dunkler die Geigen dann steigt ihr als Rauch in die Luft

Black milk of the morn’ we drink you at night
we drink you at midday and mornings we drink you as evening falls
we drink and we drink
a man lives in the house your golden hair Margarete
your ashen hair Sulamith he plays with the serpents
He cries play death more sweetly death is a master from Deutschland
he cries more darkly those violins stroke them then you will rise as smoke in the air

dann habt ihr ein Grab in den Wolken da liegt man nicht eng	then you'll have a grave in the clouds and comfortably there you will lie
Schwarze Milch der Frühe wir trinken dich nachts	**Black milk of the morn' we drink you at night**
wir trinken dich mittags der Tod ist ein Meister aus Deutschland	we drink you at midday death is a master from Deutschland
wir trinken dich abends und morgens wir trinken und trinken	we drink at nightfall and sunrise we drink and we drink
er Tod ist ein Meister aus Deutschland sein Auge ist blau	Death is a master from Deutschland his eye is blue
er trifft dich mit bleierner Kugel er trifft dich genau	he hits you with bullets of lead he hits you between the eyes
ein Mann wohnt im Haus dein goldenes Haar Margarete	a man lives in the house your golden hair Margarete
er hetzt seine Rüden auf uns er schenkt uns ein Grab in der Luft	he sools his hounds upon us and gives us a grave in the air
er spielt mit den Schlangen und träumet der Tod ist ein Meister aus Deutschland	he plays with the serpents and dreams that death is a Meister aus Deutschland
dein goldenes Haar Margarete	your golden hair Margarete
dein aschenes Haar Sulamith	your ashen hair Sulamith

(*Die Gedichte*, 46)

"Celan has more freedom with the German language than most of his fellow poets. Perhaps as a consequence of his origins. He is less constrained by the style and character of the language than others." (Günter Blöcker, 1959)

"Hitler-speak" said Celan.

3. Corona - 1948

Corona is a love poem, an erotic poem calling for an intimate love to be shown to the world, to be shouted from the balcony. Celan had written to Ingeborg Backmann in 1949:

> I will come late this year, if only for the reason that I want no one else to be present when I come with poppies, a lot of poppies and memories, just as many memories, two big shining garlands of poppies and memories, to present to you on your birthday. I have been looking forward to this moment, dying to see you for weeks. Paul
>
> (*Herzzeit*, 11, my translation)

And now he declares his love – like poppies and memory. Corona is the light surrounding an eclipse. The war has almost eclipsed love, except for the corona, which Celan uses to crown his beloved.

The poem begins with a reference to autumn, hinting to Rilke's "Autumn Day", which I have translated below – "Herr, es ist Zeit", it is time. The autumn brings reality with it, the grapes ripen, life is lush, but whosoever is unprepared for the winter, will remain alone.

Rainer Maria Rilke – Autumn Day

Herr: Es ist Zeit. Der Sommer war sehr groß.	Hey Lord: the time has come, the boundless summer gone,
Leg deinen Schatten auf die Sonnenuhren, und auf den Fluren laß die Winde los.	So deepen your shadow on the sundials now And sool the winds down corridors of time
Befiehl den letzten Früchten voll zu sein; gieb ihnen noch zwei südlichere Tage, dränge sie zur Vollendung hin und jage die letzte Süße in den schweren Wein.	Order the last of the fruit to fullness, rich Grant two more Grecian days, bathed in sun Urge them on to ripeness, and hunt The last drop of sweetness into the viscous wine
Wer jetzt kein Haus hat, baut sich keines mehr. Wer jetzt allein ist, wird es lange bleiben, wird wachen, lesen, lange Briefe schreiben und wird in den Aleen hin und her unruhig wandern, wenn die Blätter treiben	He who has no house now, will build no house He who is alone now, will stay alone Will keep watch, will read, write long letters And will wander aimlessly down alleys and continue Till all the leaves lay bare, the branches of the tree. (Rilke, 1902)

In Corona, as autumn is taking a leaf from the hand, I have translated it as if it were a bird – "autumn pecks." Celan then moves to the surreal, peeling time from nuts and teaching it to walk, before it goes back into the nutshell. Sunday is mirrored, we sleep in a dream, not dream in a sleep, but the mouth speaks the truth. The rhythm of the German rolls off the tongue, so the translation can be simple, but must move forward rhythmically. Sunday is free for love and sleep, dream and truth from the mouth. It is erotic and surreal.

Corona

Aus der Hand frißt der Herbst mir sein Blatt: wir sind Freunde. Wir schälen die Zeit aus den Nüssen und lehren sie gehn: die Zeit kehrt zurück in die Schale.	From my hand does autumn peck its leaf: we are friends. We peel back time from the nuts and teach it to walk: Time turns back – into the shell.
Im Spiegel ist Sonntag, im Traum wird geschlafen, der Mund redet wahr.	In the mirror is Sunday in the dream we sleep the mouth rings true

Corona then makes an erotic turn as the poet's gaze "steps down", "alights", to the "sex" of his lover. This could be translated as "loins", but Celan says "Geschlecht", which unambiguously means "sex". "At each other we stare", as opposed to "we stare at each other" – "wir sehen uns an" has the connotation here of "we look each other up and down". The lovers then talk "dark, darkest things". This line "wir sagen uns Dunkles" connotes a conspiracy, an erotic conspiracy to go to the darkness, the depths. I have then translated it as "we confide dark, darkest things", instead of simply "dark".

The imagery in the next stanza is surreal. “We love each other like poppies and memories”; the opiate of love, enriched by precious memories. Celan has his lovers sleep, “like wine in a shell”, like “the sea in the bloody light of the moon”. It is a restless sleep, the sea moving constantly in the “Blutstrahl” of the moon. I have not translated “Blutstrahl” as “bloodray” as it doesn’t have the same poetic lilt as “the bloody light of the moon”.

Mein Aug steigt hinab zum Geschlecht der Geliebten: wir sehen uns an, wir sagen uns Dunkles,	My gaze alights to the sex of my lover: at each other we stare, we confide dark, the darkest things.
wir lieben einander wie Mohn und Gedächtnis, wir schlafen wie Wein in den Muscheln, wie das Meer im Blutstrahl des Mondes.	We love our love like poppies and memory we sleep like wine in a shell, like the sea in the bloody light of the moon.

The lovers are then seen from the street below, “umschlungen”, entwined at the window, visible to the world. The poet now calls for disclosure, it is time for others to know of love. The surreal rock may now bloom, the restlessness of the post-war times can now be transformed, and beat in a heart. The moment is set in stone, time stands still, love survives and sleeps “in the bloody light of the moon”.

Wir stehen umschlungen im Fenster, sie sehen uns zu von der Straße: es ist Zeit, daß man weiß! Es ist Zeit, daß der Stein sich zu blühen bequemt, daß der Unrast ein Herz schlägt. Es ist Zeit, daß es Zeit wird. Es ist Zeit.	Entwined, we stand in the window, people staring up from the street: It’s time, time to tell all! It is time that the rock has comfort to bloom, that restlessness beats in a heart It is time that time became time. It is time.

(*Die Gedichte* 45)

4. The Word About Going-to-the-Depths

In 1959, Celan wrote another poem, “The Word about “Going-to-the-Depths”, which contains similar poetry to “Corona”, but going “deep” not “dark”. It was written as a birthday gift to his wife, Giselle Le Strange, and refers to what they had read together by George Heym – *“Your eyelids so long/your eyes’ dark waters/Let me dive therein/Let me go into the depth.”*

Whereas in “Corona” the lovers “confide dark, the darkest things”, in this poem the lovers go to “our depths”. It is characteristic of Celan in the erotic or love poetry that the dialogue is deep and dark, the darkest, deepest feelings. It is tragic that as his mental health deteriorated in the mid to late sixties, that the deep, love relationship he had with his wife became dysfunctional.

DAS WORT VOM ZUR-TIEFE-GEHEN	**THE WORD ABOUT GOING-TO-THE-DEPTHS**
das wir gelesen haben. Die Jahre, Wie Worte seither. Wir sind es noch immer.	which we read, back then. The years, the words, gone by. We remain, unchanged, like that.

Weißt du, der Raum ist unendlich, weißt du, du brauchst nicht zu fliegen, weißt du, was sich in dein Aug schrieb, vertieft uns die Tiefe.	You know, Space is eternal, you know, you have no need to fly, you know, that which stayed, written in your eye it deepens for us those depths, our depths

(*Die Gedichte* 129)

5. Water and Fire – 1951

Of course, all interpretation of Celan is speculative as he rarely provided analysis of his own work. "Water and Fire" from 1951 includes two motifs found frequently in Celan's poetry. The fire motif in this instance may reference Medea and her madness, her murder of Jason's bride Glauce. "A flame that measured you up for a dress", the poisonous wedding dress provided by Medea, the mistress of poison. The yew tree is poison. The fire can be an allegory for loss, for violence, for the war.

But then the night becomes light, perhaps truth, and Celan returns to his surrealism, this time quite playful. Moons in the plural, hauled up on "gischtende" tables, which literally has to do with "spray", and I have translated as "bubbling tables". The German moves quite quickly and I have tried to capture the rhythm in the surreal images – the wind fills the goblets, the sea serves the food. The sea is so powerful – the roving eye, the thundering ear.

Then references to the war – the flags of the nations, the coffins rowed to shore. Following is a reference to Midsummer's ("Johanni"), which can be analysed with reference to Strindberg's "Miss Julie", which is set on Midsummer's Eve and was being filmed in same year in Stockholm. Is it Celan alluding to class differences?

So warf ich dich denn in den Turm und sprach ein Wort zu den Eiben, draus sprang eine Flamme, die maß dir ein Kleid an, dein Brautkleid:	So I threw you in the tower and had a word to the yews on the side From thence came a flame that measured you up for a dress, your wedding dress
Hell ist die Nacht, hell ist die Nacht, die uns Herzen erfand hell ist die Nacht!	Light is the night, light is the night, for us, the inventor of hearts light is the night!
Sie leuchtet weit übers Meer, sie weckt die Monde im Sund und hebt sie auf gischtende Tische, sie wäscht sie mir rein von der Zeit: Totes Silber, leb auf, sei Schüssel und Napf wie die Muschel!	She shines her vast light o'er the sea, she wakes the moons in the straits and hauls them up on bubbling tables, and for me she washes them, cleaned, absent of time Dead silver, rise up, be cup and plate, look like a shell!
Der Tisch wogt stundauf und stundab, der Wind füllt die Becher, das Meer wälzt die Speise heran: das schweifende Aug, das gewitternde Ohr,	The table rocks back and forth, hour upon hour the wind fills the goblets, the sea serves the dishes delicious the roving eye, the thundering ear, the fish and the serpent –

den Fisch und die Schlange –	
Der Tisch wogt nachtaus und nachtein,	The table rocks back and forth, night in and night out
und über mir fluten die Fahnen der Völker,	and above me the flood of the flags of the nations do flutter
und neben mir rudern die Menschen die Särge an Land,	and next to me people are rowing the coffins to shore
und unter mir himmelts und sternts wie daheim um Johanni!	and beneath me it heavens and stars like at home on Midsummer's!

The poet then speaks romantically to his lover - "Feuerumsonnte", a Celan neologism. I don't think "fire-shrouded" does justice to the neologism, so have translated it as "a vision of fire and sun", which stays in rhythm. Then, the night climbs a mountain, the poet is a master of dungeons and towers, a whisper passing the (poisonous) yews, a reveller at sea, and finally, simply - a word, towards which his lover "slowly smoulders and burns" in my translation of "herabbrennst", which literally means to "burn down to", but would lose its passion in translation without "smoulder and burn".

Und ich blick hinüber zu dir,	And then my eyes rest upon you,
Feuerumsonnte:	Vision of fire and sun:
Denk an die Zeit, da die Nacht mit uns auf den Berg stieg,	Think of that time when the night climbed the mountain, with us
denk an die Zeit,	think of that time,
denk, daß ich war, was ich bin:	think, that I was, what I am:
ein Meister der Kerker und Türme,	a master of dungeons and towers,
ein Hauch in den Eiben, ein Zecher im Meer,	a whisper passing the yews, a reveller at sea,
ein Wort, zu dem du herabbrennst.	a word, towards which you slowly smoulder and burn.

(*Die Gedichte* 58)

6. Memory of France – 1947

Celan did foundation studies for medicine in Paris in 1938/39 and came into contact with literary surrealism. This poem refers in part to a line from Apollinaire's "Les Femmes" – "le songe Herr Traum", which is French – le songe, the dream, and German – Herr Traum, Mr Dream. Celan accesses the dream, the unconscious, the "unsaid" – his lovers are dead, but can breathe. The great autumn crocus is Medea's, the sorceress, buying hearts. This poem was dedicated to Ingeborg Bachman, with whom he had a love affair at the time and with whom he maintained a deep relationship all his life.

It is interesting to compare some words and phrases of my translation and that of Pierre Joris. In the first line, I say "the Parisian sky", he says "the sky of Paris". In both French and German the nominative comes first, the genitive second; in English the word order can be either, but to me "Parisian sky" works better poetically.

In line 4, I say "our hideaway", Joris says "our room". Celan uses "unserer *Stube*", which could be a chamber, or a parlour, but not merely a room. I have chosen hideaway, for the lovers. In line 6, Monsieur Le Songe (Mr. Dream) is painted by Celan as "hager", which has the connotation of "haggard" more than "thin", so I have used "a gaunt, a little, man" to give it some wordplay, as opposed to Joris' "a thin little man", which is think is quite plain.

In line 7, Celan loses his "Augensterne", which literally means "pupils of the eye", but figuratively means "apple of my eye", or "sweetheart". I have translated it as "darlings"; Celan

lost his family; now his lover lends him her hair, he loses it, he is struck down, the dream exits. I don't think he loses the pupils of his eyes; it is not in keeping with the poem.

Concentrate, you, think with me: **the Parisian sky**, the great autumn crocus…	Du denk mit mir: der Himmel von Paris, die große Herbstzeitlose…	You, think with me: **the sky of Paris**, the great autumn crocus…
We fetched hearts at the flower girls:	Wir kauften Herzen bei den Blumenmädchen:	We bought hearts from the flower girls:
they were blue and blossomed in water.	sie waren blau and blühten auf im Wasser.	They were blue and blossomed in the water.
It began to rain in our **hideaway,**	Es fing zu regnen an in unserer Stube,	It started to rain in our **room**,
and our neighbour came in, Monsieur Le Songe**, a gaunt, a little, man.**	und unser Nachbar kam, Monsieur Le Songe, ein hager Männlein.	and our neighbour came, Monsieur le Songe**, a thin little man.**
We played cards, I lost **my darlings;**	Wir spielten Karten, ich verlor die Augensterne;	We played cards, I lost **the pupils of my eyes;**
you lent me your hair, I lost it, he beat us to the ground.	du liehst dein Haar mir, ich verlors, er schlug uns nieder.	You lent me your hair, I lost it, he struck us down.
He left by the door, **the rain in his wake.**	Er trat zur Tür hinaus, der Regen folgt' ihm.	He left by the door, **the rain followed him.**
We were dead and could breathe.	Wir waren tot und konnten atmen.	We were dead and could breathe.
SFN	(*Die Gedichte* 40)	Pierre Joris

7. Count Out the Almonds – 1952

If we interpret "almonds" in line 1 to be events, or memories from the past, we see here the young poet exhorting his readers to interpret the bitter resonances from which his art derives. In the second stanza, however, he spins a secret thread, the secret word of poetry, on which the thoughts of the person (woman?) to which the poem is addressed can slide down to repositories, to "jugs", but remain inexplicit – finding no heart.

But in that space, where the poet's art lives, the addressee finally feels at home inside her own skin, puts her best foot forward – line 9. Then in line 11, the Nietzschean hammers of philosophy are free in the bell tower of her silence and she is privy to the whispered, the overheard secrets of life. Then death takes her arm and together the three – the poet, the whispered and death – stride off into the night. That is the poet's bitter lot, to be counted amongst the almonds.

Zähle die Mandeln, zähle, was bitter war und dich wachhielt, zähl mich dazu:	Count out the almonds, count, that which was bitter and robbed you of sleep,

	and count me in:
Ich suchte dein Aug, als du's aufschlugst und niemand dich ansah, ich spann jenen heimlichen Faden, an dem der Tau, den du dachtest, hinunterglitt zu den Krügen, die ein Spruch, der zu niemandes Herz fand, behütet.	I sought your eye, as you opened it, alone, unwatched, I spun that secret thread, on which the dew of your thoughts slid down to the jars, and shielded by a word, found no one, no one's heart.
Dort erst tratest du ganz in den Namen, der dein ist, schrittest du sicheren Fußes zu dir, schwangen die Hämmer frei im Glockenstuhl deines Schweigens, stieß das Erlauschte zu dir, legte das Tote den Arm auch um dich, und ihr ginget selbdritt durch den Abend.	There you stepped out, fully that name, yours, put your best foot forward, sure on your feet, the hammer swung free in the bell tower your silence, the whispered' rose to your ear, the dead took the crook of your arm, and you band of three, sauntered off through the night.
Mache mich bitter. Zähle mich zu den Mandeln	Make me bitter Count me among the almonds.

(*Die Gedichte* 59)

8. Corroded – 1963, from "Atemwende' (Breathturn)

This poem is taken from the collection entitled "Breathturn", published in 1963. It is useful to quote here from *Der Meridian*, Celan's 1960 acceptance speech for the Georg Büchner Prize, giving a rare insight into one of his neologisms:

> Poetry is perhaps this: an Atemwende (breathturn), a turning of our breath. Who knows, perhaps poetry goes its way—the way of art—for the sake of just such a turn? And since the strange, the abyss and Medusa's head, the abyss and the automaton, all seem to lie in the same direction—is it perhaps this turn, this Atemwende, which can sort out the strange from the strange? It is perhaps here, in this one brief moment, that Medusa's head shrivels and the automaton runs down? Perhaps, along with the I, estranged and freed here, in this manner, some other thing is also set free?
>
> (Paul Celan, transl. Rosmarie Waldrop)

The poem revolves around the word "Breathcrystal" in the final lines of the third stanza. The "Breathcrystal" is waiting, embedded in glacial time, to witness the artist's creation. If we take this neologism to represent the true poem, the crystallisation of the poetic gift, we can work back to the first stanza which opens with the word "beizen", which can be translated as either etched or corroded by some caustic solution. My interpretation is that "Breathcrystal", line 19, has been corroded, but is then freed through penitence, line 12. "Beizen" also means hunting with a bird of prey, a falcon. I have used both corroded and hunted, as the reader of English will have no way of appreciating Celan's play with the alternative meanings of "beizen".

The first stanza proposes that the "hundred-tongued perjure-poem" the "nulloem", the not-a-poem, arises from the corrosion of speech, like at Babel. "**Meingedicht"**, line 5, could be translated as either "Mypoem" or take the "Mein" to mean perjury, as in "Meineid". Given that the result is the "nulloem' I have chosen to base the translation on perjury. Celan's "Genicht", line 6, plays with "Gedicht", which means poem. By replacing one syllable, the "d" with the negative "n", he has created the "nothing poem", the "Genicht".

But the Breathcrystal, the real poem is waiting. The poet has been freed, whirled out like a mystic dancer, line 8, 9, Through the snow, the human snow, the penitent's snow of human experience. Celan coins the word "Büßerschnee", which I have translated as "penitent's hoodsnow", the "hood" emphasising the image of the ritual of doing penance. He is welcomed into the glacial caves, line 13. There, in honeycombed ice, in a gash of time, Breathcrystal waits to witness the absolute poem.

WEGGEBEIZT vom	CORRODED, hunted by
Strahlenwind deiner Sprache	The windray of your speech
das bunte Gerede des An-	The colourful gossip of received
erlebten – das hundert-	wisdom – the hundred-
züngige **Mein-**	tongued perjure-
gedicht, **das Genicht**.	poem, **the nulloem**.
Aus-	Swirled-
gewirbelt,	out,
frei	**free**
der Weg durch den menschen-	the track through snow-
gestaltigen Schnee,	humanlike, snow,
den Büßerschnee, zu	penitent's hoodsnow, leading
den gastlichen	to the hospitality
Gletscherstuben und -tischen.	of the glacial caves and tables.
Tief	Deep
in der Zeitenschrunde,	in the timegash
beim	within
Wabeneis	honeycomb ice
wartet, ein **Atemkristall,**	waits, a **Breathcrystal,**
dein unumstößliches	your irrefutable
Zeugnis.	witness.

(*Die Gedichte* 185)

Paul Celan is known for his courageous dedication to poetry as the highest form of language. From an early age he had a preternatural gift with language and languages. For Celan, language was the key to the mystery of life. When all else was exhausted, when all hope was gone, there was the word. He drew images of devastation, he wrote poems about love and sex, he wrote dedications to saints and emasculated the butchers of World War II, he honoured his mother and his Jewish blood. Above all, he mastered the poetics of the German language, confronted post-war Germany head on with their negligence, their inability to see what they had done to their culture and their language.

Eventually, the depth of Paul Celan's shame for his fellow human beings became too much. He was too sensitive to carry the sins of the world on his shoulders. Paul Celan committed suicide most likely in the night of 19 to 20 April 1970. It is assumed that he went into the Seine from Pont Mirabeau. He did not leave a note, but Wilhelm Michel's 1940

biography (464) was open on his desk with the following sentence from a letter by Clemens Brentano about Hölderlin underlined:

Manchmal wird dieser Genius dunkel und versinkt in den bitteren Brunnen seines Herzens.

("Sometimes this genius gets dark and sinks in the bitter wells of his heart")

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Chinese Studies Association of Australia (CSAA)/AALITRA
Chinese-English Translation Competition 2023: Five Chinese Songs

SHAN MA

The Chinese Studies Association of Australia and The Australian Association for Literary Translation conducted a Chinese-English Translation Competition in 2023, which considered translations of Chinese texts, of any genre or period, into English. The AALITRA Review is pleased to publish this commended piece in this current issue.

Songs reflect and carry people's emotion, affections, values, and culture, and translation of songs facilitates cultural exchanges between peoples. Song-lyrics translation can be for the purpose of understanding or singing, or in Low's (114-15) terms, adaptions and translations respectively. This work is for the latter. Low (79) suggests that singable translation is a "Pentathlon", and the Target Text (TT) needs to be assessed by five criteria: Singability **(**phonetic suitability of the TT for singing); Sense (whether the meaning in the Source Text (ST) is well transferred); Naturalness **(**how natural the style of the TT is); Rhythm (how well it fits with the rhythm of the music); and Rhyme (how well the TT rhyming matches with the rhyming of the ST). Since it is often very difficult to meet all five criteria to the same extent, the translator should aim at achieving a high overall score across the pentathlon, rather than over-emphasising any particular criterion at the expense of others. Thus, compromises are often necessary.

Translated here are the lyrics of five Chinese songs, which reflect upon the life of people in various regions of China. "*Half A Moon Is Climbing Up High*" is based on a Uyghur folk song "*Yi-la-la, Sha Yi Ge*" in West China, and was created in 1939 by Ruobin Wang (1913-1996), who is often called the "West-China King of Songs". The song is a serenade in a half-mooned night outside the sweetheart's window, and it has been performed by countless Chinese and foreign musicians. In 1993, the song was honoured as one of the "Twentieth-Century Chinese Music Classics" by the Chinese Ethnic Culture Promotion Association (Yan & Wang). To match the ST rhyming in my translation, I used "dressing desk" instead of "dressing table", and "toss it to glide" instead of "throw it down" (扔下来) as in the ST. Low (80) suggests that "[Rhyming] is the easiest criterion to assess, and usually the least important". That might be the case in English, but in Chinese songs and poems, rhyming is very important and should not be treated lightly. Thus, I have applied the above-mentioned adaption. The repeated phrase "a rose" in the second last line of each verse is inserted to match the musical rhythm, and it also makes the lyrics more expressive.

"*On The Way to See Mum*" is a North China style folk song, about a young woman's experience on her way to *Hui Niang Jia* (returning to parents' home), a long-lasting Chinese tradition where a married woman visits her childhood home. A married woman lives with her husband's family, thus *hui niang jia* is a reunion with her own family and an important and ritualistic occasion, especially for those who are newlywed or with a new baby. The song tells of a gorgeous and excited young woman, who became confused and helpless after an encounter with a sudden mountain shower on her way to *hui niang jia*. The song's original title was "*Little Missus Going Mum's Home*", which was included in a 1982 album by the Taiwanese superstar Teresa Teng (1953-1995), and became popular in mainland China when Mingying Zhu, a well-known pop star, performed it in the 1984 Spring Festival Gala. The lyrics are by Yi Sun (1928-), a famous Taiwanese song writer with over 4000 song-lyrics to his name (Sun). For my

translation, the title is adapted to set the scene for the story. The use of auxiliary words, such as *ma, ya, der* at the end of the lines, and *Yi-ah-yi-der-wei*, is typical of North Chinese folk songs. They have no real meaning other than to help fill the gaps, smooth over the singing, and make the song colloquial. Therefore, they are not translated, but presented phonetically as *pinyin* in italics in the TT. The same goes for the translation of onomatopoeia in the ST: *shua-la-la* (唰啦啦) is used to represent wind blowing through the willows, and *hua-la-la* (哗啦啦) is for water flowing in the rivers. In the TT repeated *la's* following "swish" and "swash" are to imitate the sounds in the ST on the one hand, and to keep the rhyme in the TT on the other. As suggested by Low (13), "in general you should translate phrases in terms of *what those words are doing* at that point of the work, whether they are providing information, humour, emotion or whatever" (italics original). Another feature of the translation is the inversion of word orders, putting verbs (e.g. flies, runs) or adjectives (e.g. happy, scared) in the front of the line, which makes the sentences more vivid and stimulating.

"*Mountain Yao Night Song*" is about a harvest celebration in a village of the Yao people, an ethnic minority living in the mountainous Southwestern China. The music was based on an orchestral piece from 1951, and it was turned into a lyrical song in 2009 by Zhaozhen Guo, a well-known song writer (Wikipedia). The picturesque scenery that can be envisaged by the lyrics, and the elegant music made the song an immediate success and has remained popular among Chinese people, both domestically and overseas. Again, in my translation, the chanty words (e.g. *Heiyo hohei, heiyee yahoo*) and onomatopoeia (e.g. *deedee, dongdong*) in the ST are not translated, but presented by *pinyin* in italics. The added repetition of "wafting" in the TT is to imitate the repeated "fragrance waves" (阵阵清香) and to better fit the music rhythm.

"*Great Ocean, My Hometown*" was written by Liping Wang for a 1982 movie about the lives of seamen, "*The Ocean is calling*". Wang is famous for the great number of popular songs he created, both music and lyrics. The song was intentionally "neither Chinese nor of any other peoples" as requested by the movie director (*Baidu Baike*). It was awarded the Golden Medal for Pop Music by the Chinese Musician Association in 2008 and was included in school music textbooks on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. The lyrics of this song are plain and reserved, but underneath it are the deep affection and love for mother, sea, childhood, and life in general. The translation is straightforward, and the only point of explanation needed is perhaps the inverted word order in "Wave saw me *up grown*", again to meet the criterion of rhyming.

The lyrics of "*My Motherland and I*" were written in 1983 by Li Zhang (1932-2016). It uses Child/Mother and Wave/Ocean metaphors for the relationships that people have with their motherland, which was deeply seated in the Chinese psyche (and arguably in many other cultures as well). The song gained significant popularity after the superstar Guyi Li sang it in 1984, and in 2019, even English versions became available online (e.g. TAN). It is important to note, however, that they are adaptations rather than translations as in Low's terms. The translation of the last line in the first verse of the ST, "和我诉说" (*hewo sushuo*, [You're venting to me]), was challenging. "诉说" in Chinese mainly refers to telling others your grievance, suffering, or painful experience, which does not fit with the otherwise high-spirited and cheerful text and melody of this song. One possible explanation for the writer's use of it here is that it rhymes well with the preceding lines, which is an example of the importance of rhyming in Chinese songs. As a compromise, I used "Tell me your thoughts" to make it broader and neutral in sense, and to near-rhyme with its preceding line in the TT as well. Another adaption is the translation of "袅袅炊烟" (*niaoniao chuiyan* [wafting kitchen smoke]) in the first verse of the ST. "Wafting" is commonly used in English to describe smokes, but I feel it does not match well with the grace and elegant image depicted by "袅袅" in ST. Therefore "smoke curling up tall" is used instead.

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1.《半个月亮爬上来》

新疆民歌
王洛宾词曲
译文、编排：马山

半个月亮爬上来，
咿啦啦，爬上来。
照着我的姑娘梳妆台，
咿啦啦，梳妆台。
请你把那纱窗快打开，
咿啦啦，快打开，
咿啦啦，快打开。
再把你那玫瑰摘一朵，
轻轻地扔下来。

半个月亮爬上来，
咿啦啦，爬上来。
为什么我的姑娘不出来，
咿啦啦，不出来。
请你把那纱窗快打开，
咿啦啦，快打开，
咿啦啦，快打开。
再把你那玫瑰摘一朵，
轻轻地扔下来。

1.《Half A Moon Is Climbing Up High》

Xinjiang folk song
Music & lyrics: Luobin WANG
Translation & Arrangement: Shan MA

Half a moon is climbing up high,
Yee-la-la, climbing high.
Shining upon my girl's dressing desk,
Yee-la-la, dressing desk.
Please open your window wide,
Yee-la-la, open it wide,
Yee-la-la, open it wide.
And then pick a rose, a rose of yours,
Gently toss it to glide.

Half a moon is climbing up high,
Yee-la-la, climbing high.
Why doesn't my girl show in my sight,
Yee-la-la, not in sight.
Please open your window wide,
Yee-la-la, open it wide,
Yee-la-la, open it wide.
And then pick a rose, a rose of yours,
Gently toss it to glide.

2.《小媳妇回娘家》

作词：孙仪
作曲：汤尼
译文、编排：马山

风吹着杨柳嘛
唰啦啦啦啦啦
小河里水流得儿
哗啦啦啦啦啦
谁家的媳妇
她走得忙又忙呀
原来她要回娘家

身穿大红袄
头戴一枝花
胭脂和香粉她的脸上擦
左手一只鸡
右手一只鸭

2.《On The Way To See Mum》

Lyrics: Yi SUN
Music: Tony
Translation & Arrangement: Shan MA

The wind blowing through willow *ma*
Swish-*la-la-la-la-la*
The water flowing in river *der*
Swash-*la-la-la-la-la*
Someone's missus
Who's walking brisk and fast
Turns out she's on her way to see her mum

Wearing a coat of red
Having a flower on head
Powder n rouge make her face bright
Left hand's a hen
Right hand's a duck
Happy on back is a little chubby baby *ya*

身上还背着一个胖娃娃呀
咿呀咿得儿喂

Yi-ah-yi-der-wei

一片乌云来
一阵风儿刮
眼看着山中就要把雨下
躲又没处躲
藏又没处藏
豆大的雨点往我身上打呀
咿呀咿得儿喂

Gathering is a cloud dark
Blowing is a wind fast
Approaching is a mountain shower abrupt
Nowhere for a hide
Nothing as a cover
Fat drops of heavy rain hit me hard *ya*
Yi-ah-yi-der-wei

淋湿了大红袄
吹落了一枝花
胭脂和花粉变成红泥巴
飞了一只鸡
跑了一只鸭
吓坏了背后的小娃娃呀
咿呀咿得儿喂
哎呀我怎么去见我的妈

Red coat is in dripping wet
Flower's blown off head
Powder n rouge turn to mud of red
Flies off the hen
Runs away the duck
Scared on back is the little poor baby *ya*
Yi-ah-yi-der-wei
Oh my, How can I go to see my mum

3.《瑶山夜歌》

3.《Mountain Yao Night Song》

原曲：刘铁山，茅沅
填词：郭兆甄
编曲：蔡克翔
译文、编排：马山

Music: Tieshan LIU, Yuan MAO
Lyrics: Zhaozhen GUO
Music Arrangement: Kexiang CAI
Translation & Arrangement: Shan MA

灿灿明月，
淡淡清风，
瑶家山寨沉浸在溶溶月夜中。
田野上飘来阵阵稻谷清香，

丰收夜，人不眠，
到处起歌声。

The moon is shining bright,
The breeze is soft and light,
Village Yao is soaked in the melting moonlight.
Fragrant scent of rice is wafting, wafting over the fields,
Harvest night, sleepless night,
Songs arise on every site.

木叶声声吹，
铜鼓响咚咚；
脸对脸儿跳个舞，
手拉手心相通。
嗨哟～，嗬嗨～，嗨依～，呀啰。
嗨哟～，嗬嗨～，嗨依～，呀啰。
耳环亮闪闪，
彩裙翩翩舞；
歌声环绕篝火飞，
映得满天红。

Leaf of woods sounds "*deedee*",
Drum of bronze beats "*dongdong*";
Face-to-face we're dancing,
Hand-in-hand hearts engaging.
Heiyo, hohei, heiyee, yaloo.
Heiyo, hohei, heiyee, yaloo.
Earrings are glittering,
Colourful skirts are spinning;
Around bonfire songs're soaring,
Sky is reddening.

篝火暗了，
月儿疲倦了，
白色的浓雾为群山拉起幕帐.
你听那年轻的朋友，
把知心的话儿尽情弹唱。

耳环亮闪闪，
彩裙翩翩舞。
歌声环绕篝火飞，
映得满天红。
嗨！

Faded the bonfire,
Tired the moonlight,
Thick white fog covers mountains like a curtain.
Listen to those young girls and lads,
They’re pouring out heart to each other.

Earrings are glittering,
Colourful skirts are spinning.
Around bonfire songs are soaring,
Sky is reddening.
Hi!

4.《大海啊，故乡》

词曲：王立平
译文、编排：马山

小时候妈妈对我讲
大海就是我故乡
海边出生
海里成长

大海啊大海
是我生长的地方
海风吹，海浪涌
随我漂流四方

大海啊大海
就像妈妈一样
走遍天涯海角
总在我的身旁

大海啊故乡
大海啊故乡
我的故乡
我的故乡

《Great Ocean, My Hometown》

Lyrics & Music: Liping WANG
Translation & Arrangement: Shan MA

Mum told me while I was young
Ocean is my hometown
By its beach I was born
Waves saw me up grown

Ocean, ah ocean
Where I was raised upon
Blowing winds, and surging waves
Accompany me in roaming around

Ocean, ah ocean
You are Mother in every account
No matter where I may go
You are with me all along

Ocean, my hometown
Ocean, my hometown
You are my hometown
You are my hometown

5.《我和我的祖国》

作曲：秦咏诚
作词：张藜
译文、编排：马山

我和我的祖国

《My Motherland And I》

Music: Yongcheng QIN
Lyrics: Li ZHANG
Translation & Arrangement: Shan MA

My motherland and I

一刻也不能分割
无论我走到哪里
都流出一首赞歌
我歌唱每一座高山
我歌唱每一条河
袅袅炊烟 小小村落
路上一道辙
我最亲爱的祖国
我永远紧贴着你的心窝
你用你那母亲的脉搏
和我诉说

我的祖国和我
像海和浪花一朵
浪是那海的赤子
海是那浪的依托
每当大海在微笑
我就是笑的旋涡

我分担着海的忧愁
分享海的欢乐
我最亲爱的祖国
你是大海永不干涸
永远给我 碧浪清波
心中的歌

Can never be torn apart
No matter where I travel
An ode always flows out of heart
I sing for every mountain
I sing for every creek
Village small, smoke curling up tall
Tracks in the road
Oh my dearest motherland
Forever I will be close to your heart
You use your motherly pulse
Tell me your thoughts

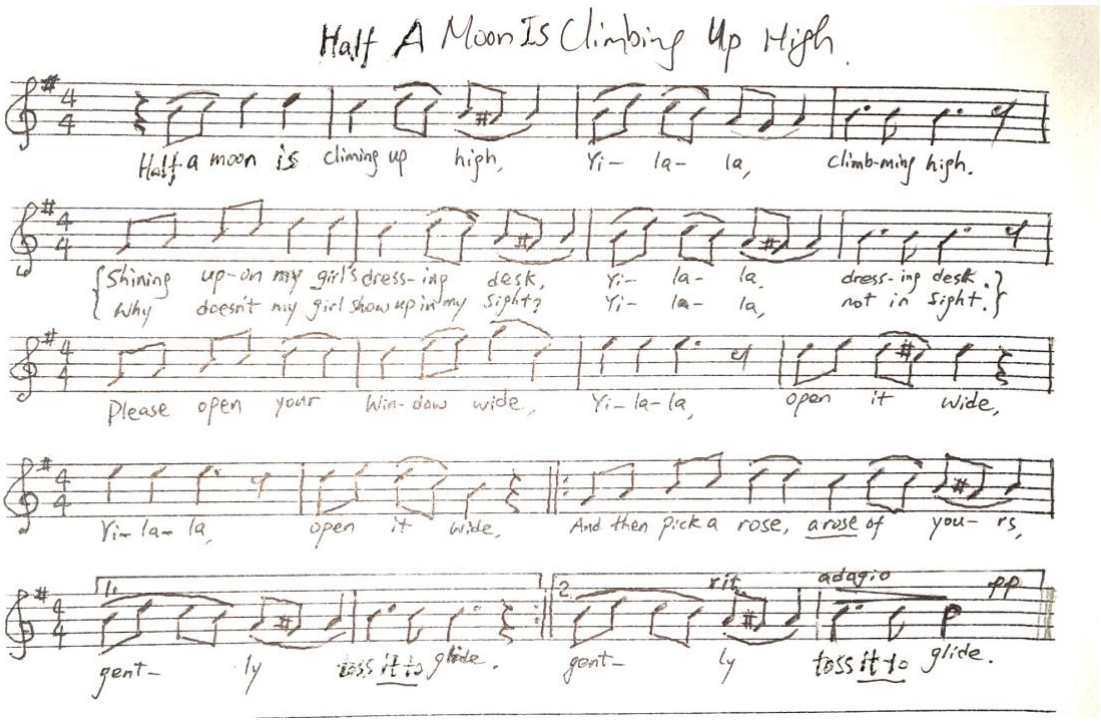
My motherland and I
Relate like ocean n waves
Wave is child to ocean
Ocean is wave's support
Whenever ocean is smiling
I am the swirl of her smile

I share all the ocean's sorrows
I share all her joys
Oh my dearest motherland
You are the ocean which never dries up
Always assures me blue water waves
A song from heart

Appendix
Five Chinese Songs: Music Arrangement

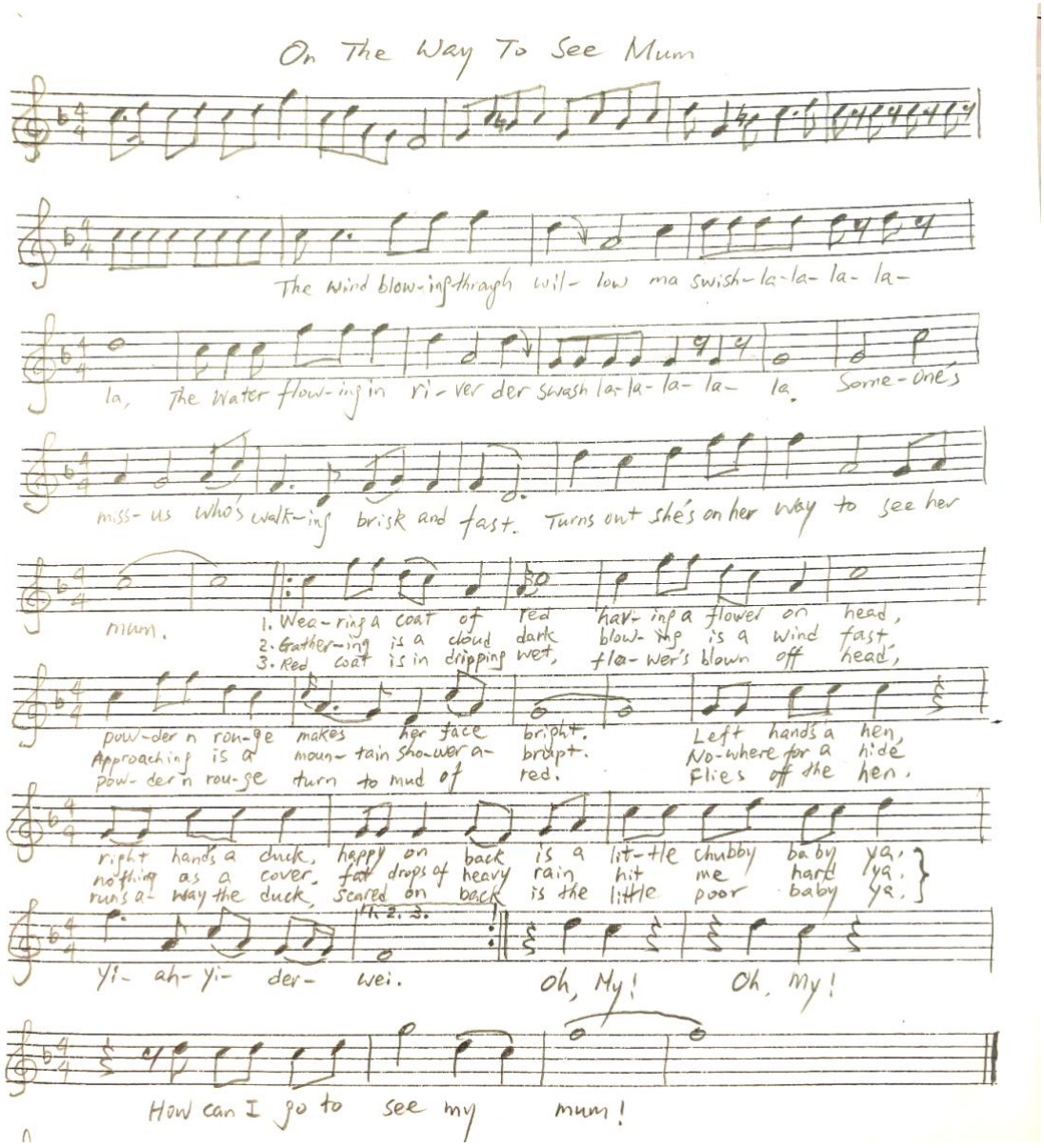
1. Half A Moon Is Climbing Up High

Music & Lyrics: Luobin Wang
Translation & Arrangement: Shan Ma



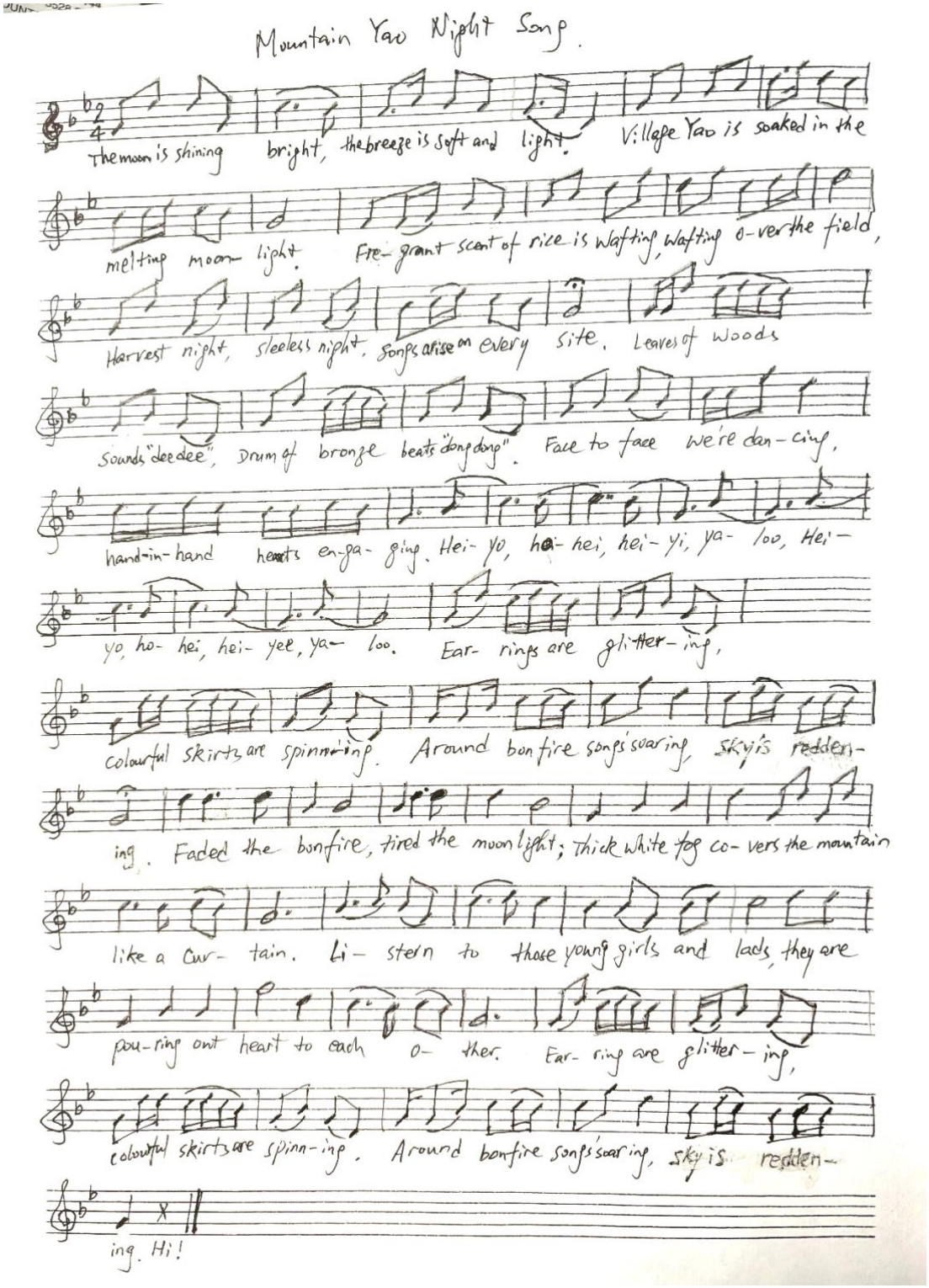
2. On The Way to See Mum

Music: Qingxi Weng (Tony); Lyrics: Yi Sun
Translation & Arrangement: Shan Ma



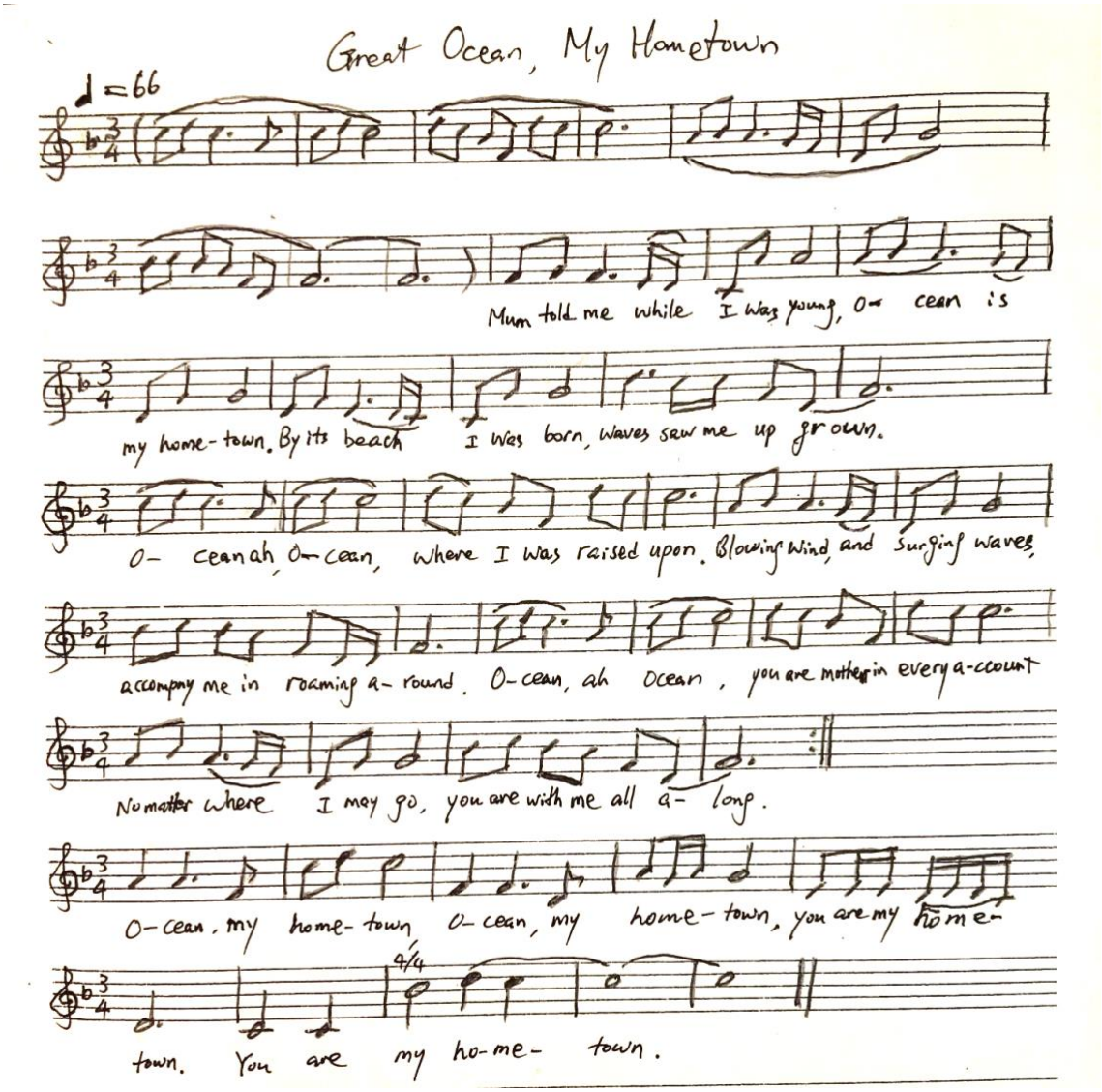
3. Mountain Yao Night Song

Music: Tieshan Liu & Yuan Mao
Lyrics: Zhaozhen Guo
Arrangement: Kexiang Cai
Translation & Arrangement: Shan Ma



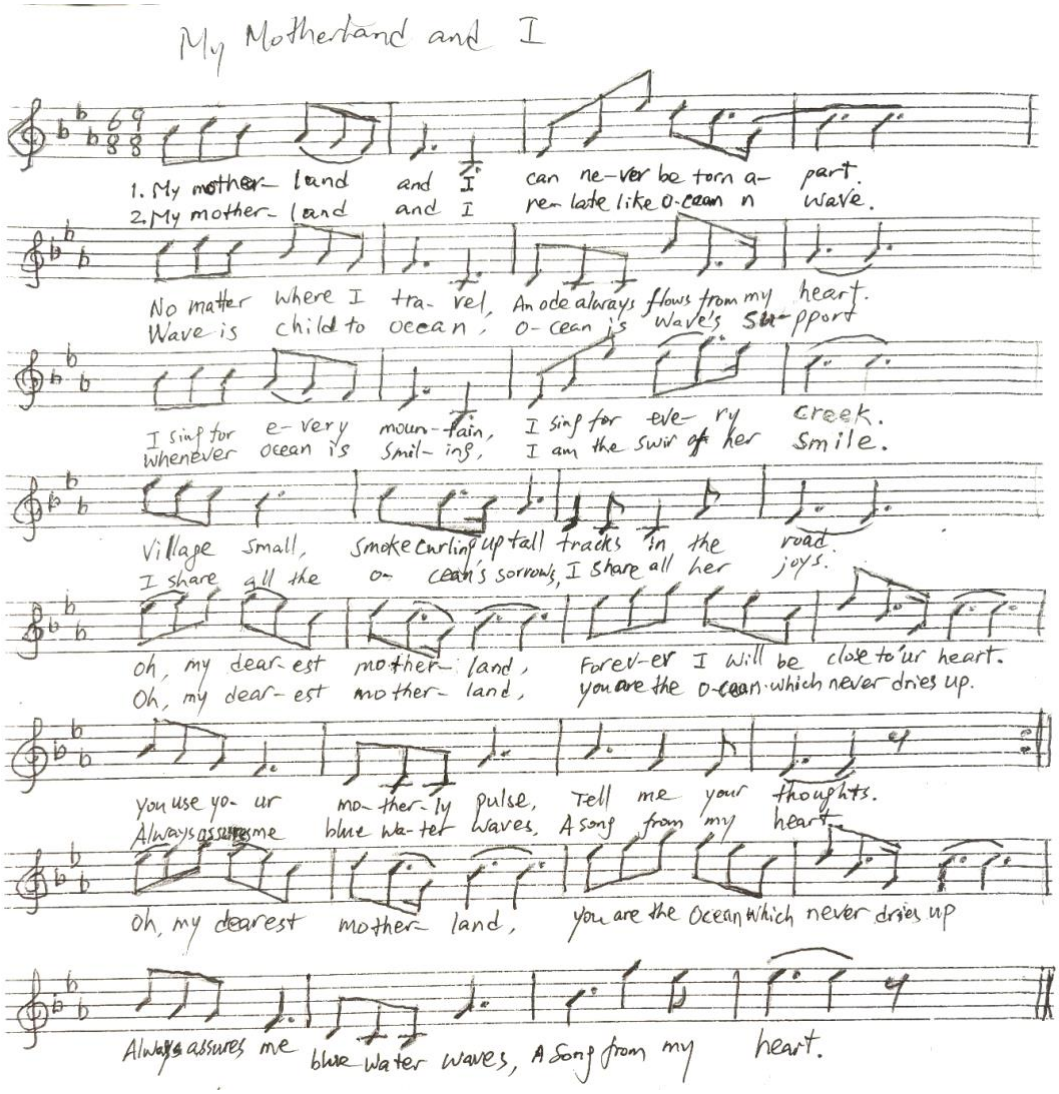
4. Great Ocean, My Hometown

Lyrics & Music: Liping Wang
Translation & Arrangement: Shan Ma



5. My Motherland And I

Music: Yongcheng Qin
Lyrics: Li Zhang
Translation & Arrangement: Shan Ma



Five Poems in Translation: Original Poems by Ioana Vintilă

CLARA BURGHELEA
University of Texas at Dallas

Romanian poet Ioana Vintilă's second collection, *the origami bunker*, was published in 2022. The volume addresses an imaginary land anchored by chemical formulas and miniature dystopias. It echoes the post-rock/metal universe, blending dreamy, tech-savvy, and mundane elements. The title of the collection mirrors the poet's quest to save humankind from the origami bunker. It references a sort of salvation "that is still needed" and begs to be found between the darkness and the promise of light that the poems tackle (Vintilă 76). The dainty architecture of the origami is contrasted with the menacing stance of the bunker which is to be read as both sheltering and an outpost against the crumbling world.

The collection is divided into three sections that are in conversation and vividly express the poet's peculiar style. The first section, *the solar funeral*, is introspective and outlines the poet's voice, both vulnerable and strong. The poems question the poet's place in the world, at times, an accepted failure:

> I lived my life with the severity that, willy-nilly
> engineering shuffles down your neck
> and this thing entered like an old dog does in the hole under the apartment building
> tail between his hind legs
>
> (20)

Other times, there is an inner rebellion which mirrors the cold, distant interiority of the poetic voice who is unwilling to give up on the world:

> how to thrust roots straight down the cracks
> how to come back home alone
> how to pull the deer from the reptile's belly and clean the juices off
> how to relax the wrists
> how to write in buried letters
> how to calculate the balance of forces
> and how to wrap everything, a bride with poppies embroidered
> on the dress,
> in the warm water he rinses
> softly
> the hair with
>
> (22)

The cold analysis of the first section becomes a consuming fire in the next one, where the poet is willing to burn alongside the dying world:

> the body
> an under-pressure reactor
> the metal rods in the brain methodically corroded
> waiting for the decisive trigger
> an implosion with a splendid, blinding
> light

(39)

The humane power resists this apocalypse, despite the violence some of her lines exult. The poems become a test of resilience for the reader who is expected to witness the dissection that the speaker displays in their attempt to reconcile the brutalization of the world and their inner sensitivity. Lately, the language around poetry has become an economic metaphor, yet Ioana Vintilă's lines foster a rich aesthetic challenge. In "Veil", the poet moves from the delicate, frail structure of the May moth to the revelation of the vastness of the world, encased in the tiny structure of the insect:

> within its dozens
> eyes I saw the solar night falling like a mandarin
> peel
> over our eyelids

(58)

The last section, *pleading for my father's right hand*, addresses personal loss and pain which "has a measuring unit. It is called *dol* there are/ also instruments to measure the pain threshold – dolometers – or palpometers (newer versions, based/on applying pressure instead of heat as stimulus)". The body is the elastic glue that binds familiar figures – father, sister, grandmother – to the surrounding abuse and disaster, illustrative, once again, of the speaker's need for human connection.

The first three poems are part of the second section, whereas "smoothie" and "shell" belong to the last section. I chose these poems because they differently address the body and the violence inflicted on this body. They also represent the author's characteristic strengths and some typical translation issues. The author has an unadorned lucidity in the way she uses free verse, and her metaphors are layered with compressed meaning. Form wise, she is willing to explore the confined space of the poem and often uses white space to address tone and the required silences. As always, I started by doing a close reading of the original text, paying attention to the quality of words and the way their layered meanings can be preserved in English. In Daniel Hahn's words, "translators are hybrids – a particularly strange kind of reader, with a particularly strange kind of writer" (2). Romanian is more musical and is riper than English which makes the translation process challenging. It always helps to be fortunate enough to be in conversation with the poet to clarify any linguistic or cultural confusions. Ioana is a versatile poet, whose language is both flexible and intriguing, requiring careful attention to the interplay of the scientific, musical, and conversational undertones her verses encapsulate.

My translation strived to convey the poet's unique style and rich imagination, while also preserving the quality of her poetic trope. Her direct style presented me with an initial problem, because the poems seemed easy to translate which instantly led to a literalness of equivalents. For example, in "slug" it was easy to follow the use of the anaphora (the use of "există" four times) in the English translation. There was a musical interplay between the "x" in the "limax" and "există" which could not be identically replicated in English (43). However, the musical touch was preserved in the "g" in the English words: "slug", "rough", "glittering". Another difficulty came from the two questions that also played around anaphora: "ce pot alege & ce se alege". In Romanian, the structures are similar with the only difference in the voice; the first verb is used in the active voice, whereas the second is in the reflexive voice (Romanian has three voices). In order to preserve the use of the anaphora and address this grammar difference between the two languages, I kept the interrogative pronoun "what" and used verbs with propositions/phrasal verbs: "long for", "come of", "shot at". I also used perspective change, as a solution type as Anthony Pym names them in his book, *Translation Solutions for*

Many Languages. I changed the reflexive voice into an active voice, thus changing the sentence focus.

Similar translation decisions were made at the form level and meaning level in the other poems, from literal translation ("one May evening I caught a moth in a glass") to modulation ("it is not appropriate to talk about illness") and these reflected not only to the necessary small, deft touches but also the very nature of translation as an act of interpretation and imagination. In his article, "How to Read a Translation", Lawrence Venuti echoes his view on foreignization as the ethical choice for translators to make:

> The translator must somehow control the unavoidable release of meanings that work only in the translating language. Apart from threatening to derail the project of imitation, these meanings always risk transforming what is foreign into something too familiar or simply irrelevant. The loss in translation remains invisible to any reader who doesn't make a careful comparison to the foreign text– i.e., most of us. The gain is everywhere apparent, although only if the reader looks. (n.p.)

Hopefully, there is a gain in the way the five poems are carried over from Romanian into English, and it overweighs the losses.

As a poet myself, I had to depart from the boundaries of my own writing, keeping one foot on the shore of linguistic and cultural reality and the other on the shore of creativity. For example, her change of linguistic choices and tone from one section to the next required paying attention to how themes and contents are complemented by forms and the manner in which the Romanian text could be carried on into English, retaining the individual voice of the speaker. To my mind, both poetry and translation are all about slowing down – writing, reading, and using the language in a manner that is equally quiet and intimate. Translation feels at times also a relief and a heaviness, as opposed to the way poetry is primarily interested in preserving an imaginary place. When there is a poetic language to be translated, the process intensifies, since the poem allows the translator to share space with the pace, cohabit and inhabit the poem. Translation thus stands for the metaphor of the limitations of the space and its potential to overspill its own confinement on the page.

As a reader of Ioana Vintilă's poetry, I was seduced by her use of the senses to unsettle the form and enhance the content. Her poems required an alertness that both puzzled and appealed to me as a translator. The attention she paid to structure and white space, her code-switching and occasional hybridity made the collection a peculiar kind of animal. Reading, understanding, and translating her poetry felt both like taming this wilding, as well as allowing it to run free. Thus, the five poems from Ioana Vintilă's second collection mirror the volume's resourceful construction of poetic survival in a mechanical, dehumanized world, seducing the reader with vivid imagery and an almost gothic mood. Hopefully, the English translation of her poems captures the rich cultural and scientific references of her poetry, alongside the lushness of her verse.

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the origami bunker
Ioana Vintilă

limax

există melci fără cochilie,
așa cum există piele aspră, neatinsă

există praf în pânze strălucitoare de păianjen
& există pietre desfăcute, sângerânde

ce pot alege
& ce se alege de inima asta tânără
în care se trage cu revolverul pe jumătate
încărcat

ca un limax orb
să mă târăsc
să mă ghemuiesc
stadiu anterior
în pietre
desfăcute
sângerânde

meltdown

în sfârșit durerea asta are un nume

dar se cuvine să nu vorbim
despre boală

înăuntru

corpul
un reactor sub presiune

tijele de metal din creier roase metodic

se așteaptă declicul hotărâtor

o implozie cu o lumină splendidă

the origami bunker
Ioana Vintilă

Translated by Clara Burghelea

slug

there are slugs
same way there is rough, untouched skin

there is dust in the glittering spiderwebs
& there are open, bleeding stones

What can I long for?
& what will come off this young heart
which is shot at with a half-loaded
revolver

like a blind slug
to crawl
to crouch
to a previous stage
in stones
open
bleeding

meltdown

finally there is a name for this pain

but it is not appropriate to talk
about illness

inside

the body
an under-pressure reactor

the metal rods in the brain methodically
corroded

awaiting for the decisive trigger

an implosion with a splendid, blinding

orbitoare

&

câmpul gol ce rămâne în urmă

văl

într-o seară de mai am prins un fluture de noapte într-un
pahar. picioruşele i se scuturau lovind sticla.
în zecile lui
de ochi am văzut cum noaptea solară se aşază ca o coajă de
mandarină
peste pleoapele noastre

smoothie

utopiile se măsoară
în forma distinctă a ochilor unui orb
licheni & muşchi de inimă în blender
presărați pe-o plajă unde am stat
la Marea Nordului
& în zare se profila un torace gigantic deschis
gata să cuprindă ţărmurile

şi-am strâns mâna cu nisip ud
am simţit particule sub unghii
apoi am plâns încet pentru noi toţi

scoică

am citit că scolioza Luciei Berlin
i-a perforat un plămân
şi a fost nevoită să care pretutindeni, în ultimii ani,
o butelie cu oxigen

vreau doar să te întreb dacă, atunci când va veni timpul,
o s-o cărăm împreună în timp ce ne facem micul dejun
în apartamentul de pe coasta de est a spaniei

şi dacă atunci când vom sta pe plajă să citim

light

&

the empty field left behind

veil

one May evening I caught a moth
in a glass. its little legs were dangling against the glass.
within its dozens
eyes I saw the solar night falling like a mandarin peel
over our eyelids

smoothie

utopias are measured
in the distinct shape of a blind man’s eyes
lichens & heart muscles in the blender
sprinkled across a beach we shared
at The North Sea
& the silhouette of a giant open thorax
on the horizon
ready to swallow the shores

and I clutched my hand filled with wet sand
felt the particles under my nails
then softly cried for us all

shell

I read Lucia Berlin’s scoliosis
perforated a lung
and she had to carry everywhere, during her last years,
an oxygen tank

I just want to ask you if, when the time comes,
we will carry it together while making breakfast
in the apartment on the eastern coast of Spain

and when we lie on the beach reading

o să-ți culci urechea
să auzi șuieratul sincopat, din ce în ce mai slab,
al scoicii din piept

you will place your ear
to hear the syncopated, fading whizzing
of the shell in the chest

An Unrepentant KGB Informer: An Introspective Poem by Sergei Khmelnitsky

KEVIN WINDLE
Australian National University

Poetry and the USSR's security services may seem unlikely bedfellows, except in a purely adversarial sense. It is well known, after all, that many poets and writers suffered during the long years of Stalin's repressions. Yet the concepts were not necessarily mutually exclusive. Those who served the KGB and its predecessors (OGPU, NKVD, MVD) included some extremely cultivated representatives of the intelligentsia, whether as full-time operatives or part-time agents. The poem offered here is the work of a member of the latter category – a zealous and industrious informer with highly developed aesthetic sensibilities and a rare poetic talent.

Sergei Khmelnitsky (1925-2003), an architect, connoisseur of art and literature and specialist in Central Asian architecture, wrote striking poetry from earliest youth but published little until after his emigration to West Berlin in 1980. This poem appeared with eight others in an article written in response to an unfavourable literary portrait by Andrei Siniavsky in his autobiographical novel *Goodnight!* (Terts; Khmelnitsky 182). It was, Khmelnitsky asserted, "flagrant … unprovoked slander", a grossly exaggerated picture of "evil incarnate", a farrago of "nightmarish lies" by one who had no claim to any moral superiority (Khmelnitsky). Other accounts, however, especially that of another one-time friend, Vladimir Kabo, fully accord with that in *Goodnight!* (Kabo 116-141).

"Greetings, dear unrepentant…" presents a revealing insight into the mind of what Olga Matich has termed an "evil genius, reifying the demonic artistry of High Stalinism" (Matich 56), as depicted by Siniavsky. Written on the poet's twentieth birthday, according to Kabo it constitutes "a coded address to himself, a self-portrait and a program for living" (Kabo 128). A few years later, in 1949, Khmelnitsky would manufacture "evidence" of an anti-Soviet conspiracy by two students, his good friends Kabo and Iurii Bregel, and see them receive ten-year sentences in the GULAG. In 1964, having returned to Moscow, Kabo and Bregel contrived to expose their accuser, who then found himself ostracized by the intellectual society which had always been his natural home (see Kabo 114-141; Windle, "The Belly of the Whale" 6-7). In another poem, as elsewhere in his response, the poet expressed a measure of regret, without apology, for the harm done ("I saw that wrong can't be set right"), while maintaining the focus on his own uncomfortable social situation (Khmelnitsky 187; Windle, "Tantamount to Death" 157; Windle, "The Belly of the Whale" 19). For that, his poem states, "you boys are not to blame", implying that Kabo and Bregel might have reason to consider themselves, rather than him, at fault.

In 1966, when Siniavsky and Iulii Daniel were put on trial for sending their "anti-Soviet" writings abroad, Khmelnitsky, who knew much about them and their literary work, appeared as a witness for the prosecution, contributing nothing that might ease the defendants' lot. Kabo was of the opinion that the poem "Greetings, dear unrepentant…" showed that Khmelnitsky's Faustian pact with the KGB pre-dated his twentieth birthday, and suggests that others unknown may have fallen victim (Kabo 118, 120, 128).

The translator is guided by the method advocated by Walter Arndt: the translation should replicate the "total effect" of the original verse (Arndt xiv). Similarly, David Samoilov (cited by Chukovsky 95) and Paulo Rónai (144), like Ezra Pound (cited by Underhill 159), favoured a "poem-for-poem" approach, viewing the product first as a whole, and only then considering the semantic and formal detail.

The translation seeks to reflect the sentiments of the poem, while conveying something of its formal properties and the playful ease of its simple language. The poet adheres to a traditional Russian verse form which has never gone out of fashion: trochaic pentameter with a pattern of rhyme (sometimes assonance) of *abab*. The translation follows similar patterns, in places modulating the metre to iambic without disrupting the regular alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables. An attempt has been made to replicate the rhyme or assonance in the /b/ lines, where rhyme is more strongly felt.

Among the difficulties posed for the translator was the need to avoid pop-song tropes in the lines about loneliness and finding love. The imagery involving the Russian coins *piatak* and *grivennik*, in stanzas 2 and 3, necessitated a generalized interpretation, since the alternative, explaining their value in a footnote, seemed inappropriate.

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Sergei Khmelnitsky

Здравствуй, милый нераскаянный
злодей.
Очень рад я познакомиться с тобой,
Потому что я люблю плохих людей,
Потому что я и сам такой плохой.

Может, я с тобой давно уже знаком?
Ты ведь тоже любишь в омут головой,
Тоже любишь прокаленным пятаком
Прокатиться по гремучей мостовой.

Не кривись и не ломай карандаши,
Никого себе на помощь не зови.
Или в гривенники выйти порешил,
Или холодно на свете без любви?

Не печалься, не тревожься и наплюй.
Все прекрасно, только очень может быть
–
Никогда я никого не полюблю
И меня, пожалуй, не за что любить.

Но пройдем мы по земле и по воде,
Наглым смехом нарушая их покой,
Потому что я люблю плохих людей,
Потому что я и сам такой плохой.

7.5.1945

Sergei Khmelnitsky

Translated by Kevin Windle

Greetings, dear unrepentant evil-doer!
Glad I am to meet you, yes indeed,
Because I'm so very fond of evil-doers
And I too am of the evil-doing breed.

But perhaps we've known each other for
some time.
You also like to plunge into the deep
And rattle round the town like warm small
change
That tinkles on the cobbles of the street.

No use grimacing or breaking things in spite
Or calling anyone to lend a hand.
Did you decide you'd boost your worth a
mite,
Or is a loveless world too cold to stand?

Don't you worry or lose heart; put it behind.
It's for the best, although it may well be
That love is something I won't ever find,
And maybe there's no reason to love me.

In the meantime we can make a bit of
trouble,
Crassly cackling as we roam the land and
sea,
Because I'm so very fond of evil-doers,
And I too am of the evil-doing breed.

7.5.1945

"Home"

LEEI WONG
Sheridan Institute of Higher Education

Born in Canada but brought up in Singapore, the author of "Home", Miriam Wei Wei Lo, now resides in Australia, which she considers her home. She has a diverse background, being of both Malaysian-Chinese and Anglo-Australian heritage. She completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Western Australia and earned a PhD from the University of Queensland. Her debut book, *Against Certain Capture*, garnered the 2004 Western Australian Premier's Award for Poetry. She is currently a lecturer in creative writing at the Sheridan Institute of Higher Education. Recognised as the 2023 Westerly Mid-Career Fellow, she has released her new book, *Who Comes Calling?* Which was published by West Australian Poets Publishing in May 2023.

About the Poem and Translation Analysis

"Home" is a poem that was first published in the 2013 anthology *Contemporary Asian Australian Poets*, edited by Adam Aitken, Kim Cheng Boey, and Michelle Cahill. The poem's significance is highlighted by its inclusion in the NSW Higher School Certificate syllabus. The poem is written in standard free verse form, with varying stanza lengths and line lengths that serve to create a sense of organic flow and reflect the fluid nature of the poem's themes. In the translation of the poem, particular attention was paid to preserving the line breaks and other elements of the original freestyle, ensuring that the translation captures the full essence and impact of the poem's imagery and language.

While reading this poem, one must crucially consider the literary devices employed by the poet. These elements not only enhance its impact but also enrich its meaning. Of particular note is the rich imagery saturating its initial stanza: sensory descriptions evoke an olfactory experience – specifically that of food's aroma – and simultaneously contrast cultural influences from East to West. As we transition into subsequent stanzas, auditory and tactile imagery take centre stage: they vividly portray sounds like running waters – echoing with their unique rhythm; and textures reminiscent of braille, thus infusing a deeper sensory experience within our understanding of the piece. The final stanza employs botanical imagery, crafting a vivid and evocative portrait of foreign plants. This addition intensifies the pervasive sense of displacement and otherness that the stanza conveys.

Lo also intentionally employs metaphors and imagery in "Home" to construct a complex amalgamation of emotion and image that communicates the experience of dislocation and uncertainty regarding identity. Throughout the poem, she accentuates the contrast between East and West, intertwining culture with religion. This imbues an additional layer of depth into the persona's perception of displacement and otherness. Additionally, the poet's background is crucial to understanding the poem's themes and perspectives. As noted earlier, the poet has lived in different countries and comes from a mixed-race marriage. These personal details shed light on the poet's unique experiences and cultural background, which likely influenced the themes and perspectives of the poem.

While cultural and linguistic challenges were involved in translating this poem, capturing the biblical allusions and references to C.S. Lewis's (1898-1963) work was the primary difficulty. These elements underscore the poem's underlying theme of life as a pilgrimage to a higher purpose. They emphasise the transient nature of earthly homes in contrast to an eternal spiritual abode.

This translation employs Lefevere's strategies, focusing particularly on blank verse, literal translation, and interpretation to maintain the original poem's thematic depth and poetic form. Blank verse provides syntactic freedom without sacrificing thematic integrity. It aims to render the poem into unrhymed iambic pentameter, valued for its rhythmic consistency and approximation of natural speech patterns.

For instance, the line "我将独自生活在那里，同时与我所爱的人共处" ("I will live there alone and with everyone I love") uses blank verse to convey complex emotional states. It juxtaposes solitude and community, enriching the poem's emotional depth. Another example is "I consider my father, born into a single room". This line aims to retain the many layers of meaning by contemplating the humble origins of the poet's father. Although Chinese does not share the same metrical constraints as English iambic pentameter, a conscientious translation still aims to capture both the content and some semblance of the original rhythm, as seen in "我忆起父亲，生于一小房".

The conversational tone often attributed to blank verse is evident in the line "我们回家了！ 他们肯定视这里为家" ("We're going home! They must mean this place"). This form's universality and relatability are heightened by its resemblance to spoken language. On the aesthetic front, blank verse excels in capturing a naturalistic flow, demonstrated in "足够的书籍卷轴，满足皇后与中世纪国王的渴求" ("enough books for a dowager empress, or medieval king"). The line's rhythmic cadence enhances the reading experience by mimicking everyday speech.

Moreover, the utility of blank verse in maintaining thematic integrity is evident in lines like "提醒我已为此，舍去思想的束缚" ("reminding me that I have left the life of the mind for this"). Here, the translator preserves the implications of choosing spiritual knowledge over earthly pursuits. The subtlety of this meaning could be compromised if a more rigid translation approach were used.

In conclusion, adopting blank verse in Chinese translations successfully preserves the original poem's structural complexity and thematic richness. This form serves as an adaptable medium that translates the poem's essence into a linguistic and cultural context accessible to a Chinese readership.

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Home
Miriam Wei Wei Lo

回家
罗薇薇

Translated by Leei Wong

1. One day I will find it

I'll follow the smell of food:
fried ikan balls, roast lamb, mangoes;
Or the sound of water touching down on sand, stones, mud.
Perhaps the code for entry will be in braille
and I must stand in a dark room at midnight, weeping
and running my fingers over two stone tablets.
It will be in my mouth—a thin wafer of honey,
The bitter salt taste of my husband's sweat.
I will see it, I'm sure, yellow as wattle in winter
And brown as the grass under snow.

It will be a skyscraper, fifty storeys tall.
It will be the smallest, most picturesque cottage.
I will live there alone and with everyone I love.

No children are raped there.
No one eats while others go hungry.
No lying awake, wondering which woman or child
in what sweatshop has made these pyjamas I wear,
or the sheets on the bed, or the rug on the floor.
I will not have to lock the door.

2. Without Warning

An explosion of light.
A word that is itself.
A word to possess me.
An image so bright and complete
it can only be seen with eyes shut tight.
As in prayer.
As in sleep - a dream that outlives reality.
An image to enter me like a knife, like a nail,

1. 我终将寻获

追随美食芳香：
炸香鱼丸、烤羊肉香，与芒果之味；
或波涛拍岸，感受沙石泥韵。

盲文或许是通往内心的密码，
漆黑房间独自夜半啜泣，

指尖探寻摸索双石碑 。

它将在我口中，犹如薄薄的蜂蜜饼干，

夹带我丈夫汗水的苦咸。
我将见到它，它肯定黄如冬日的金合欢，

棕如雪地下的草丛。

它将是座五十层高楼耸立在天。
它将是最小巧，如画的小屋。

我将独自生活在那里;同时与我所爱的人们共处为伴。

那里孩童免受性侵犯。
他人饥饿时，无人独享餐。
不再辗转反侧，琢磨/揣测是哪位女人或孩童，
在何处的血汗工厂， 缝制我身上的睡裳，

床头衣物或地板上的地毯。

我将无需锁门防护。

2. 毫无预兆

突如其来目眩的光芒。
神的话语自身。
深深地占据我。
如此明亮完整的图像，
唯闭双眸，方可领悟。
如同祷告般。
如梦境般存在， 超越现实。
如刀如钉般的影像，穿透我心，

hammering in till it finds its reply, taking my body
like breath, like the strong kiss of a bridegroom,
like death, in all its finality

Someone is at work in me,
translating this corrupt language of my body,
the dark, bitter words of my heart,
into the pure language of that other place
where every word is a radiant arrival
that draws me across the threshold
and claims me as its own.

3. A Place to Return To

Bed, toilet, kitchen. Exposed brick walls.
This worn grey carpet, toys all over the floor
reminding me that I have left the life of the mind
for this. "Home!", the children call out in the car,
"We're going home! " They must mean this place.

I consider my father, born into a single room,
that housed his whole family. And this — running water, six sets of taps, a fridge, a washing machine,
enough books for a dowager empress, or medieval king.

If there must be a place,
a tent for the body on this earth,
I'll take this one,
with the blue plumbago waving defiantly through the natives, the climbing white jasmine rampant over the fence,
and the mulberry tree,
that foreigner so completely at home,
growing taller each year.

锤打不已，直至觅得回应，占据我身

宛如呼吸般自然，犹似新郎深情热吻。

犹如死亡，带着最终的决断。

有某种力量在我身躯中呼之欲出，
将我体内的腐败语言，

我内心黑暗、痛苦之词，
转化成那纯净之地的语言，
字字闪耀如光辉迎来，
引导我迈过门槛，
并宣称我属于祂。

3. 回归之地

床、厕所、卫生间、厨房。裸露的红砖墙。
磨损的灰色地毯，地上散落着的玩具

提醒我已为此，舍去思想的束缚，

“回家了！”孩子们在车里欢呼，

“我们回家了！”他们肯定视这里为家。

我忆起父亲，生于一小房 ，

家人全共居一隅。而这儿—
潺潺流水、六组水龙头、一台冰箱、一台洗衣机，
足够的书籍卷轴，满足皇后与中世纪国王的渴求。

若必须有一处居所，
一座容身之所，
我会选择这里
蓝钟花倔强地

向当地肆虐篱笆的白茉莉花，挑衅地挥舞着
还有桑树，
这异乡之植，竟盎然生长
逐年生长更高。

Review of Oodgeroo Noonuccal's *La Mia Gente* (Translated by Margherita Zanoletti)

RACHAEL SCRIVENER
Monash University

Noonuccal, Oodgeroo. *My People. La mia gente*. Translated into Italian by Margherita Zanoletti, 2021.

The work *My People* by Oodgeroo Noonuccal (1920-1993), has been translated for the first time in Italian by Margherita Zanoletti, with the title *La mia gente*. However, this is not Noonuccal's first entry into the "world literature" via translation (Wilson 78); she has been of great academic interest for many of her works in both China and India as two examples (Xu; Kar). *La Mia Gente* is subsequent to an earlier collaboration of Di Blasio and Zanoletti who translated *We Are Going: Poems* by Noonuccal. *My People* collects poems of Noonuccal's first two books, *We Are Going* and *The Dawn Is At Hand* and an additional seven writings.

Whilst Australian literature translated into Italian has become a part of the Italian national literature, primarily in popular genres (Di Blasio and Zanoletti, *Encrucijadas*), before 2000 few Aboriginal texts were known. Di Blasio and Zanoletti (*Encrucijadas*) assert there is a growing series of Italian publications dedicated to Aboriginal texts, although their Italian audience remains principally within academic circles.

La mia gente has two parts, the first is an introduction and discussion of the source author, the text, and the translation, and the second part features the collection in both English and Italian of seventy-five poems, an interlude and the conjointly written discussion by Noonuccal and her son Kabul. Literature on translated works of Australian Aboriginal writers is concerned these books misrepresent the original intentions of the author and distort the perception of Australian Aboriginal peoples by European communities (Čerče and Haag). Yet, Zanoletti has taken a progressive step forward by opening with an essay penned by award-winning Aboriginal Australian novelist Alexis Wright, member of the Waanyi nation of the southern highlands of the Gulf of Carpentaria. The essay is well selected for its reflection on the rich diversity within Aboriginal literature and how it should not be narrowly confined. The essay introduces the context with Wright's eloquently powerful insight, thus, Italian readers with potentially little prior knowledge are introduced to Oodgeroo Noonuccal through the lens of an insider. In the subsequent chapter, Zanoletti provides a biography of Noonuccal, focusing on her life as a writer, educator and political activist, capturing the intersectionality that directed Noonuccal's life and works. Oodgeroo Noonuccal, first published under the Anglo-Saxon name Kath Walker, was the first Indigenous poet and the first Aboriginal woman to publish a literary work (Zanoletti, *Intersemiotic*). Zanoletti provides a descriptive analysis of the fundamental characteristics of the collection within a historical-political context under three frameworks. The translation of Australian Aboriginal texts "is a complex task involving difficult negotiations across cultural, linguistic, and historical contexts" (Čerče and Haag 86) and the final part of the introduction discusses this translation process.

Mudrooroo, a writer and close friend of Noonuccal, wrote that she never described herself as a poet but when pressed, as an educationalist. This primary aim may support the translator to focus on the semantic meaning rather than the aesthetic structures, employing a literal translation approach. Faced by the challenge of hybridism in the original text with code-switching between English, Aboriginal English and Aboriginal lexical items, Zanoletti (*La mia gente; Intersemiotic*) states her aim was to recreate a communicative approach as close to the source as possible, whilst acknowledging the limitations of the target language. However,

Zanoletti (*Intersemiotic*) also discusses the process of recontextualising, intermediating and transmitting the work in a creative way.

A glossary has been included since the first edition of *My People* to define the Aboriginal lexical items woven with English in the original poems, an indicator of Noonuccal's political and pedagogical work, always educating and guiding the reader. Code-switching was a key device of Noonuccal to move the reader emotionally and Zanoletti does justice to the original text. The translator retains code-switching between Italian and Aboriginal lexical items and includes a glossary (*Intersemiotic*). It has been noted the asterisks indicating words defined is, at times, inconsistent with that of Noonuccal. For example, *playabout*, an Aboriginal English lexical item appearing five times in the source text, was asterisked, however Zanoletti opts to translate the item into Italian in different ways (*di celebrare, un passatempo della communità, che spasso, celebrazioni*). Similarly with the vernacular items *fella* and *fellow,* appearing more than twenty times throughout the source text, are translated as *amico* or *compagno* or otherwise omitted entirely.

Another interesting example is in the poem *Jarri's Love Song (La canzone d'amore di Jarri)* where the source text has the item *pitcheri* asterisked, a native Australian plant with narcotic properties. Rather than retaining the item with an asterisk in the target text, it is translated as *brocca* in Italian which is a pitcher (jug). Whilst a jug has no semantic resemblance to the native plant, it is curious the resemblance between *pitcheri* and the English *pitcher* to the degree that one might be concerned there was a mistranslation resulting in *brocca*. However, the inclusion of *pitcheri* in the glossary would support otherwise. A reader can only ask why this lexical item that was code-switched in the source text was not also retained in the target text, consistent with the overall approach. Interestingly, Zanoletti does retain the foreignizing strategy of Noonuccal within the same verse by adapting the target text to have another Aboriginal lexical item. *Didgeridoo* is asterisked although the source text had written *drone-pipe*, which in and of itself was an interesting choice by Noonuccal. The Oxford English Dictionary lists the second sense of drone-pipe is the didgeridoo, with a quote of its use recorded in 1905 (2023, drone pipe entry). The use of drone-pipe is an example of Noonuccal's poetic device of using the language of the 'colonizers' as she amalgamates two worlds through interlingualism (Zanoletti, *Intersemiotic* 245). As Zanoletti replaces the Aboriginal lexical item, *pitcheri*, with an Italian word, and adds an Aboriginal word via *didgeridoo,* she shifts the asterisk in the verse whilst preserving the dimension of interlingualism. Perhaps the translational challenge was not *pitcheri* to begin with but the translation of drone-pipe, thus the solution being didgeridoo and the resulting shift.

When under the critical lens of a review it might be easier to highlight the non-literal solutions of a translator and conjecture their acceptability (Čerče and Haag), this would only detract from the complex work involved in translating deeper multi-levelled meanings which a translation can only communicate its interpretation of, as the translator "re-experiences" the source and the result reflects the translator's voice, sensitivity and writerly style (Zanoletti, *Intersemiotic*). The examples discussed demonstrate the translator addressing the challenges of poetry which already employs a foreignizing hybridity of cultures in the source text. Zanoletti has contributed a valuable text to the growing series of Aboriginal literature in Italy which one can hope will reach not only academic circles but beyond.

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Review of Kavita Bhanot and Jeremy Tiang's (eds.) *Violent Phenomena:* 21 Essays on Translation

JODIE LEA MARTIRE
The University of Queensland

Bhanot, Kavita, and Jeremy Tiang, eds. *Violent Phenomena: 21 Essays on Translation.* n.p.: Tilted Axis Press, 2022.

Violent Phenomena is a response to one of the significant political concerns of our moment, that of decolonisation. Let's begin by reminding ourselves of Tuck and Yang's ineluctable statement that however much "decolonisation" may have become a buzzword in recent years, "decolonisation is not a metaphor". It "brings about the repatriation of Indigenous land and life" (1). Accordingly, twenty-four writers and translators from across the world here direct the "violent phenomenon" of decolonisation – in the words of Frantz Fanon – to the cultural establishment of literary translation, a field which editors Kavita Bhanot (editor and translator) and Jeremy Tiang (translator) accurately describe as "dominated by middle-class whiteness" (8). The volume aims to problematise translation as a neutral field, highlighting instead the "imperialist mindset" (9) at play where the "seemingly benign 'curiosity' [of Western readers of translated works] can be questioned as an assertion of power" (9).

This review can only provide the barest introduction to the breadth and richness of the content and approaches in *Violent Phenomena*. Contributions range across memoir, scholarly work, interviews and literary analysis, with some pieces strongly based in translation and/or political theory and others prioritising the human experience. For this reviewer, that diversity of thought and form, offered by contributors from over a dozen different ancestries and mother tongues, was rich, inventive and absorbing.

The collection opens with a quasi-academic conversation/article between Gitanjali Patel and Nariman Youssef, printed in landscape rather than portrait format and including extensive quotations "from translators for whom [the translation] mainstream is not enough" (18). Kaiama L. Glover considers blackness, race and "cleansing" material by examining her own translation of the Haitian Vodou novel *Hadriana dans tous mes rêves* [Hadriana in All My Dreams], while Aaron Robertson writes of his unpublished translation from Italian of *Memories of an Ethiopian Princess*, highlighting the relationship between Italy and nations in the Horn of Africa. In contrast, Korean translator Anton Hur explores the supremacist mythos of "the English reader" – white, male and literary – who is the default target of mainstream translations.

Khairani Barokka debunks "the colonial right of people privileged by Empire to access all kinds of information" (66). A speaker of three Indonesian languages, including one under threat, Barokka emphasises that "there are things that [non-locals] *should not* translate, and that, as indigenous peoples, we do not want them to even have access to" (74, original emphasis). Eluned Gramich relearns herself and/in Welsh, while Paraguayan-born Elisa Taber demonstrates *mythopoetizaje* ("the recreation of myths (mythopoesis) born out of mestizaje"; 268) explicating texts presented in Guaraní, Spanish and English. Polyglot Indian translator Madhu H. Kaza writes of the central disjunct in her relationship to her mother tongue, Telugu: "In the last decade I have translated contemporary Telugu fiction into English, and yet it remains improbable to think of myself as a translator from this language" (306). Another multilingual, "mutt mixed-breed Latina translator" (150) Lúcia Collischonn, contributes a "academic-essay-manifesto-crônica" (150) in defence of the L2 translator and against the

colonial supremacy that considers them an "incompetent *under*lingual suboptimal beings" (153, original emphasis).

Scholar Sofia Rehman examines the complexities of being a feminist, decolonising translator of classical Arabic texts, and Layla Benitez-James analyses issues around translating racialised terminology as a Black, mixed-race woman from Texas. Sandra Tamele, granddaughter of assimilated Mozambicans, explores her relationship to imperial and African Portuguese and to languages of Mozambique, while Monchoachi (one name only) considers the status of Martinican Creole between *crié* (spoken) and *écrit* (written) forms. This is complemented by an afterword from Monchoachi's translator, Eric Fishman, which situates his writing in a Francophone and Creolophone cultural context. Shushan Avagyan gives a scholarly history of translations from Armenian; Onaiza Drabu sets out the invisibility of Kashmiri, as the language of a contested territory; and British Pakistani Sawad Hussein shares racist episodes from her history as a "BROWN WOMAN" (171, original emphasis) who is a translator of Arabic.

In essays focused on poetry, Hamid Roslan, an ethnically Malay Singaporean, considers his experimental bilingual Singlish/English poetry book *parsetreeforestfire*. Tobago-born M. NourbeSe Philip and Ghanaian-American Barbara Ofusu-Somuah share an interview about "untranslatability" and a performance of the book-length poetry cycle *Zong!*, centred on the drowning massacre of 133 enslaved Africans in 1781. Mona Kareem is scathing of mostly monolingual poets creating "renditions" of poems through often unacknowledged literal/other translations; her title: "Western poets kidnap your poems and call them translations: On the colonial phenomenon of rendition as translation" (143-150). Anticaste publisher Yogesh Matreiya shares his experience rendering into English the work of Dalit poet Nagraj Manjule.

Despite the high calibre of contributions, the collection is not as well designed and laid out as other Tilted Axis titles I have read and enjoyed (Tilted Axis is a UK small press which has exclusively published translations since its founding in 2015. Its publications were originally translated from Asian languages only, although recently it has expanded its ambit to include works from the African continent). This decreased quality may hint at a rushed production phase–perhaps submissions were longer than expected, but both page count and price point were strictly limited. Among other issues, apparently random sentences, paragraphs and pages are printed in darker type for no clear reason, while the lighter type is slightly hard to read; left and right margins are laughably slim, and text falls in the gutter; footnotes are crammed into the already tight bottom margin, and are neither attractive nor systematically formatted across the anthology. It is unfortunate that these flaws drag on the reader's attention and diminish the physical attractiveness of the volume. Elsewhere, the designers have responded quite well to the demands of typographically experimental work, such as text running in two columns across the spread (as in Patel and Youssef's piece, or in Ayesha Manazir Siddiqi's defence of Urdu, an essay which "is also a prayer for the tender things, those that become lost, damaged or forgotten when a dominant language overtakes one less powerful"; 83).

Printing issues aside, I found this collection of writings confronting, stimulating, wide-ranging, insightful and overall thoroughly fascinating – I have longed for a fellow reader to discuss it with. It is no pleasant process to have one's ideas and thinking patterns around translation and language violently disrupted, and that is as it should be. As Bhanot and Tiang close their introduction, "Colonialism is violence, and it is difficult to see how decolonising could be anything other than a violent disruption" (13). This volume is highly recommended, challenging and rewarding for all writers, translators and mindful users of language.

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Review of Roy Youdale's *Using Computers in the Translation of Literary Style: Challenges and Opportunities*

LOLA SUNDIN
Monash University

Youdale, Roy. *Using Computers in the Translation of Literary Style: Challenges and Opportunities.* Routledge, 2020.

Roy Youdale's *Using Computers in the Translation of Literary Style: Challenges and Opportunities* is a thought-provoking and insightful exploration of the crossroads of technology and literary translation. In an age when machine translation is advancing rapidly, this book investigates the unique complexities of maintaining the nuances and style of literature through automated means.

Three years have passed since the publication of this book, and during this timeframe, we have witnessed remarkable advancements in technology. These transformative developments underscore the increasing relevance and significance of embracing automated translation within the realm of literary translation. It is noteworthy that the field of literary translation has traditionally demonstrated a certain resistance to change, especially when compared with other domains of translation. However, the swift evolution of technology now emphasizes the need to continuously adapt to changing landscapes, even in this traditionally conservative sector.

The book, which contains an introduction and eight chapters, begins with a comprehensive overview of the history and development of machine translation, providing a solid foundation for readers, whether they are experts in the field or newcomers seeking to understand the landscape. Youdale's writing is clear and accessible, making the complex subject matter approachable to a broad audience. The author presents a fundamental question that arises in the translation of literary style – the concept of style itself – which after providing definitions by other scholars, the author himself defines as "the distinctive linguistic characteristics of a particular text, which comprise both conscious and unconscious elements of language use" (3). Subsequently, the introduction delves into an exploration of the pros and cons of the practice of close reading. It is from this discussion that the concept of distant reading is introduced. Shortly thereafter, a detailed presentation highlights the advantages of adopting a combined close and distant reading (CDR) approach, which is described as "a convenient way of referring to the methodological approach to the translation of literary style" (7). With this innovative approach in mind, the author then proceeds to explain the criteria used in selecting the case study – his own translation of Mario Benedetti's *Gracias por el fuego* – which comprises the majority of the book.

One of the key strengths of this book is its balanced examination of both challenges and opportunities presented by using computers in literary translation. Youdale highlights the potential benefits of automation, including increased efficiency and the ability to translate vast amounts of text in relatively short periods. At the same time, he addresses the limitations and intricacies of preserving literary style, which is often deeply rooted in cultural and historical contexts. Youdale's thorough exploration of these challenges is commendable. He delves into the difficulties of maintaining the cultural and contextual elements of literature, as well as the subtleties of authorial voice and tone, in which shifts may result in mistranslations. The author also offers valuable insights into the potential for machine learning and artificial intelligence to improve over time and bridge some of these gaps.

Throughout the book, Youdale provides various examples of problems and challenges posed by machine translation to illustrate his points effectively. He identifies issues associated with aligning sentence lengths in machine translation (131-132) (though it seems important to exercise awareness regarding the limitation of length as a criterion or indicator for gauging accuracy or equivalence, especially when comparing texts in unrelated languages); as well as relating to grammatical norms and structure which may be difficult for machine translation to identify, because these are "internalised and often language-specific" (144). These offer readers a tangible understanding of the subject matter when using computers in literary translation, and also, the importance of continuing to use human judgement in the production of literary translations.

While the book's content is exceptional, it would benefit from more in-depth technical explanations for readers with a background in machine translation or computational linguistics (even though this is what allows newcomers to the field to seamlessly gain an understanding of the topic). Additionally, a more extensive exploration of the ethical and cultural implications of machine translation in literature would have been a valuable addition. As an increasing number of professions integrate artificial intelligence into their tasks, it becomes especially important to uphold principles of safety and regulation, and the language sector is no exception.

In conclusion, *Using Computers in the Translation of Literary Style: Challenges and Opportunities* by Roy Youdale is a well-researched and informative exploration of an increasingly relevant topic. It offers a balanced view of the potential benefits and obstacles in applying computer technology to the delicate art of literary translation. This book is a valuable resource for scholars, translators, and anyone interested in the evolving landscape of computer-assisted translation in the world of literature. Youdale's work serves as a crucial step in understanding the complexities and possibilities that lie ahead in this ever-evolving field.

Interview with Samantha Schnee

CLARA BURGHELEA
University of Texas at Dallas

Clara Burghelea: How important is your editorial work at *Words Without Borders* for your own translation practice? Do you see the two informing one another?

Samantha Schnee: Not only do they inform each other; it is hard for me to separate them. There is no doubt that all translators make editorial choices when they choose which words to use, how to transpose punctuation, recreate syntax and so forth. After twenty-plus years of editing, and as many of translating, I do not think I am capable of translating without thinking editorially. And I believe that editing has made me a better writer, ergo a better translator.

Clara Burghelea: What are your strengths as an editor?

Samantha Schnee: I think that over time I have become more sensitive to non-Anglophone aesthetics in literature. What do I mean by that? Anglophone readers are accustomed to a highly refined product – a book that has been edited, sometimes heavily. That is often not the case in works of literature from other cultures, where attitudes toward writers differ and there is often less of an editorial infrastructure. For example, one writer I work with recently told me that she would like to publish her next novel simultaneously in English and Spanish, because when I translate her work I read with such a close eye that I raise questions her home-country editors don't raise – in part because they don't have time, due to the way the publishing business works there, and in part because of a reverence for the writer's work. As a translator I have learned to be a careful, close reader who makes editorial suggestions – not major ones like "could you change the ending?"– but about maintaining consistency and voice.

Clara Burghelea: Your most recent translation of poetry is *The Goddesses of Water* by Mexican poet Jeanette Clariond. How was your working relationship with the author?

Samantha Schnee: Jeannette and I worked very closely together. This was necessitated in part by the fact that the book had not yet been published in Spanish when I embarked upon the translation. Jeannette had continued to revise the manuscript with Spanish poet Antonio Gamoneda while I was translating. When our UK publisher, Tony Frazer, suggested that we publish the Spanish and English *en face*, Jeannette and I had to go back to the beginning and discuss whether we should implement the changes she had made in the English translation and, in the end, we agreed to make some but leave others unchanged. And then there is the fact that, like most poets, Jeannette does not have an agent, so as translator I was the one who pitched the book to English language publishers, acting as her agent. Many translators do that to support their authors' publication in English.

Clara Burghelea: What drew you to translate *The Goddesses of Water*?

Samantha Schnee: It is shocking. In Mexico, eleven women a day are murdered; this has been going on for years, decades, and shows no signs of stopping. Jeannette has sent me photos from the nightly news in Monterrey. CCTV footage of women's naked bodies being loaded into black Suburbans. You can imagine how, as a citizen, this would wear you down – the horror and the grief of the relentless desecration of women's bodies, as if we were disposable goods.

I read *Las diosas del agua* as a *cri du cœur*, Jeannette's expression of her rage and grief, raising a voice for the parents and families of these women, as well as of the country. The problem of femicide is not confined to Mexico, though; throughout Latin America the numbers of women killed per day differ slightly from country to country but that is the only difference. Women's bodies still end up brutalized, in plastic bags, strewn across the land. This epidemic of female-centred violence seemed urgent to me, particularly as I read it during the early days of the pandemic, when domestic violence was on the rise around the world.

Then there is the language that Jeannette uses in her poetry; her words of lamentation are so lucid – one critic called it "diamantine" – that they have an otherworldliness. In these poems she is striving to understand what purpose all this carnage has and, in the end, she finds the answer in Aztec mythology. I found it very compelling on both an artistic and a personal level.

Clara Burghelea: What were some of the translation strategies you used in trying to preserve the Spanish flavour of the original text, while making it accessible to the English audience?

Samantha Schnee: Since the poetry is grounded in ancient Mexican mythology, I decided not to translate the Nahuatl words and we agreed to include a glossary at the end to explain what many of those concepts mean. One reviewer said that we should have included a pronunciation guide since poetry has such an important aural component. We will include that in a future edition. In terms of language and the aural component of the collection, Spanish is more melodic than English, full especially of "a" and "o" sounds, which becomes difficult to replicate in English; so instead I employed tools like sibilance and alliteration in an attempt to recreate the aural beauty of the text.

Clara Burghelea: How do you navigate the poetry and prose genres? Your previous translations include Carmen Boullosa's *The Book of Anna* and *Texas: The Great Theft*, both of which were novels.

Samantha Schnee: I like moving back and forth between the worlds of prose and poetry. Prose tends to be more straightforward but also more limiting, whereas in poetry language can be so compressed that it is necessary to speak with the author to understand their precise meaning, otherwise the translation of the poem would be better described as an interpretation. But in the case of Carmen's work, she is such an inventive and poetic prose-writer that it is not such a huge leap from prose to poetry – Carmen is a beautiful poet herself.

Clara Burghelea: You recently published a new translated novel of Boullosa's: *The Book of Eve.* What is it like to collaborate with an author over many years?

Samantha Schnee: I have worked with Carmen since 2006, when I translated an excerpt from her novel *La otra mano de Lepanto*. Since then I have translated her reviews, poetry, essays, and even a screenplay; Carmen has lived in the US part-time for decades now and is perfectly fluent in English so she can share valuable feedback about tone and more nuanced aspects of translation, which enables us to have a dialogue about each text as I'm preparing it for publication. In the case of *Eve,* I shared some chapters with her early on to make sure the translation felt right to her ear, and we discussed things like character names as well. I like to have her input because if I feel strongly about something she will always hear me out, and vice versa. The translator Danny Hahn has described translating as "writing in company" and that is very much true for me; in fact, it is why I prefer translating to writing my own work, which can occasionally feel like drawing blood from a stone in comparison.

Clara Burghelea: What is your advice to emerging translators like me? How does one penetrate the sometimes fickle, inaccessible, publishing world of books in translation?

Samantha Schnee: Number one, get some exercise every day and make sure you have a good desk set-up. I cannot tell you how many translators I know who have developed back problems and/or carpal tunnel syndrome from sitting and typing all day! Second, networking is really important, since many foreign writers are un-agented, and the translator often ends up pitching their work. Go to book fairs where you can meet editors, join the American Literary Translators Association, and take advantage of their Pitch Sessions, join PEN and its translation committee which can help with contract negotiations and such. The community of translators working into English is a rich tapestry of great people who are eager to support their colleagues, even emerging translators, so it is also a wonderful place to find moral support and camaraderie. Translators are definitely the "tribe" I most closely identify with.

Clara Burghelea: Has the perception of translation and translators changed in recent years? Do you notice less of the "translator's invisibility"?

Samantha Schnee: Undoubtedly. Twenty years ago, it was not uncommon for a translator to be asked to grant copyright to a publisher, handing over their rights in their work in perpetuity. A campaign to change that has been effective, and I know of only one remaining Anglophone publisher that stubbornly persists in demanding translators to hand over copyrights. Similarly, the campaign that Jennifer Croft and Mark Haddon launched in 2021 to "Name the Translator" has gained traction. I think in general translators are becoming more confident and more skilled at defending their cause in negotiations with publishers, and I expect we will see more developments that make translators and their work visible in the future, recognizing its social and artistic value.

Clara Burghelea: What are your current readings?

Samantha Schnee: Words Without Borders is always my first stop for literature in translation, of course. It is vital for a translator to read widely in both their source language and their target language, from the classics to contemporary authors. Right now, my book club is reading *David Copperfield*; I am behind but hope to finish by the end of the year. I am also constantly reading in Spanish as a scout – looking for things to translate. Currently I have a collection by Ecuadorian poet Siomara España called *Cuerpo presente* on my nightstand; it covers some of the same ground as *Goddesses of Water* but takes a completely different artistic approach. I am also reading Cervantes' *Journey to Parnassus* to prepare for a new translation I will start soon.

Clara Burghelea: What is your next translation project?

Samantha Schnee: I am beyond excited about it. I first translated an excerpt from Carmen Boullosa's novel *Conspiracy of Romantics* in 2014 and although the excerpt won the *Gulf Coast* Translation Prize the next year, I was never able to find a publisher for the book. So, I applied to the NEA (National Endowment for the Arts) for a fellowship to complete that translation; now I just need to find a publisher…

CONTRIBUTORS

Judith Bishop is the award-winning author of two books of poetry, *Interval* (UQP, 2018) and *Event* (Salt, 2007). A third book, *Circadia*, is forthcoming from UQP in 2024. Her translations from French poets Philippe Jaccottet and Gérard Macé have been published in Australian and international journals.

Peter Boyle is a Sydney-based poet and translator of poetry. He has ten books of poetry published and eight books as a translator of poetry from Spanish. In 2020 his book *Enfolded in the Wings of a Great Darkness* won the New South Wales Premier's Award for Poetry. Other prize-winning books include *Apocrypha* (2009), *The Blue Cloud of Crying* (1997) and *Coming Home from the World* (1993). He has performed his poetry at International Poetry Festivals in Canada, France, Colombia, Venezuela, Macedonia, Nicaragua and El Salvador. He holds a Master's Degree in Spanish and Latin American Studies from the University of New South Wales and a Doctorate in Creative Arts from the University of Western Sydney.

Clara Burghelea is a Romanian-born poet with an MFA in Poetry from Adelphi University. Recipient of the Robert Muroff Poetry Award, her poems and translations appeared in *Ambit, Waxwing, The Cortland Review* and elsewhere. Her second poetry collection *Praise the Unburied* was published with Chaffinch Press in 2021. She is Review Editor of *Ezra, An Online Journal of Translation*.

Beixi Li is a PhD candidate in Translation Studies at the University of Bristol, specialising in literary translation, paratext in translation, and reader reception. With a keen interest in crime fiction translation, her research delves into the translation and reception of contemporary Chinese crime fiction in the English-speaking world.

Shan Ma was brought up in China, where he obtained his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Mining and Systems Engineering respectively. He moved to Australia in 1994 and got his PhD in Behaviour Science at Griffith University. He had taught business and management subjects in Chinese and Australian universities for many years. Shan currently works as a NAATI-certified freelancing translator and interpreter between English and Chinese, and enjoys singable song-lyrics translation between the two languages. Shan is also a proud long-term chorist.

Jodie Lea Martire is a PhD candidate in the Centre for Communication and Social Change at The University of Queensland. Her doctoral research focuses on minority-language publishing in Australia and its role in communities' defence of their linguistic human rights; she has recently learned the braille code (a minority script) as part of her doctoral work. Jodie comes to her research on publishing with 20 years' professional experience in the book trade (as a writer, editor, Spanish–English translator, foreign rights manager, publishing manager, bookseller and trained librarian). Her research interests centre on justice, representation and power in the contemporary publishing industry but she still reads books for fun.

Stephen Nagle lived in Germany and Switzerland in the 1970s and 1980s. He worked as a language teacher and technical and medical translator in Hamburg, then West Germany. Returning to Australia in 1988, he has since then had a corporate career in the international education sector. More recently he has taken to poetry and translating Rilke and Celan from German to English. He has a NAATI Level 3 certification from 1988.

Carol O'Sullivan is Associate Professor of Translation Studies at the University of Bristol, UK. Her research interests include audiovisual translation, translation history, literary translation, censorship in translation and machine translation. Her current research projects include a history of subtitling into English, Irish-language film subtitling and the everyday use of machine translation in society.

Gerardo Piña is a Mexican scholar, researcher, author, and translator. He translates from German and English into Spanish (literature, philosophy, and social sciences). He currently teaches at the National School of Languages, Linguistics and Translation (Enallt) in Mexico City. He is a member of the Mexican National System of Researchers (SNI). His most recent translation is *Después de la huida* (Nach der Flucht) by the German author Ilija Trojanow (Auieo 2023).

Rachael Scrivener is a life-long learner of Italian, having lived in country earlier on and going on to complete a Bachelor of Education (Honours) and Arts (Italian and linguistics) to teach Italian in Victoria, Australia. Rachael is currently completing a Double Masters of Translation and Interpreting with Monash University and Università di Bologna. After completing the final year of her Masters in Italy, she intends to return to Melbourne with the hope of working in the language service provider industry.

Lola Sundin was awarded her PhD in Translation Studies from Monash University in 2019. Her thesis research focussed on the translation of hierarchy in the Japanese crime fiction novelist Hideo Yokoyama's works, and included her own translations of three of his short stories. Lola taught as a tutor and a lecturer in the Master of Interpreting and Translation Studies program at Monash University for many years, and is also a NAATI-certified freelance translator and interpreter. Previously, she worked for a Japanese local government office, where her particular research interest was piqued.

Kevin Windle is an Emeritus Fellow in the School of Literature, Languages and Linguistics at the Australian National University. His major publications include the biography *Undesirable: Captain Zuzenko and the Workers of Australia and the World* (Melbourne, 2012), *The Oxford Handbook of Translation Studies* (co-edited, with Kirsten Malmkjær, 2011), and the first English translation of Artyom Vesyoly's novel *Russia Washed in Blood* (London and New York, 2020). For his translations from various languages he has been awarded several prizes, including the Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs (FIT) Aurora Borealis Prize for the translation of non-fiction.

Leei Wong obtained her PhD from the University of New England and is a Humanity and Social Sciences lecturer at the Sheridan Institute of Higher Education, Western Australia. She teaches some of her self-developed units in Chinese and Japanese studies, including translation units. Her research area lies in applied linguistics.