ATA’S 2015 ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN MIAMI

PLUS TRIBUTES TO MARILYN GADDIS ROSE (p. 30)
and ANGELA McEWAN (p. 9)
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BTW Cartoons by Tony Beckwith

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This year’s ATA conference in Miami was a lively one for the Literary Division, and many of the events are recaptured here. In her last letter, outgoing LD Administrator Mercedes Guhl speaks of accomplishments during her tenure, including highlights of the conference. Photos on page 6 feature shots of the Literary Division meeting, including one of newly elected LD Administrator Jesse Tomlinson and LD Assistant Administrator Paula Arturo. Photos from the conference continue for the next two pages, with a full-page spread on page 8 of photos from the popular After Hours Café.

We invited Sara Nogueira, who received the Alice Gordon Award for Word Artistry from ATA President Caitilin Walsh at the conference, to write about her experience. The result is her essay “How I Became the Translator I Already Was.”

Rafa Lombardino graciously volunteered to contribute reviews of some key LD presentations and panels from the conference:

- **The New Normal: Cuba and the Power of Translation**
  by Esther Allen, Marilyn Gaddis Rose Lecture
- **The Translator as Author**
  Mercedes Guhl, Abe Haak, and Faiza Sultan
- **Trials and Tribulations of Translated Literature from the Margins**
  Vivian Steemers and Faiza Sultan
- **Beware of the Fallible Filter and Unreliable Narrator:**
  Enhancing Professional Trust
  Susan Xu
- **Finding the Author’s Voice in Literary Translation**
  (While Silencing Yours)
  Mercedes Guhl.

We include in this issue a tribute to Marilyn Gaddis Rose, who passed away November 15th. Many in our profession have been touched by her generosity. In 2007 she agreed to serve on the Editorial Board of *Beacons*, Volume X, when I served as editor for that last published LD anthology. Here María Constanza Guzmán writes a moving account of her own long association with Professor Rose. And Lois Feuerle pays homage to actress and ATA stalwart Angela McEwan, who left us in late December.

As always, Tony Beckwith has enlivened *Source* with three cartoons and a By the Way essay, this one on the importance of “A Translator’s Room.”

**ABOUT THE EDITORS**

*Michele Aynesworth* specializes in translating Argentine and French authors. E-mail: michele@mckayaynesworth.com.

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Special thanks to *Jamie Padula* for proofreading and especially to Literary Division Administrators *Mercedes Guhl* and *Josefina Iannello* for their continuing support over the last two years.
SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

As the journal of the ATA’s Literary Division, Source is both a forum for the discussion of literary translation and a vehicle for LD members and guest contributors to publish their work. Novice translators, as well as those with more experience, are encouraged to submit translations of poetry and prose together with their meditations on the process. We are also constantly on the lookout for submissions from Asia, Africa, and all other less frequently represented cultures.

Submit articles up to 1600 words, Word or text file, single-spaced. Palatino Linotype size 14 with indented paragraphs (1 tab), no line breaks between paragraphs and no word breaks. Unjustified righthand margin. Endnotes please, not footnotes.

Please include a brief, factual bio and photograph. Links and illustrations, etc., are encouraged. Submissions may be edited.

Submissions go to michele@mckayaynesworth.com

Submissions deadline for the Spring issue: February 21.

Source is published by ATA’s Literary Division.
American Translators Association
225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590
Alexandria, VA 22314

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Letter from the Outgoing LD Administrator

Dear LD members,

This is my last letter as Division Administrator: it brings to a close my two-year term, which extended from the conference in San Antonio to the recent one in Miami. During that period, Josefina Iannello, me, and the rest of LitDiv’s Leadership Council worked hard to make our division more visible and active. The division webpage was renovated, and some of its features were improved and relaunched, such as the “Wall of Fame” for published translations and the “Interesting blogs and webpages.” I would like to thank Salvador Virgen, our webmaster, for designing the new webpage, and Lisa Carter and Alessandra Pires for their input in the list of interesting blogs. Josefina Iannello, Jesse Tomlinson, and Paula Arturo were crucial in maintaining the activity in our virtual forums: the Listserv and the LinkedIn group. Jamie Padula provided a multitude of interesting news and links. Michele Aynesworth and her editorial team did an amazing job with Source, giving us the chance to propose topics and authors for each issue. I personally enjoyed contributing to the journal a lot and also learned from the corrections Patrick Saari made to my final drafts.

For two consecutive years, we managed to have a Distinguished Speaker for our Marilyn Gaddis Rose Lecture at the annual conference. In Chicago, we had Ioram Melcer, Israeli literary translator into Hebrew, and in Miami, we had Esther Allen, Spanish-into-English literary translator. I’d like to thank them both for their generosity and for coming all the way to the conference cities to share their knowledge and expertise with us. The literary sessions during those two conferences were well attended, and I like to think we did a good job of fostering some of those sessions from initial ideas into fully fledged proposals and reviewing all the ones that were sent to the conference organizer. We expect the flow of interesting topics and high-quality presentations to continue for the following years. Do get in touch with the new division officers if you have ideas you would like to propose.

Our most iconic division event at the conference, the After Hours Café (aka poetry reading), also continued, and those who attended it in Miami commented it was one of the best they had been to, with an amazing variety of languages despite a wide range of genres, from poetry to lyrics translation. Thanks to our all-time MC

Lydia Razran-Stone, and time-keepers Martha Kosir, Lisa Carter, and Vladimir Reznikov for letting us take a glimpse at literary translation at work.

Before Chicago, we came up with the idea of literary mini-guides to the city hosting the annual conference. For Miami, we realized it was not always easy to compile a list of literary-related places and landmarks for every city. Still, it was a challenge to put together the list and a chance for us to explore off-the-beaten-path spots. Thanks to Salvador Virgen, Jesse Tomlinson, Josefina Iannello, and Lisa Carter for their work on these mini-guides.

Mercedes Guhl is a freelance English into Spanish translator. She has over twenty years’ experience translating for the book industry in Latin America, mainly translating books for young readers and academic research in humanities. 

mercedesguhl@gmail.com

SOURCE
In 2015, there were heated discussions about translator’s copyrights among colleagues. We participated in that debate with the webinar on intellectual property that Paula Arturo provided in October. It was the first ATA webinar aimed mostly at literary translators, and it is still available on the ATA website (https://www.atanet.org/webinars/ataWebinar149_copyright.php). Thanks to Mary David at ATA headquarters and Paula Arturo for making it possible.

And one last word of gratitude to Corinne McKay, current president-elect and former member of the Board of Directors, for her support when we needed a certain subject to be raised at the meetings of the Board.

In our annual division meeting at Miami’s conference the newly elected division administrator, Jesse Tomlinson, and assistant administrator, Paula Arturo, took office. Both of them worked for the division during my two-year term and I can attest to their commitment. I wish them luck and advise them to take advantage of this opportunity to get to know division members and network with them to find ideas and actions for division activities. There is a wealth of experience in our LitDiv and a thirst for sharing and contrasting points of view, waiting for the chance to be channeled and heard.

It was a pleasure and an honor to be LitDiv’s administrator.

Sincerely,

Mercedes Guhl

Photos from the LD Meeting
Top: Mercedes Guhl, administering the meeting
Middle: Newly elected LD Administrator Jesse Tomlinson and LD Assistant Administrator Paula Arturo
Bottom: Attendees at the meeting
Top: Freek Lankhof, who had the InTrans Book Service booth at the exhibition hall for over 20 years, receiving an honorary ATA membership from ATA President Caitilin Walsh. Photo by Jeff Sanfacon 2015
Bottom: Rafa Lombardino and friends at ATA. Photo by Jeff Sanfacon 2015
Background: Miami. Photo by Jesse Tomlinson
AFTER HOURS CAFE
Literary Division Loses Longtime Member Angela McEwan

Gifted translator, interpreter, published poet and actress – these only hint at Angy’s accomplishments. A California native, she dreamt of acting, but took a detour when she married Guillermo McEwan and moved to Mexico. She returned to California, earned her masters in Spanish at UC Irvine, and was an LA criminal court interpreter for 30 years. Late in life she returned to acting, winning a role in the movie *Nebraska* and subsequently a recurring role in *Getting On*. A loyal supporter at the ATA’s table in the Rights Center at the Guadalajara Book Fair, she missed it only to stand on the Red Carpet at Cannes with the cast of *Nebraska*. —Lois Feuerle

Cheryl A. Fain, the official translator for the Embassy of Switzerland in Washington, is pleased to announce the recent publication of her German-into-English translations of the following books on Swiss and Swiss-American culinary history by Ambassador of Switzerland Martin Dahinden and Mrs. Anita Dahinden:

• *Delmonico’s and Haute Cuisine in the New World*
• *Dunand: Napoleon’s Chef and Poulet Marengo*
• *Oscar of the Waldorf*
• *Maestro Martino: A Ticinese Ends the Culinary Middle Ages*
• *Vatel and the Sun King’s Delights of the Table*
• *César Ritz: King of Hoteliers and Hotelier to Kings.*

In addition, she edited Ambassador and Mrs. Dahinden’s *Dishes for the Generals’ Room*, a publication partly based on her translation *Delmonico’s and Haute Cuisine in the New World*.
Anne Milano Appel announces two translations and an award.

Book translations:

Award:
Anne’s translation of *Blindly* by Claudio Magris was awarded the Italian Prose in Translation Award (IPTA) at the ALTA Conference in Tucson, Arizona, on October 29, 2015.

Sue Burke had a translation of selected passages of *Confusión de Confusiones* (Confusion of Confusions) published in December 2015 by Spain’s Comisión Nacional de Mercado de Valores (National Stock Exchange Commission). The book, by Joseph de la Vega, was originally published in 1688 and is the world’s first book about stock markets. This edition, which includes the entire text and an analysis, was created for the commission’s 25th anniversary and will be used as an institutional gift.
I am new to this. I am not a successful literary translator—I am not even a very experienced translator in any specific field. I have no publications, no long list of clients or companies I have worked for. I can’t show you a page full of references. But that’s how things start. What I do have is the process that brought me here, pictures that come to mind when I try to figure out how I decided to become a literary translator. That’s all I can share with you.

My name is Sara and I am not very fond of books. That’s what the early-teenage me would have said in the mid-90s. Don’t blame me; I was a middle-class teenager living in an almost-but-not-so-much-anymore-marginalized neighborhood of an industrial city in
northwestern Spain. I wasn’t a good student, nor was I a good reader—maybe some *Mafalda* and *Asterix* on occasion. I was a good kid though; you can ask my mum.

I wasn’t interested in books although there was a magnificent library at home. The old dark pinewood bookcase covered an entire wall of our living room, from floor to ceiling, holding books that had belonged to several generations of my family. I remember my mother reading on weekends and before bedtime and my two older brothers reading everything from comics to young adult collections and science fiction. And yet, none of that seemed to influence me.

Then, a first picture: Joyce’s *Ulysses* sitting on my brother’s nightstand for months—a white-ink drawing of a man wearing a monocle against a bright navy blue background. As my brother was an avid reader, books didn’t generally stay on his nightstand long enough for me to remember their covers. Besides, my whole family was talking about how crazy he was for attempting to read this book, so I was curious and asked him about it. I can’t recall what he actually said—he was clearly struggling, perhaps I hadn’t chosen the best book to get meaningful answers for—but I do remember that whatever he said it was said with passion. That was probably the first time I showed any real interest in literature. It goes without saying I had no intention of reading *Ulysses* at that point in my life, but that moment was a turning point. Maybe that spark of curiosity led my brother to do what came next, something that changed the entire story: I met Mr. Vertigo; I met Mr. Auster.

Next picture: my brother at the door of my bedroom, a paperback of *Mr. Vertigo* in hand. The cover is light blue—or is it lavender?—and has the picture of a funny man flying over a plane made of sticks and threads on it. Over time, I learned that my brother was right a little too often—more than I would have liked to admit—so instead of leaving the book on my desk (where it would have stayed for months before finding its way back to a shelf), I decided to crack it open and read it. And I loved it. Auster’s fiction captivated me; his prose was witty and
charming, and he was telling me a story that sounded real despite all of its craziness. Maybe conventional fairytales were not for me—maybe this was.

After Auster came many others, anything I found on the shelves of my living room. I even started enjoying the required reading in school. I was still a bad student (you can ask my mum about this too), but there was always a book next to my bed. Eventually, when I had to pick a major in college, I chose English Language and Literature. Honestly, during college I was more into linguistics than literature—I became fascinated by Old English, syntax, and phonetics. But I also got to read and analyze the greatest authors, meet new people with a lot to teach me, and had teachers that made me appreciate literature more and more. As I finished my studies, I realized that teaching English as a foreign language was pretty much the only future my major offered me in Spain, so that’s exactly what I did for the next five years. It wasn’t my dream job, so when I moved to New York with my husband three years ago, I seized the opportunity to make a fresh start.

The city was like a dream to me. I had spent time here in the past, and I loved to explore it while reading Auster’s novels. I would walk along the same streets, enter the same buildings, and visit the same neighborhoods; I would cross the Hudson River following the tracks of Philip Roth; and I would spend hours at the Strand Bookstore kiosk at the southeast corner of Central Park browsing for secondhand gems. But that was when I was on vacation. After several months without a job, the fresh start became a nightmare that went from bewilderment to frustration and finally to stagnation. My only professional experience was teaching, so I started looking for teaching jobs. I even worked for months on a project to open a new Spanish school actually believing that that was what I wanted to do. But if it really was, where was my motivation? Why didn’t I wake up every day looking forward to making it happen? At some point, I had to sit down and weigh up the situation: language lover, meticulous grammar nerd and voracious reader, twitching left eye
when confronted with bad spelling, flexible schedule and possibility of teleworking when traveling to Spain needed.

I started working as a freelance translator and realized it was something that had always piqued my curiosity. When I think about it now, I remember I had previously done a few translations as a volunteer or as a favor to friends. It was one of the few things that kept me glued to my desk and made me forget about everything else—strange, considering that I was not even getting paid for it. But since I had no real experience or contacts and I couldn’t get much work, I spent most of my time reading, mostly North American fiction. I kept catching myself analyzing tricky sentences and thinking how I would write them in Spanish, constantly losing track of the story. So I decided it was time to become a literary translator even if I didn’t know where to begin. After doing a lot of research, I decided to take the courses offered by Lisa Carter. It felt so good to be back in school, learning about the industry, analyzing texts, tearing them to pieces and studying every small detail. Before I finished Lisa’s courses, I had already determined I was a literary translator. And I haven’t looked back.

Just for fun I started translating excerpts of short stories I liked from literary magazines, and the more I translated, the more pleasure I derived from the process. As I did not have enough experience to enter the market, I looked for contests to which I could submit my work. That’s when I learned about the Alicia Gordon Award. Now, I just needed a good story. I must have read hundreds of short stories before I found the one that made my brain click: short, beautifully complex, modern, engaging, and challenging. I was so delighted to learn that the author owned the rights to the story and was excited by my request. I finally had a story and I loved working on it.

Then, the process of translating—the best part of it all. The story was tricky: it mixed unpunctuated dialogue and narration in the same sentence, there was a descriptive paragraph I even dreamt about. Translating it involved a meticulous process of reading, re-reading and analyzing, taking notes, finding the author’s voice and style, picturing his imagery, and sleeping on it until I found a way to capture the
The author’s words into Spanish. When the translation was done, I let it settle for a while and went back to it later. Even when I thought it was finally ready for submission, I looked at it one last time and found I still had more changes to make. Beginner’s fright probably had something to do with this—or maybe translation is just a process that never ends. There’s always something you can improve: a pronoun here, a comma there, a word you’re sure is not getting the essence of the original text across. And in this case, the story was only 750 words long.

But effort (and passion) sometimes are rewarded. When I opened the mailbox and saw an envelope from the ATA with my name handwritten on it, my first thought was, “What, did I forget to pay?” When I saw that I had actually won the award, I cried for an hour. I received the prize at the ATA Annual Conference in Miami and enjoyed every minute of it. As a newbie, it was an overwhelming experience, but the people I met and the things I learned made it easy for me to believe that I was part of this. When I opened that envelope, all my fears, concerns, and insecurities faded into the distance; and all my frustration turned into feelings of satisfaction. All the arrows started pointing in the right direction—just be a literary translator.

I know I still have a lot to do and learn, and I know it won’t be easy. There will be many milestones to reach and challenges to tackle—and Ulysses is still on my bucket list.

If you would like to read both versions of the story that earned me the Alicia Gordon Award—What’s Confusing by Willie Fitzgerald—you can do so at www.literarysara.com.
“My doctor is so high-tech. I told him I was having trouble staying awake after lunch and he said there’s a nap for that.”
ATA Literary Division Presentations at the 56th Annual Conference of the ATA in Miami, Florida, on November 4-7, 2015

Reviewed by Rafa Lombardino

Rafa Lombardino is the author of Tools and Technology in Translation — The Profile of Beginning Language Professionals in the Digital Age. In addition to acting as content curator at eWordNews, a collective blog about translation and literature, she runs Word Awareness, a network of professional translators in San Diego, and coordinates Contemporary Brazilian Short Stories, a project that promotes Brazilian literature worldwide. She is also Blog Editor for the ATA’s Portuguese Language Division.

The New Normal: Cuba and the Power of Translation
Esther Allen, Distinguished Speaker, Marilyn Gaddis Rose Lecture

This year, the Literary Division’s Marilyn Gaddis Rose Lecture was delivered by Esther Allen, a writer and translator who teaches at Baruch College. She spoke about The New Normal: Cuba and the Power of Translation. A two-time recipient of National Endowment for the Arts Translation fellowships, Esther was a fellow at the Cullman Center for Scholars and Writers at the New York Public Library. She also co-founded the PEN World Voices Festival in 2005, and guided the work of the PEN/Heim Translation Fund between 2003 and 2010. In 2006, the French government named her a Chevalier de l’ordre des arts et des lettres and, in 2012, she received the Feliks Gross Award from the City University of New York Academy for the Arts and Sciences.

Esther’s ATA presentation was based on an article by the same name, which she wrote for Words Without Borders only two days
after the normalization of U.S. relations with Cuba was announced on December 17, 2014. She mentioned that many U.S. commentators foresaw an “invasion of tourists, traders, and investors.” “The mentality is that Cuba existed in a vacuum and now it will be Americanized overnight,” Esther disagreed, explaining that the country is no stranger to globalization, as its founding father José Martí had already written about the diverse origins of Cuba extensively.

Recommended Reading:
*Cuba: We Never Left*
Written by Esther Allen for *The New York Review of Books*

The presenter told us that Martí spent most of his adulthood in New York City, where he wrote about the United States, and his articles were published throughout Latin America at a time when Cuba was still a Spanish colony. Martí was killed by the Spanish forces in the beginning of the insurgency he had initiated, which resulted in the Spanish-American War that led the United States to occupy Cuba and establish a naval base on Guantánamo Bay. The rest is history, as we all know.

As the translator of José Martí’s *Selected Writings* and currently a Biography Fellow at the Leon Levy Center for Biography working on a book about Martí’s life, Esther analyzed how President Barack Obama mentioned the Cuban founding father in his speech. “Obama turned to address the Cuban people directly. He began with a citation from José Martí: ‘Liberty is the right of every man to be honest.’”

She wondered how Obama had arrived at that precise quote from Martí, and whether he had made a conscious decision to leave the second part out of it.

*Libertad es el derecho que todo hombre tiene a ser honrado y a pensar y hablar sin hipocresía.*
— MARTÍ, José. *Tres héroes: Bolívar, San Martín, Hidalgo.* “La edad de oro” (1889), part of a series that is very popular among Cuban children.
The possible sources she found were:

1. “Freedom is the right of every man to be honored, and to think and speak without hypocrisy” — English-speaking guide at the Monumento a José Martí, La Habana, Cuba, February 2015.
2. “Liberty is the right of every man to be honest, to think and to speak without hypocrisy” — Cuban student translation exercise cited in Enseñar inglés básico a partir de textos de José Martí (pedagogical study done in Santa Clara, Cuba, 2011.)
3. “‘Liberty,’ Martí wrote, ‘is the right of every man to be honest, to think and to speak without hypocrisy.’” — Carlos Ripoli, letter to The New York Review of Books denouncing the “Marxification of Martí,” July, 1988.

Esther went on to say that, in the late 1800s, Martí used to write for Patria, located at 120 Front Street, which is now Wall Street. “He wrote in English as a Spaniard,” she explained, “because Americans were more interested in what Europeans had to say about the United States, rather than a Latin American from a country that did not exist yet.” He also wrote a letter disapproving a mainstream newspaper that talked about how annexing Cuba to the United States would not have been desirable.

Curiosity: José Martí identified the lack of secular children’s books. He was writing some material on the subject, but his funder from Brazil withdrew funds after they realized the material didn’t have any religious content.
The speaker said that Martí’s work as a journalist was paid, but not well enough, so he turned to translations. Martí translated Helen Hunt Jackson’s *Ramona*, which came out about thirty years after Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and is compared to it because the former raised awareness of the plight of Mexican Americans just as the latter raised awareness of the plight of slaves in the United States. Martí then decided to self-publish and distribute the Spanish version of *Ramona* mainly in Mexico. Esther said that he used to call it *nuestra novela* (our novel), meaning that he believed the book spoke to the real struggles of Latinos, albeit within the context of the years following the Mexican-American War.

Going back to normalization of U.S. relations with Cuba, Esther reminded that, in the early 20th century, Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortíz coined the term “transculturation” to describe the distinctive cultural characteristics of Cuban history. “And that history holds some significant lessons about the roles translation can play in the process of globalization,” she assured. Whether now American translators will be able to keep in touch with Cuban culture and learn more about its literature is something yet to be seen. “Canadians visiting Cuba each year don’t have Communist cooties,” she added, hinting at how our neighbors to the north, just as much as British and Australian tourists, may be better equipped at attempting to bring literature from Cuba to English-speaking countries at the moment.

**The Translator as Author**  
*Mercedes Guhl, Abe Haak, and Faiza Sultan*

For the presentation on **The Translator as Author**, the panelists were Mercedes Guhl, Administrator of ATA’s Literary Division; Abe Haak, translator from Arabic, French, and German; and Faiza Sultan, Arabic and Kurdish interpreter and translator.

Abe Haak introduced the material, which focused on the theory and practice discussed in The Translator as Author: Perspectives on Literary Translation, Proceedings of the International Conference, an event that took place in Italy in 2009 to discuss the issue of authorship in translation.
The first topic the panel addressed was: When is it acceptable for translators to delete or replace content from the book they are translating? Some examples included complementary information that supports central ideas, but become meaningless once removed from the original context: references to local history, characters, and rituals, as well as figures and statistics. In order to support the argument, a fragment of Julia Alvarez’s *How the García Girls Lost Their Accent* was mentioned, in which part of a dialogue was omitted in the Spanish translation because it referred to the character’s accent, so it was turned into an explanation:

“Stop!” Carla cried. “Please stop.”
“Eh-stop!” they mimicked her. “Plees eh-stop.”

“¡Paren!”, lloró Carla. “Por favor, ¡paren!”
Los muchachos la remendaron, burlándose de su acento hispano en inglés. (The boys mimicked her, making fun of her Hispanic accent in English.)

Another subject addressed by the panel was: When is an explanation or addition welcome or even required? The potential scenarios for these options include situations or passages where the main idea becomes confusing, contradictory, or plainly nonsensical when it appears out of context. That also holds true for cultural differences or historical references that make more sense when they are supported by a brief explanation. Likewise, substitutions can be introduced by a translator when a statement or example is lost in translation and there are equivalent references, situations, or circumstances that can work as replacements.

Other subjects that were discussed included adaptations (when information that is central to the text cannot be translated directly or replaced by an equivalent) and suppressions (whether it is okay to remove passages that are considered inappropriate and at what point does that become censorship).

Lastly, Abe talked about the degrees of intimacy, when translators shift from literalness to creativity, and the degrees of departure, that is, the level of interference they can resort to when intervening in the texts they are translating:
• Notional departure = inspired by
• Schematics departure = based on
• Textual departure = translated from

“The farther you go into creativity, the less money you make, it seems,” Abe joked. “General interest books; that’s where you have to exercise most of your creativity,” Mercedes suggested.

Trials and Tribulations of Translated Literature from the Margins
Vivan Steemers and Faiza Sultan

The speakers for Trials and Tribulations of Translated Literature from the Margins were Vivan Steemers, associate professor of French at Western Michigan University, who has published Le (néo)colonialisme littéraire, a book about sub-Saharan Francophone literature translated into English, and Faiza Sultan, Arabic and Kurdish interpreter and translator and founder of DarSafi, a publishing house that specializes in translating and publishing literary and creative works.

Vivan started the presentation by saying that, for sub-Saharan authors, the very act of writing is an act of translation because, instead of writing in their native language, they write in French—the language of their former colonizer—in order to have more exposure.

She highlighted that, although publication of sub-Saharan authors continues to be modest, the number of sub-Saharan books translated into English has increased since the 1950s. Two of the books that triggered this wave were The African Child (L’Enfant noir, 1953) by Camara Laye from Guinea—which had originally been published as The Dark Child—and Cruel City (Ville cruelle, 1954) by Mongo Beti from Cameroon.

According to her, this increase owed a great deal to the African Writer Series published by Heinemann Educational Books between 1962 and 2000 and, more recently, to the creation of smaller, independent publishing houses. Still, “cynical, commercial publishers” in France act as “gatekeepers of ideas,” for they aren’t sufficiently aware of these authors writing in French and, as a result, will not push for their translation into
English. “These writers are left at the tender mercies of the Paris literary establishment,” Vivan wrote in her book.

Next, Faiza Sultan talked about another group of authors living on the margins, more specifically those producing Arabic literature about the Kurdish people, and how few of them are translated into English.

She stressed that publishers in Iraq aren’t authorized to publish anything without the approval of the Iraqi government. “They called it editing, I called it censoring,” she added.

Likewise, Iraqi readers don’t have access to certain books from various parts of the world, because they are banned for political, cultural, social, and moral reasons—and those who smuggle books face government persecution, even execution. Due to this censorship, Faiza explains it’s much easier for expats to get published and, consequently, most of the works written about the Kurdish people are in Arabic and Persian.

Faiza then talked about her own initiative to establish a small publishing house to bridge the gap between East and West and tell untold stories about her people. The title she introduced to the audience was Salam Ibrahim’s *In the Depths of Hell*, the touching *story of a man* who survived chemical warfare in Iraq.

**Beware of the Fallible Filter and Unreliable Narrator: Enhancing Professional Trust**

*Susan Xu*

The presentation on *Beware of the Fallible Filter and Unreliable Narrator: Enhancing Professional Trust* was made by Susan Xu, senior lecturer in the Translation and Interpretation Program at the School of Arts and Social Sciences of SIM University, Singapore. She recently completed her PhD thesis at the National University of Singapore on a topic related to autobiographical translation, and her session was based on her findings and conclusions.

Susan explained that the “fallible filter” and “unreliable narrator” are two forms of untrustworthiness in literary narratives. In the former, the narrator invites readers to enjoy irony at the expense of the character.
In the latter, the author conveys a secret ironic message to his readers via the narrator.

She also clarified the difference between the “implied author” (showing the psychological and ideological points of view of a character’s consciousness) and the “real author” (showing the visual and linguistic style of the narrator’s consciousness). “Character and narrator are not the same person. The character lived in the past; the narrator is older, evaluative, and more experienced,” she summarized, indicating that there’s also a difference between the “implied translator” (whose name is indicated in the book) and the “real translator” (a collective effort by translator, proofreader, editor, etc.)

Throughout her session, to help translators reflect on their own practice and enhance their professional trustworthiness, Susan quoted a political autobiography to illustrate how fallible filters are transferred and transformed in the translation process. The examples she presented were drawn from an autobiography written by Lee Kuan Yew, the founding father of Singapore, who passed away early this year. He wrote all his memoirs in English, his native language, and the book analyzed by Susan during the session was My Lifelong Challenge: Singapore’s Bilingual Journey, which was published in two separate, but similar editions: a 400-page Chinese edition by Lianhe Zaobao and a 388-page English one by The Straits Times Press.

Susan reminded us that translators using their own voice and perspectives run the risk of inadvertently interfering in the autobiographies they translate. These interferences can happen as reorientations (weighing in on redundant or inadequate information), self-reflexiveness and self-referentiality (using the translator’s own idioms, polysemy, word play, and paratexts) and contextual overdetermination (omitting the author’s self-contradictions and erasing or creating irony.)

In order to avoid bringing in this “other voice,” translators must analyze foreground elements present in the narrative, so they can identify the author’s distinctive linguistic pattern. In Lee’s book, these foreground elements are marked by syntactic contrast (sudden brevity) and underlexicalization (either noticeable suppression of a term or use of single simple term instead of a complex expression).

One of the most relevant interferences Susan identified in Lee’s book was how characters were presented. For example, the author
showed a certain disrespect for the father figure introduced in the book and depicted his grandmother as a nagging, authoritarian person. All of these notions are implied in the author’s choice of words, but the translation into Chinese seems to have been culturally adapted to remove derogatory depictions of these two key persons and make sure that the respect traditionally shown for elders in Asian culture is upheld.

After introducing these concepts, Susan drew conclusions from her studies in autobiography translations:

- The point of view in the interplay between narrator, character, and readers highlights an implied author who largely adheres to the generally perceived normative view of the autobiographer.
- The factual, attitudinal, and ideological discrepancies present an altered persona of the implied author, who departs from the norm of the autobiographer.
- The discrepancies are translator-unconscious in his effort to attune the narrative to the dominant ideology in the target-language culture and project a positive image of the implied author among target-language readers.

Lastly, the presenter gave us some tips on how to enhance our professional trust: “Every word choice makes a difference. Examine the foreground features in order to reflect the authorial tone. Also, adjust your point of view and align your consciousness with that of the narrator or character.”
Mercedes was born in Colombia, started translating children’s books in 1990 while completing her BA in philosophy and literature, and later received her MA in translation studies from the University of Warwick, in the UK. Recently, while talking to her husband—who is also a translator—he asked her whether all books translated by the same translator end up having the same voice.

While pondering the question, she realized that: (a) No, books translated by the same translator shouldn’t “sound” the same because translators re-enact or re-create the author’s voice in the target language; and (b) Yes, translated books may sometimes seem to have the same voice if the originals sound the same because they belong to a series, fall in the same genre, or were poorly written in the first place. “Editors don’t understand that sometimes a book can be translated in different ways,” she added, indicating that her husband’s question doesn’t seem to be very unusual after all.

Paraphrasing Umberto Eco, Mercedes said that the best-case scenario for book translators would be to read as the ideal reader, but translate with the common reader in mind. As a general concept, by reading as ideal readers, translators can learn to emulate the author’s voice, since “the original provides a grid” for the target text to be produced.

She also mentioned the contrasts between translators from an earlier age, who translated books to understand and acquire knowledge, and modern book translators, whose work is intended for publication and distribution. Because book translations are now being targeted for mass consumption, translators must hone their writing skills in order to “have the tools and resources required to imitate, innovate, and create when necessary.”

In order to learn more about the work process other book translators follow and how similar or different it might be from her own method, she decided to carry out a study. One of the main questions she added to a questionnaire sent out to fellow book translators was whether they preferred reading the entire book before translating it, as she does herself, or they opted for reading each page as they translated.
Mercedes was surprised to find out that many would rather not read in advance, since she believes that some texts “should be understood as a whole” after a thorough reading, for they could contain “landmines that need to be simmered.” One of the opposing views she highlighted was by a translator who, in turn, contended that “reading as you translate yields a more vivid and spontaneous version.”

“Do you read to understand or do you translate to understand?”

Another matter that Mercedes was curious about was how translators first approach a project, which she calls “the first ten pages struggle.” Because she translates mainly children and young adult books, she says “it’s easier to just turn to the teenager you have inside you and go... After the first ten pages, things come together and click. You go with the flow,” she added.

As for quality standards—which is always a hot topic when it comes to book translations, given the exposure that the final material gets—she wondered what her peers considered to be a good or a poor translation.

“I’m a little fearless,” she admits. “I was trained as an editor, so I am always thinking about the poor reader. It’s like a ménage à trois, and you have to be faithful to both the author with the original and the reader with the translation.” The two questions she asks herself to assure the quality of her translations are: “Is it internally coherent?” and “Is it adequate for the market?”

She also had the following questions, among others, for her peers:

- Is a book a 100% mind-consuming task? In other words, do translators read or work on more than one book at a time?
- When and how do you read? Do you read to understand or do you translate to understand?
- Do you look up criticism and reviews about the book you’re translating?
- Do you talk to editors about your translation choices?
Do you follow a given method or do you just “go with the flow?” That is, do you compile glossaries and take notes while reading or just see what happens in the first draft?

How do you deal with dated expressions? Do you research equivalents or just make something up in the target language to make it sound contemporary?

How about loaded words? Do you provide a direct translation, replace it, or coin a new term?

Do you have any trouble finding the voice of an author/character who is of the opposite sex?

How do you translate dialogues?

What is your view about footnotes? Do you see them as a way to “manipulate” readers or would you rather remain silent as a translator?

During the final stages of the project, do you make minor or major changes?

Do you always have a chance to review your translation after it’s edited so that you can have the final say?

The conclusions she reached at the end of her study were as follows:

1. There are no sure methods or tried paths when it comes to translating a book.
2. Each individual profile, set of skills, and background call for individual methods.
3. Likewise, certain projects call for a different approach.
4. Creativity rules, not only in the general method, but also in the way a given project is undertaken.
"I had to send an email to my ex, so I signed it ‘Worst.’"
It is somewhat rare, in academia, for someone to be highly regarded across different and, at times, contesting intellectual points of view. Marilyn Gaddis Rose, who left us this year, was one such rare scholar. A fundamental figure in the development of translation studies, Marilyn, or Professor Rose, as her students always called her, was instrumental in gaining recognition for translation, translators, and translation studies both in the United States and internationally. She was also unique, leaving those who crossed her path with lasting memories.

Professor Rose was born in 1930 in Fayette, Missouri. She received a BA from Central Methodist University, an MA from the University of South Carolina and a PhD from the University of Missouri. A life-long Francophile, upon finishing her undergraduate degree she spent a year (1952-53) at Université de Lyon on a Fulbright scholarship. She joined the faculty of the State University of New York at Binghamton in 1968.
and was part of the Comparative Literature department until she retired in 2014. Many people were fortunate to meet and work with her during her almost 50-year academic career. It was to study with her that many of us applied to Binghamton in the Translation Research and Instruction Program (TRIP), which she founded in 1971 and directed for several decades.

Professor Rose was one of the main translation scholars in that crucial period of the second half of the twentieth century when translation studies became institutionalized nationally and internationally. She was known for her scholarship on French and Anglo-Irish literature, her writing on various translation-related subjects, several of which dealt with pedagogy, and her book *Translation and Literary Criticism* (1997). A beautiful and prolific writer, her insights about what translation brings to reading, specifically her theorization of approaching translation as a form of stereoscopic reading, influenced scholars interested in translation as literary and cultural critique. Conceptually, she was a referent for researchers working at the intersection between translation and comparative literature, particularly regarding what she termed “speculative” approaches to translation. A literary translator, she translated *Volupté: The Sensual Man* by Sainte-Beuve, *Lui, a View of Him* by Louise Colet, and *Axel and Eve of the Future Eden* by Villiers de L’Isle-Adam, and retranslated *Adrienne Mesurat* by Julien Green. Her

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The Marilyn Gaddis Rose Lecture was first established in 1999 at St. Louis, Missouri, to honor ATA Honorary Member Marilyn Gaddis Rose, Distinguished Service Professor in Comparative Literature; founder of the Translation Research and Instruction Program at Binghamton University, New York; longtime member of the Literary Division; and a distinguished contributor to the translation profession and to ATA.
institutional contribution was also central, as she was on the advisory board of important publications and translation associations, in which she played a key role in promoting translation as a scholarly endeavor. She received recognition from a number of institutions, such as the Canadian Association of Translators (CATS), which made her an honorary member, and the American Translators Association (ATA), which named its annual Marilyn Gaddis Rose Lecture after her, granted her the Special ATA Service Award twice (1983, 1996), and awarded her the Alexander Gode Medal in 1988. Since 1991 she was Distinguished Service Professor at SUNY Binghamton.

I met Professor Rose in 2001, when I came to Binghamton as a doctoral student. As a translator who wanted to pursue translation theory I knew the program had her signature, that of being open to a spectrum of forms of translation as a human experience while seeing it as occupying a central place in the humanities, straddling philosophy and literature. Professor Rose was an influential mentor for many generations of students and junior scholars from the world over. She supported us not just academically and professionally, but also personally. One of the many lessons I learned from her, which I think about everyday in my work as a translator educator, is that my role accompanying someone on his or her pedagogical path is complex and poses challenges; it is both a beautiful task and an enormous responsibility.

Professor Rose was a tireless advocate of translation and translation studies. During her decades of tenure as TRIP director, the program became a focal point for literary translation and translation theory, attracting students and scholars from around the world. Through TRIP she offered ongoing translation workshops in various languages—she taught the French section for years—and the program coordinated translation theory courses for master’s and doctoral students. TRIP also had two publications, the journal Translation Perspectives and the volume Translation Spectrum, both of which she coordinated. She spearheaded the effort that resulted in the first PhD in Translation Studies in the United States.
Professor Rose was also a visionary. She was able to see connections among areas that were not previously articulated, and would not shy away from entertaining and supporting diverse projects—her students did translation-related PhD dissertations in a wide range of topics and even genres—and invited exploring new and daring perspectives and conceptual combinations. She defended without dogmatism what she had built through the years, and she was also able to embrace change and entertain new forms of knowing and practice. As she remarked, speaking about translation pedagogy and evaluation, in an interview entitled “The Making of a Translator” conducted by her colleague and friend, translator and scholar Carol Maier, she viewed change as “our leitmotif as translators. Language changes, usage changes, rhetorical fashions change and, inevitably, translation evaluation changes. I suggest that we accept that inevitability, even rejoice in it.”

An elegant, gentle woman, Professor Rose was intelligent and sharp. She had strong convictions and fought fearlessly for what she considered morally, culturally and intellectually important. At the university she was disciplined and dedicated, her work ethic was noteworthy—until her retirement she could be found in her office every single day. She was also relentless, always making an effort, however limited the resources at the university, to give students the opportunity to learn and pursue their interests and also to become engaged in professional and collegial life.

Her dedication to her work did not stop Professor Rose from being active and engaged in other activities. She was a long-time supporter of local and regional theater and the arts. Her philanthropy did not stop there, however, and extended to generous support for the university. She loved animals and was a longtime supporter of animal rights. She enjoyed company and friends. She brought to everything she did her critical eye, her wit and—often dark—humor, her grace. Professor Rose had a sharp mind and a vision; and she was, at all times, deeply humane. For me she was, and continues to be, a model of how to be both a rigorous scholar and educator while being humane, and of how to be a woman, in academia.
Three of her former students, now academics, co-edited a volume of essays in her honor entitled *Translation and Literary Studies: Homage to Marilyn Gaddis Rose* (St. Jerome, 2012). All the contributors and others who knew about the project were enthusiastic from the start and thought it was important to have a scholarly tribute to her. We wanted her to see it, and she did. We were glad to be able to offer her a gesture of gratitude and recognition for everything she had given us.

Marilyn Gaddis Rose passed away this past November in Binghamton, at age 85. She is deeply missed by all who were touched by her presence. We will always remember her wisdom, her subtle intelligence, her intellectual curiosity, her humor and wit, her stylish and gentle demeanor, her love of life. She took care of many of us and inspired us with her generosity, ethics, and conviction. Farewell to an extraordinary lady. Thank you for everything you gave to us. Goodbye, dear Professor Rose.

**María Constanza Guzmán** is Associate Professor in the School of Translation at Glendon College, York University. She holds a Ph.D. in comparative literature from the State of New York at Binghamton. She is the author of the book *Gregory Rabassa’s Latin American Literature: A Translator’s Visible Legacy.*
“We’ve organized a conversation class for English as a second language. We’re calling it a Blab-Lab.”
A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction.
—Virginia Woolf

In her essay A Room of One’s Own, Virginia Woolf suggested the idea she posits in the quote mentioned above. It was a revolutionary idea for its time and no doubt stirred many passions when she proposed it in the lectures she gave at Cambridge University in 1928. What she was referring to, of course, was the financial and conventional barrier that aspiring women writers faced in English society in those days. The luxury of having a room of one’s own is something that is still, nearly one hundred years later, beyond the reach of a certain
percentage of women—and men—who are trying to be freelance translators, though today’s barrier no longer reflects societal taboos; it is usually created by a shortage of funds.

Time and technology change our lives in a multitude of ways, and the modern trend of telecommuting has encouraged the proliferation of another modern trend: the home office. But not every translator has the space in which to create a home office or can afford to have a dedicated computer of their own, and some still work at the kitchen table and share the family laptop with spouse and children. Am I exaggerating? Perhaps. But surely it’s no exaggeration to say that all translators want a room of their own in which to immerse themselves in their work, whatever form that might take. A room where they can disengage from other concerns and indulge in their research, reading, and translation, blissfully immune to unwelcome intrusion and outside distraction. I am one of the lucky ones. I have a room of my own, and I love every inch of it.

My home office is a good size; fourteen by twelve feet, and the ceiling is ten feet high so there’s plenty of space for ideas to go “sailing alone around the room” as Billy Collins says. There are three large windows in two of the walls, and a French door that leads to the side porch and the rock garden beyond. There is a pond with a fountain in the garden, and when the weather cooperates I leave the door open so that I can hear water falling on water, one of the most soothing sounds imaginable. Among many other advantages, having a room of my own means that, when reminded of Billy Collins, I can reach up and take a book of his poems off the shelf and read a few of them; maybe even find one to quote.

Not everything I translate requires laser-sharp concentration in a monastic setting. Some materials have become a little repetitive as speech patterns become more homogeneous and buzz words beget set phrases and people begin to sound more and more alike. But when a text of subtle depth and nuance calls for every jot and tittle of my concentration, then I want to be in a place where I can respond to that demand with no distraction. Concentration is a rarified state that
is, by definition, volatile and fleeting. The quieter, more solitary the experience, the more I can concentrate; the longer I can concentrate, the more I can focus and—hopefully—achieve the deeper insight I’m searching for. I bring my translator’s tools to any task I undertake, of course, but at another, deeper level I also bring a bagful of attitudes, preconceived ideas, and biases. The writer of the document I am about to translate presumably had his or her own set of biases and perspectives that have informed and influenced the text to some extent. Will I be able to detect and identify those influences? What if I find that the author’s bias runs contrary to mine? At that point I must be able to explore my reactions and emotions, and make sure they are working with me rather than against. To do so, I find it best to be in a physical and mental space that is conducive to the kind of concentration required.

At one point I found music to be an interruption, but then learned that some music has just the opposite effect. One rainy afternoon I was listening to some piano pieces from the Romantic period¹ and noticed that the music was present in my awareness but not as an intrusion. Perhaps it has something to do with flowing, melodic sound as distinct from punctuated rhythm. At any rate, it enhanced my concentration by adding an aesthetic dimension to my thinking and the exploration process mentioned above. I now work with Pandora playing very quietly on my computer, with stations programmed to broadcast the kind of music I describe as “a pensive piano playing in an empty room,” and only rarely do I have to skip a track that jars the mood.

Virginia Woolf’s view that a woman must have a room of her own is surely true at a certain level for translators of all genders today, but it is also true that there are many different ways to do our kind of work. In the late 1980s and early 1990s translators claimed that, with a laptop and an internet connection they could work anywhere, and everyone had their own definition of “anywhere.” Mine was a beach in the Caribbean, and such was the idyllic (and unfulfilled) nature of this fantasy that it never occurred to me to wonder where I would plug in my laptop at night. Today many—
maybe most—translators work on a laptop, and mobility is a given, whether to a different room in the house or to the other side of the world. It is indeed efficient to work in coffee shops and parks, airports and hotel rooms, and I have experienced the road warrior lifestyle. It is thrilling, I admit, to feel like a self-contained and self-sustaining unit that can be constantly productive and permanently on the move. But in my opinion it doesn’t hold a candle to working in my own room.

In a certain sense, this room has come to define me, and I feel more thoroughly myself (as in “me-the-translator”) here than anywhere else. When I was a boy I used to read about writers and scholars (and detectives) who had a study or den where they spent virtually all their time, and I came to covet those sanctuaries. Most of them had a fireplace, and my image of the perfect room does in fact include an open, wood-burning hearth. I was, unfortunately, unable to replicate that feature in my real-life version, although the truth is that Texas doesn’t have many days when a toasty fire would be welcome. But I do have a sofa and an armchair in which to read and review a translation in a comfortable position. Or to take a break and read something else. A few pages of another writer’s work can help to refresh and reboot my objectivity when reviewing a translation with which I am all too familiar.

While translating an art museum piece the other day I came to a section on Renoir’s painting *Luncheon of the Boating Party.* I have never seen the original but am familiar with the painting. In fact, it came up in a book I had recently enjoyed, *The Hare with Amber Eyes* by Edmund de Waal. From what I remembered of the passage in question, I thought it might contribute some insight into the painter and this particular painting, so I took the book off the shelf and lay on the sofa to read. The author describes his ancestor, Charles Ephrussi and his enviable life in Paris in the late 1800s. Charles is a wealthy flâneur (a variation on the better-known term boulevardier) and collects art for himself and others, frequenting the ateliers of the painters of his day—the Impressionists—and chatting with them about where to find the freshest croissants, how to capture light as it reflects off water, and so on. He assembles an impressive collection of paintings, and actually appears in at least
one of the more famous ones of the period. In the Renoir mentioned above, Charles is the one standing at the very back, wearing a top hat. The author names the people in the painting and explains who they are, with book in hand, I Googled it and, for a brief, exhilarating moment, felt that I was looking at a group of friends in a familiar place. *The Luncheon* had always looked like a party I would have enjoyed, but this time, because I knew who everybody was, I identified much more closely with the scene, as though it was one I knew well. I felt that, but for some regrettable contretemps, I would have been at the Maison Fournaise that afternoon, sitting at the table, chatting to one of the girls in their pretty hats. By the time I got back to translating the museum essay, the painting was alive in my mind and the words flowed easily from one language to the other.

As daylight dies I light the lamp on the desk beside me. This desk is a relic of another age: a massive piece of mahogany furniture that looks as though it would have been perfectly at home in a writer’s den in Virginia Woolf’s London. Desks like this have been replaced by elfa shelving and modular furniture designed to open up a modern space and make it roomier. My cat lies on the desk, looking out of the window at the garden. When she sees something that requires her personal attention she jumps down and stands at the door, waiting for me to open it. Later, when she has had enough of the great outdoors she will appear on the windowsill beside me, waiting for me to let her in. This little charade may sound distracting but oddly enough, like solo piano music, it is not. It has become part of my routine and gives me a reason to get up and stretch a little more frequently than I otherwise would. Cat people will understand.

I moved into this room twenty-five years ago at the dawn of my freelance translator career. My wife gave me the desk, and I think its size and style say something about her expectations for my new venture. Speaking of generous wives, one day many years ago I reached the point where I felt ready to quit my day job and go full time. I asked a seasoned veteran—a colleague at our local association—what I needed most to become a successful freelance translator. Without any hesitation he said, “A spouse with a real job.” I was lucky again. The
fact is that without my spouse and her real job it is highly unlikely that I would have this particular room of my own, and I imagine I’m not the only one in this position. So, three cheers for our spouses and other supporters; words cannot express the depth of our gratitude to you all. Everyone’s situation is unique but, as seen from my circumstances, I am tempted to paraphrase Virginia Woolf’s dictum to read: “A translator must have a spouse with a real job if she wants a room of her own.”

ENDNOTES

1 One example of the music from the Romantic period is Chopin’s Nocturne #8: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nMz14eCD6IQ], played here by Arthur Rubinstein


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