

Introduction

After an interruption of almost two years, due to a change of publisher and additional complications, I am delighted to announce that *translation: A transdisciplinary journal* is back—stronger and better than before. Thanks to a collaboration with the publisher Eurilink University Press located in Rome in Italy, we are finally able to take up all the threads we had fashioned and, more importantly, are creating anew.

We owe all our readers sincere apologies for the inconvenience this delay has caused many of you—readers who have been waiting for new articles and issues to peruse; authors who have been waiting to see their articles published; subscribers who have paid to receive the journal in print, online, or both; the community following us online. Thank you for your patience and faith in our shared project that is *translation*.

To get back on schedule as soon as possible, we will be publishing issue 6—a special issue devoted to *Memory* and guest edited by Bella Brodzki and Cristina Demaria—immediately after the present one.

Before I introduce the exciting content of this issue, let me present a few new entries and changes in the journal's staff. **Carolyn Shread** (Mount Holyoke College, USA) is the journal's new assistant editor, and **Giuliana Schiavi** and **Salvatore Mele** (both Scuola Superiore Mediatori Linguistici, Vicenza, Italy and members of FUSP—Fondazione Universitaria San Pellegrino) are new members of the editorial board. In truth, they are not really new, since all three have served at the journal since 2014; but this is the first time they are officially connected to a new issue of the journal, and are presented to the readers. It is also thanks to Carolyn, Giuliana, and Salvatore that the journal is now reappearing.

Loc Pham Quoc (Hoa Sen University, Vietnam), who has already appeared in the journal as author, will in the future serve as

the journal's new reviews editor. He will be responsible for the reviews published on the journal's website (translation.fusp.it). Reviews will include not only books, but also events, conferences, and other initiatives and publications related to translation.

I look forward to a stimulating collaboration with these four fine scholars and friends. (Please find their bio presentations in the last pages of this issue, and on the journal's website.

A journal's board is important to establish its editorial identity, to guarantee continuity, and to conceive innovative and original issues, but what gives a journal its body is its content. This is ensured by the authors and their articles and contributions, and I am proud to present this new issue's particularly strong and innovative content.

First of all, we are happy to continue the tradition of hosting lectures presented at the yearly Nida Translation Studies Research Symposium in New York. The current issue is therefore publishing **Bella Brodzki's** "Autobiography, Memory, and Translation" and **Suzanne Jill Levine's** response, "Autobiography/Translation: Memory's Losses or Narrative's Gains?" It is a particular pleasure to include these two scholars' contributions, since both serve on the journal's advisory board and have sustained the journal since its foundation. From the same symposium, we also publish an article by Christi Merrill presented below.

Bella Brodzki's point of departure is a strong statement: She argues that "autobiography is a modality of translation" since it translates "experience." The autobiographer, in other words, is a "translator of her own life experience or past, whose meaning is created through the interpretive act of remembering." Brodzki's essay develops ideas presented in her groundbreaking *Can These Bones Live?: Translation, Survival and Cultural Memory* (2007), in which she so convincingly demonstrates how connected memory and translation are, since all translations reconfigure, redefine, and excavate a past, relying on memory and remembering. As mentioned above, Brodzki will be developing the theme of Memory for our next issue as guest editor with Cristina Demaria. In this issue she looks at one special form of memory—autobiography—and analyzes three very different examples of autobiography and their special mode of creating a memoir, conceived here as a self-reflexive mode of translation. The subject of autobiography is

therefore both a translator and a translation; the autobiographee is being displaced, carried over, “shifting shape and form, becoming other to herself.”

As the translation process of the psychic content of self-reflection and memory is a characteristic for autobiography, and “all memory is mediated and motivated,” Brodzki turns to Freud, electing him as a guiding spirit in her inquiry. Freud, himself a paradigmatic figure of translation, provides an interpretive framework for her analysis. The role of autobiography and translation in Freud is present in the essay as a kind of *fil rouge*, and, as **Suzanne Jill Levine** puts it in her response to Brodzki, “Autobiography and Translation come together logically and intuitively in Freud whose early work as a translator helped create his career as a scientist and hence the persona whose theoretical work was practically based on autobiographical as well as clinical reflection.”

Brodzki’s first example is Nabokov’s *Speak Memory*, a book that in itself is particularly interesting also because it is a result of multiple translation processes between Russian and English. Brodzki’s next example is the Guadeloupean author Maryse Condé, whose texts are translated into English by her translator–husband Richard Philcox. Here, Brodzki demonstrates how the couple “enact the ongoing, defining, and productive tension within translation studies, of the paradox of untranslatability on the one hand, and translatability on the other.” Alison Bechdel’s graphic memoir, *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* (2006) is Brodzki’s final example of another variation on the theme of “how techniques of translation are implicated in the act of materializing, textualizing, and visualizing the autobiographical subject.”

In her response to Brodzki’s lecture, Levine draws attention to parallels between autobiography and biography, asking whether both of these forms of biographical writing, as well as other forms of narrative—fictional and nonfictional—can be considered as having a translational nature. “Are we perhaps speaking of a translational paradigm for narrative in general?” she asks.

Analyzing the case of Dalit literature, “a phenomenon in and of translation,” **Christi Merrill** suggests we “think more carefully about the relationship of translation studies to postcolonial theory.” Her article explores the ways Dalit consciousness is a multi-

lingual issue, connecting it to the multilingualism that is so central in India that one can speak about a “translating consciousness” consisting in an “‘open’ daily negotiation along a continuum of mutual understanding.”

Let me add a personal note here: for me, as a European growing up in an ideologically monolingual society, going to India for the first time last year to attend the international conference on Plurilingualism and Orality at the Indraprastha College for Women, University of Delhi, organized by Babli Moitra Saraf, one of our board members, and with the participation of this journal, it was an incredible surprise to experience how people used several languages simultaneously in a continuous translation movement. It struck me that if the dominating Eurocentric Translation Studies discourse had looked further outside its boundaries, and specifically to the Indian tradition, it would have developed very differently and might have freed itself from the shackles of a binary hierarchy grounded in monolingualism, and the very idea of one necessary original of which any translation is derivative would not have had such a dominating position. The “translating consciousness” of which Merrill speaks is inherently multilingual, which automatically opens an alternative vision of what translation is about.

In regard to Dalit literature, Merrill demonstrates how this multilingual negotiation is all but simple and peaceful; rather, it is connected to domination and repression. Since the language of dominance is predicated on caste, Merrill argues the translating consciousness is a more complex one than the colonizer–colonized binary.

Merrill’s interesting contribution originated as a response to Robert Young’s lecture “Freud on Translation and Cultural Translation” at the same New York symposium at which Bella Brodzki presented her paper. Young’s lecture—not included in this issue since it was committed to another publication—was dedicated to the concept of translation in Sigmund Freud’s work. Merrill works Young’s thematics into the problematic of the translating consciousness of Dalit literature in fascinating ways. For instance, in discussing catharsis as a multilingual project, she creates a parallel to Freud’s idea of psychoanalysis as a translation not only into another language, but as a translation of the unknown.

If the job of the psyche is to “translate” or displace traumatic

experience into a language foreign to the individual subject, the work of psychoanalysis is then to interpret that idiosyncratic language and “de-translate” it back into a language shared with the analyst.

Merrill also sees clear parallels between the idea of cultural translation as explained by Young and Dalit literature, in that “it offers, for example, a possible way of reading the invisible, the subaltern.”

Valeria Luiselli’s essay “Translating Talkies in Modernist Mexico. The Language of Cinemas and the Politics of the Sound Film Industry” represents a new and innovative way of looking at how translation may occur through cultural models such as architecture and movies, and how different “translation practices” represent cultural production and exchange. She tells the story of when the first talkies appeared in Mexico, and analyzes the way in which the introduction of sound movies represented a twofold translation, both spatial and cultural. In examining the arrival of sound film technology, Luiselli looks at the relationship between “the modern architectural language of movie theaters and some of the dominating cultural politics of the burgeoning sound film industry in Mexico.” Her question is whether there was a consonance or a dissonance in the relation to the discourse of modernity between sound film technology and architectural perspective, and how they contributed to the formation of ideas of modernity. What emerges is that modernist translation was actually “a way of appropriating new forms and thus a creative locus of innovation.” Luiselli discusses different forms of translation, from dubbing and the politics of film translation to the movie theaters as concrete spaces of translation, or even as translators, thus operating with a refreshingly broad concept of translation.

Although Luiselli’s essay does not discuss this theme, I would suggest that this modernist translation practice was particularly prosperous in South America. The parallels between the thinking on translation expressed by authors such as Borges, De Paz, and especially Haroldo de Campos with his idea of translation as transcreation and even “irreverently amorous devouring,” invite further investigation.

Luiselli describes the fascinating story of how Spanish-speaking dubbers and voice actors were introduced in Hollywood films

to counter the threat of English-language domination not only with their voices but also with “their entire body.” The introduction of American films in Mexico was complicated, however, and all manner of different options were explored in the process—including subtitling, dubbing, simultaneous “remakes,” and printouts of film dialogue. All of this cinematic innovation took place in buildings that were also subject to translational practices, such as the famous Teatro–Cinema Olimpia, for example, which was originally a convent. This movie theater plays a central role in the introduction—translation—of the modern experience to the Mexican audience, and was, in Luiselli’s words, a “translator made of concrete and stone.” Luiselli’s essay anticipates and opens a discussion that will be pursued in the future issue of this journal devoted to spaces and places, guest edited by Sherry Simon and Federico Montanari.

Enquiries about translation in connection to places are also present in **Sherry Simon**’s essay “At the Edge of Empire: Rose Ausländer and Olha Kobylianska,” in which she examines “the work of translation at the edge of empire” through the two Czernowitz authors—the Ukrainian Olha Kobylianska (1863–1942) and the German–Jewish Rose Ausländer (1901–1988) viewed as translators of their border city. Luiselli’s broad concept of translation, applied to cultural practices and movements, are developed by Simon in other both social and physical directions, for instance in the political and geographical borders of a multilingual city.

To translate at the edge of empire—of which Czernowitz is an example in relation to the translational relationships developed through German—is to be especially aware of the ways in which boundaries can accentuate or attenuate difference. Political borders hypostatize cultural and linguistic differences, while geographical borders often show difference to be gradual. The multilingualism of border zones problematizes the activities of translation as source–target transactions.

Drawing on a suggestion in Coetzee’s novel *Waiting for the Barbarians*, in which the distinction between enemy and citizen, alien and human beings is blurred, Simon looks at “another site of translation at the edge of empire,” a border city that has represented a wall against the alien, discovering similar elusiveness and instability of the borders. Czernowitz is intensely multilingual with the particularity of German as prominent and autonomous, and no

language apparently dominating over the others. In the search of a more realistic — and less idealized — understanding of the multilingualism of Czernowitz, Simon starts by defining it as *translational*, thus underscoring the “connections and convergences across language and communities” that might be much less peaceful and friendly than expected.

Literary transactions express this translational terrain, and one of them is the tendency among many authors at the beginning of the twentieth century to move away from German to other minor languages. One such writer is Olha Kobylanska, who embraced the Ukrainian national cause and translated her texts from German. Her writing can be referred to as “translational writing—a product of the particular *mélange* of cultures particular to the Bukovina and Czernowitz.”

The other author analyzed by Simon, Rose Ausländer, on the contrary, “returns” to German after her permanence in the writing in English. But this choice “is less a one-way and definitive embrace of the authentic tongue than a renewed practice of translation, as she brings back to Germany the long experience of exile, experiencing new forms of displacement within the German-speaking world.”

The eternal question of the relation between original and translation is discussed in **Alfred Mac Adam**’s “Translating Ruins.” In an interesting perspective, he analyzes three sonnets that are direct or indirect derivations of Ianus Vitalis’ (1485–1560) epigram *De Roma* (1552) on the theme of Rome’s ruins. The “poem is a fascinating irony,” Mac Adam argues: “A poem in Latin on mutability that seeks to avoid the mutability of vernacular tongues” results in vernacular translations and imitations of which there exist over a dozen.

The three sonnets compared by Mac Adam are Joachim du Bellay’s 1558 version and the two of which is progenitor or source, namely Edmund Spenser’s 1591 version of Joachim du Bellay and Francisco de Quevedo’s 1648 sonnet. The three sonnets are “simultaneously the same and different, translations and originals” while they are in different relations to the distinction between translation and adaptation. They are all new poems, “appropriate for their language and culture, but none replicates *De Roma* in a vernacular language.”

Each of *translation*'s issues includes an interview. We are happy to continue this tradition since interviews permit a different form of reflection from essays in that they are dialogic, “thinking-out-loud” texts. **Lydia Liu**—who has already published an article with us in our special issue on *Politics* guest edited by Sandro Mezzadra and Naoki Sakai (issue 4) and who will be present in a future issue (issue 7) with the lecture she gave at last year’s New York symposium—was interviewed by Carolyn Shread, *translation*'s assistant editor. In the course of their conversation, Liu’s work against nationalism emerges as a strong starting point for her thinking on translation, which in many respects runs counter to current ideas circulating in translation studies. Not only vocabulary, but intellectual discourse, political theory, and script are among the “foreign” elements that interrogate national literature and national identities in general. Script, and the technology connected to its reproduction such as the telegraph and the typewriter, actually “put pressure on all East Asian societies to reform their scripts.” The paradox consists in the fact that the typewriters’ limitations “[l]ed to campaigns that targeted the native script [. . .] as a backward writing system.”

In regards to Liu’s ideas on the political dimension of translation, this conversation with Liu offers an excellent explanation of the ideas she expressed in her article in issue 4 of this journal: Liu recalls her research on the Opium Wars through which she discovered how translation “could provide an illuminating angle for understanding international politics.”

Contrary to what people generally think, Liu argues that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is *not* a Western document. It is, rather, a document that registers “competing universals.” According to Liu, translation is an event, not just reduced to one instance of textual transfer, and needs to be reconceptualized in terms of situatedness in time and place. “Eventfulness allows temporalities to give any particular text a new mode of life in a new language,” she argues.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue’s articles!

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