

NO. 77 | WINTER 2018-2019

SOURCE

A QUARTERLY
PUBLICATION
OF THE ATA'S
LITERARY
DIVISION



ATA NEW ORLEANS

FEATURING

SESSION REVIEWS:

Michele Rosen reviews Gabriella Page-Fort
Shelley Fairweather-Vega on Sibelan Forrester
Ángeles Juarans Font on Mercedes Guhl
Mercedes Guhl reviews
Ellen Sowchek and Stephanie Delozier Strobel

WORDS, WORDS, WORDS:

The Porous Border between English and Spanish



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From the Editors



Michele Aynesworth
Editor-in-Chief

This Winter issue of *Source* is devoted to reviews of presentations at ATA's annual conference in New Orleans this past Fall.

Michele Rosen's review focuses on the two sessions given by Gabriella Page-Fort, the Literary Division's Distinguished Speaker. The review highlights Page-Fort's interest in making AmazonCrossing's publications more diverse and in finding books with "good hooks."



Patrick Saari
Associate Editor

Shelley Fairweather-Vega writes about the Susana Greiss Lecture delivered by Sibelan Forrester, the Distinguished Speaker for the Slavic Languages Division, which examines the "double margin" encountered by translations of Croatian and Serbian women writers into English. Ángeles Juarans Font has a personal take on Mercedes Guhl's presentation, asking "Who is the right candidate for a literary translation career?" Finally, Mercedes reviews the "very entertaining" session in which Stephanie Delozier Strobel and Ellen Sowchek discussed ways in which translators can intervene or manipulate the text.

Our Words Words Words column, which surveys the "porous border between English and Spanish," is illustrated by two apposite paintings, one of a Blackfoot warrior and the other of "a *vaquero* (Spanish cowboy) in action roping cattle with a *lazo* (lasso) and wearing a *sombrero tan galán* (elegant precursor of the ten-gallon hat) with a *galón* (braided band around the crown) during 1830s Spanish California." Together with the illustration on page 7, *Giant Steamboats at New Orleans*, these paintings represent our efforts to brighten our pages with art. Tony Beckwith's toons, as always, give our signature artistic seal.



Mercedes Guhl
Associate Editor

Paula Arturo's letter from the Literary Division Administrator introduces two new members to the LD Leadership Council and shares good news about next year's speaker in Palm Springs.

Upcoming Issue: We look forward to contributions relating to children's literature, as well as to our Words Words Words column.

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 to LD Administrators **Paula Arturo** and **Amanda Williams** for their support.

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.

TOPIC FOR THE SPRING 2019 ISSUE:

- We are now soliciting contributions relating to children's literature, as well as to our Words Words Words column.
- Contributors are asked to follow the format guidelines below.
- **Submission deadline for the Spring issue: April 20**

FORMAT:

- Submit articles up to 1600 words, Word or text file, single-spaced.
- Garamond font, size 12, without indented paragraphs.
- Line breaks between paragraphs but 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 patricksaari@netlife.ec or michele@mckayaynesworth.com

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LETTER FROM THE LD ADMINISTRATOR

Dear Literary Division,
This is my first letter after yet another wonderful conference, and I'm happy to say things are looking up for our lovely "little" division.

As you know, we already have a committed and hardworking Leadership Council (LC) which has served time and time again as an invaluable guide for all our important division decisions. Today, I'm happy to report that, after the conference, two new members have joined the LC. We now have Shelley Fairweather-Vega and Michele Rosen on our LC.

You may know Shelley from the conference. And if you've had a chance to meet her, you know what a delightful human being she is. But just to give you an idea of who she is as a translator, let me tell you a little about her: She translates from Russian and Uzbek into English and collaborates with authors, academics, and activists around the world on projects as varied as Russian poetry, Uzbek historical fiction, popular science, romance, and detective stories. She is a founder of the literary translation circle in Seattle, Washington, and runs FairVega Translations and FairVega Russian Library Services.

Next in line alphabetically (although not in order of importance) is Michele. Also one of the friendliest and kindest people I've met, Michele immediately jumped to the division's aid when we needed her the most! Michele Rosen, PhD, is an ATA-Certified French-to-English translator and editor. She was the managing editor of *Translation Review* and served as director of the American Literary Translators Association (ALTA). Before that, she taught journalism, new media, and writing at Rowan University, Rosemont College, and The University of Texas at Dallas. Michele has a background as a reporter, editor, and content strategist for newspapers, magazines, and websites.



Paula Arturo is a lawyer, translator, and former law professor. Throughout her fifteen-year career, in addition to various legal and financial documents, she has also translated several highly technical law books and publications in major international journals for high-profile authors, including several Nobel Prize Laureates and renowned jurists. She is an independent lawyer-linguist for the United Nations Universal Periodic Review process of several Latin American states, as well as a legal-linguistic consultant for various international organizations. She is a co-creator of *Translating Lawyers*, a boutique firm specializing in legal translation by lawyers for lawyers. She is currently serving a two-year term as Administrator of the American Translators Association's Literary Division, Co-head of Legal Affairs at the International Association of Professional Translators and Interpreters and member of the Public Policies Forum of the Supreme Court of Argentina.

Getting these two amazing women to join our LC was the highlight of the conference! But a lot more good came out of it.

As you know, our very own Lisa Carter managed to secure Gabriella Page-Fort from AmazonCrossing as Distinguished Speaker in New Orleans, and we've heard nothing but positive reviews about our guest's presentations. Attendees were able to learn about literary translation from the editor's point of view, which is precisely what you had asked us for the year before in our Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. So, I'd like to thank Lisa and Gabriella for making that happen.

Now our eyes are set on the future, and we've joined forces with the Italian Language Division to bring you yet another distinguished speaker of the caliber our division deserves. We've nominated Ms. Ann Goldstein, editor and translator from Italian into English who is best known for her translations of Elena Ferrante's Neapolitan Quartet to speak this year in Palm Springs! And we sincerely hope that her nomination will be accepted by the conference organizers.

Back in my law school days, our philosophy professor quoted Aristotle: "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts." Of course, I'm taking the quote out of context, which is something my old professor warned us not to do, but if the people who make up our LC are any reflection of our division's parts, then this division is moving toward great things. And I for one am grateful for each and every one of them.

Here's to a great year for the Literary Division!

Best,
Paula

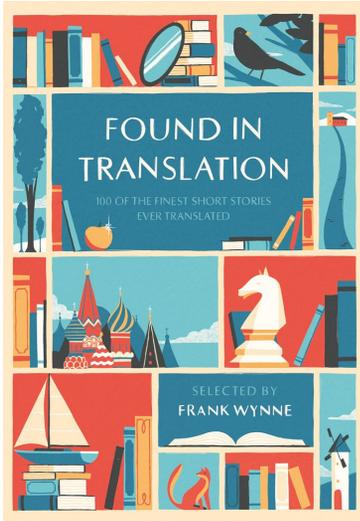
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Amanda Williams, amanda@mirrorimagetranslations.com



Hippolyte Sebron (1801-1879), *Giant Steamboats at New Orleans* (1853).
The steamboats "Gipsy," "Grand Turk," and others at the Sugar Levee and the wharf
busy with stevedores, oil on canvas, Tulane University of Louisiana, New Orleans.

READERS' CORNER



Shelley Fairweather-Vega announces:

My translation from the Uzbek of Hamid Ismailov's story "The Stone Guest" was included in an anthology called *Found In Translation: 100 of the Finest Short Stories Ever Translated* (ed. Frank Wynne, Head of Zeus, 2018).

My translation from the Kazakh and Russian of Talasbek Asemulov's novel *A Life at Noon* was published with a grant from the Republic of Kazakhstan in January 2019.

FairVega Translations
Russian and Uzbek to English translation
<http://www.fairvega.com/translation>
translation@fairvega.com

Chen Du's translation of three poems by Dong Li, a famous young Chinese poet, was published by *Lunch Ticket* on January 14, 2019.

Her essay titled "Catch the Train" has been accepted by *The Dead Mule*.

Chinese <> English

Email & Skype: of_sea@hotmail.com

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Chen Du

READERS' CORNER, CONT'D.



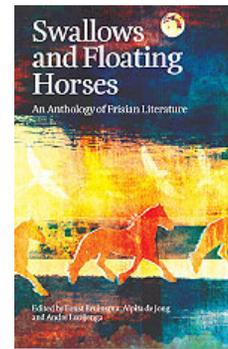
David McKay

A new translation by **Ina Rilke** and ATA-LD member **David McKay** of the well-known Dutch novel *Max Havelaar* will be published by NYRB Classics on March 5, 2019 and is the March 2019 selection of the NYRB Classics Book Club.

<https://tinyurl.com/Havelaarbook>

Swallows and Floating Horses, an anthology of Frisian literature published by Francis Boutle in late 2018, includes many translations of poetry and prose from the ninth century to the present day by David McKay and others.

<https://tinyurl.com/Boutlebook>



CANCIÓN ANTIGUA AN OLD SONG

ANTOLOGÍA POÉTICA
Vicente Núñez

Vicente Núñez



Versión de Sue Burke y Christian Law Palacín

Sue Burke and Christian Law have translated *Canción Antigua - An Old Song*, an anthology of poems by Vicente Núñez. The book, published at the end of 2018 by the Fundación Vicente Núñez and the Diputación de Córdoba, was presented at a program January 29, 2019, in Córdoba, Spain. Vicente Núñez (1926-2002) was one of the most daring and important poets of Andalusia, Spain, in the second half of the 20th century.



“How much fact does a fact-checker check when a fact-checker checks the facts?”

Inside AmazonCrossing with LitDiv’s Distinguished Speaker, Gabriella Page-Fort

By Michele Rosen, PhD., CT

Gabriella Page-Fort is the editorial director of AmazonCrossing, where she has worked since 2010. Her list includes award-winning authors from around the world, such as Laksmi Pamuntjak, Martin Michael Driessen, Laura Esquivel, Dolores Redondo, Laura Restrepo, Zygmunt Miloszewski, and Ayse Kulin. She was named **Publishers Weekly** Star Watch “Superstar” in 2017. She is also a literary translator from French and Spanish.



Gabriella Page-Fort

Since its launch in 2010, AmazonCrossing has grown to dominate the American translation publishing landscape. The Amazon.com-owned imprint released seventy-five titles in 2015, three times more than the second largest U.S. publisher of translations, Dalkey Archive.¹ At this year’s ATA conference, attendees had the opportunity to hear two densely packed, data-driven talks about AmazonCrossing’s editorial process and how the imprint finds the books it publishes in translation from the Literary Division’s Distinguished Speaker, AmazonCrossing editorial director Gabriella Page-Fort.

In her first session, “International Literature: A Data-Driven Approach to Prioritizing Diversity,” Page-Fort addressed why books from some countries are more frequently translated than others and how she seeks to broaden the pool of potential translations. In the first place, she noted, some countries invest heavily in exporting their countries’ cultures; in some cases, these efforts are even part of an official government strategy and are undertaken by government ministries. Based on data she compiled from UNESCO and the Three Percent database, Page-Fort found that neither population nor literacy rates are strongly correlated with publishing volume from country to country. Instead, she asserted that “translations beget translations,” with editors gravitating to countries whose works have been translated in the past. This contributes to a virtuous cycle (or a vicious cycle, depending on your perspective) in which governments, cultural organizations, and translators promote books for translation to agents, scouts, and publishers; those translations that are published and become bestsellers or win awards become lodestars for future cycles.

As Page-Fort noted, editors, who ultimately make decisions based on both what they think will sell and on their personal tastes, are often unaware of their own biases. That said, they can't be expected to choose to publish translations of books they don't know about. As a result, books from countries and regions with fewer industry professionals on the lookout for the next "Stephen King"—such as Asia, the Middle East, or non-French or English-speaking Africa—simply don't get as much attention as those from Europe. Page-Fort noted that thirty percent of the translations published in the U.S. in 2017 were from just four languages: French, German, Italian, and Swedish.

To illustrate her efforts to broaden the pool of potential source languages for AmazonCrossing's translations, Page-Fort talked about her exploration of literature from Bangladesh, a country that declared its independence in part "to preserve the Bengali language." Once she decided to delve into the country's literature, she asked her contacts with knowledge about Bengali literature for the first book they would recommend to someone who had never read anything from Bangladesh. Further illustrating the importance of personal relationships and networking in the publishing industry, once she settled on a book to publish, she explained that she had also asked her contacts for recommendations for Bengali translators, at which point she contacted the translator directly about the project.

Page-Fort acknowledged that emphasizing bestsellers and recommendations of first books to read from a national literature will tend to focus attention on a certain kind of book, and she explained several ways in which she seeks to counteract this tendency. Among other initiatives, she compiled a list of countries—Ethiopia, Vietnam, Taiwan, Thailand, and Malaysia—that publish a large volume of literature but have not seen many of these works translated in the United States (Page-Fort pointed out in passing that the only language from these countries with a language sticker at the ATA conference was Chinese). Another way AmazonCrossing seeks to broaden the pool of potential translations is to actively seek recommendations for literature to translate from both readers and translators. Page-Fort noted that one of AmazonCrossing's books was first recommended by a hotel receptionist.

In the end, however, AmazonCrossing is a business, and "success in the original language is compelling" to the company's decisionmakers, according to Page-Fort. As a result, Amazon uses its own country-specific sites to analyze sales data—which may tend to favor translations from countries with their own dedicated Amazon sites—and to analyze their bestseller lists in their search of the next new publishing trend. Page-Fort acknowledged that it's not necessarily clear why any given book becomes a bestseller. For example, Page-Fort said she still wants to understand why several translations from German have recently become bestsellers in the United States. Further complicating the issue, Page-Fort added, some bestsellers from other countries are less likely to be accepted by American readers. In particular, she said, American readers demand

fast-paced narrative and a coherent plot; in contrast, she said, “it’s hard to find great literary fiction from France that also has a plot.”

In her second session, “Publishing Literature in Translation: How Translators Help AmazonCrossing Bring Stories to New Readers,” Page-Fort focused on the importance of the translator in AmazonCrossing’s editorial process. Since publishing translations involves a number of unique challenges, including finding the source text before the translation process can even begin, Page-Fort said she appreciates when translators bring her books with good “hooks”—mysteries, family dramas, familiar themes—in other words, elements that the reader can connect to. About a quarter of AmazonCrossing’s titles were originally suggested by the translator, she said, with others coming from suggestions by publishers, agents, and language teachers. She added that she loves to hear from translators about why they want to translate a particular book, because this tells her how to market the book to readers and reviewers.

Page-Fort also advocated collaboration between translators and authors, once again highlighting the importance of personal relationships in the publishing industry. Authors, she said simply, “like results” in the form of sales and reviews. However, they can’t represent themselves in a foreign language. Therefore, the translator must serve as the advocate for a book’s translation if the original language editor chooses not to do so, both before and after publication.

As she had done in her earlier session, Page-Fort continued to acknowledge the difficulty of predicting which translations will do well in the U.S. market. For example, she thought that Marc Levy, a French author who writes contemporary romances with a sense of humor, was “too French” for American readers, but his novel *PS from Paris* became AmazonCrossing’s top seller in 2017. In the end, she said, “the book matters more than the source language.”

NOTES

1 Alison Flood, “How Amazon came to dominate fiction in translation,” *The Guardian*, 9 December 2015, <https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/translation/home/index.html>



Michele Rosen

*Michele Rosen is an editor, translator, and former communications professor. Her recent translation projects include **Telepresence in Training** edited by Jean-Luc Rinaldo (ISTE, 2018) and **Power** by Olivier Dupont (ISTE, forthcoming). Michele earned her PhD in Humanities from The University of Texas at Dallas, where she also served as managing editor for Translation Review from 2012-2015. She lives in Baltimore, Md. with her husband, two dogs, and a cat named Hobbes.*

Multiple Double Margins

Sibelan Forrester's session "From a Double Margin: Translations of Croatian and Serbian Women Writers into English"

Reviewed by Shelley Fairweather-Vega



Sibelan Forrester

Sibelan Forrester earned a BA in Russian from Bryn Mawr College, and an MA and PhD in Slavics from Indiana University, Bloomington. She taught at Oberlin College for five years, then moved to Swarthmore College. She started translating on an exchange program in Zagreb, in then-Yugoslavia and continued translating in order to teach some Russian women poets who had not been translated before. She has published translations of fiction, poetry, and scholarly prose from Croatian, Russian, and Serbian, and teaches a regular translation workshop at Swarthmore. Her research interests include poetry and poetics, women's studies and gender studies, folklore, science fiction, and translation theory.

ATA 2018 featured more treats than usual for the organization's literary translators. Professor Sibelan Forrester, the Slavic Languages Division's Distinguished Speaker, was one of them. Dr. Forrester is Susan W. Lippincott Professor of Modern and Classical Languages and Russian at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania. Besides teaching translation (and literature in translation), she is a published translator of prose and poetry from Croatian, Serbian, and Russian.

Forrester's presentation was based on a study of anthologies and reference materials dedicated to Serbian and Croatian literature. Taken together, these are a fair representation of the literary canon in the region, as constructed, approved, and reinforced, as she points out, by time and tradition. Everywhere, this process of canon-making has tended to leave out women altogether

or to relegate them to the “margins.” A common result, Forrester argues, is that women are recognized mainly for writing children’s literature or folktales, while their other work is often ignored or dismissed as “trashy” or just uninteresting. While one or two female names do come up again and again in these anthologies and studies, only collections that are expressly inclusive of gender seem to find a wider variety of women authors to showcase. And women are represented much more frequently in recent anthologies than in older collections that represent the established canon.

Forrester listed several female writers from the region whose works have recently been published in translation (see box). There are also many who should be translated, and included in the canon, but are not (not yet, anyway).

One reason for this lack of representation is that women in this region are writing from a “double margin,” kept at a remove from the global mainstream not just by virtue of their gender, but also by history and geography. In Slavic studies in the Anglophone world, other languages consistently take a back seat to Russian, which has the advantage of a long, celebrated, and extensively translated literary culture full of recognized geniuses. Combine that tradition with the Russian Empire and Soviet Union’s geopolitical dominance over Eastern Europe (but not only Eastern Europe) for much of the twentieth century, and the reasons that other Slavic literatures have been less studied in the West become clear. Indeed, as Forrester points out, literatures in countries like Serbia and Croatia have been forced to develop partly in response to this geopolitical and cultural marginalization in the shadow of Russia, as a way of, on the one hand, embracing the Soviet project of increased literacy, education, and cultural pluralism, and on the other hand, asserting their own nationhood as unique cultural entities following the collapse of the Soviet system and, shortly thereafter, the breakup of bigger Eastern European countries like Yugoslavia.

All this means that translation—and translators!—can be a powerful force moving these writers out of the margins and into the (global, English-reading) limelight, where they can receive greater recognition than they might have enjoyed at home. All writers in this cultural and political margin struggle to make their voices heard, but women writers face a double challenge. Translation is vital. But how does the process of selecting women for translation work in practice?

Largely by serendipity, as it turns out. Forrester points out that it is often chance encounters between the relatively small number of English-speakers reading Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian (BCS) with authors and poets in the region that result in successful translation projects. There is still no large community of readers proficient in these less-commonly-taught languages, so for anyone writing in those languages to “exist in literary study,” they must have their work translated into English. And specific programs aimed at highlighting work by women around the world, such as Women in Translation (WiT) Month, also direct attention to marginalized writers.

I had met Dr. Forrester before at American Literary Translators Association (ALTA) conferences, and I knew how delightful she is, so I was pleased to see her name on the ATA conference program. I was even more excited because I believe that the Literary Division can benefit immensely from more cooperation and cross-pollination with ALTA, and I applaud every attempt to bring our two organizations closer together. I attended Forrester's session knowing next to nothing about South Slavic literature, much less women writing in those languages. Still, the topic drew me in because it seemed relevant to my own work. I translate mostly from Russian, but have spent most of the past year translating work by women in Kazakhstan, another place where Russian literature and culture still seems to overshadow local writing. I left the session convinced that translators from smaller Eastern European languages are facing some of the same challenges as I am. There is plenty of work to be done.

Recent English translations of South Slavic women writers

Dubravka Ugrešić, multiple works of cultural criticism

Daša Drndić, *Trieste* (Trans. Ellen Elias-Bursač), 2012

Olja Savićević, *Goodbye Cowboy* (Trans. Celia Hawkesworth), 2015 (UK), 2016 (US, as *Adios Cowboy*)

Milica Mičić Dimovska, *The Cataract* (Trans. Sibelan Forrester), 2016

Jovanka Živanović, *Fragile Travelers* (Trans. Jovanka Kalaba), 2016

Vedrana Rudan, *Love at Last Sight* (Trans. Ellen Elias-Bursač), 2017

Shelley Fairweather-Vega translates mostly literature from Russian and Uzbek to English. Her translations of women writers have been published by Routledge and AmazonCrossing and in *Words Without Borders*. Shelley is president of the Northwest Translators and Interpreters Society.



Shelley Fairweather-Vega

BTW



"...and tweet no evil, of course."

WHO IS THE RIGHT CANDIDATE FOR A LITERARY TRANSLATION CAREER? Reflections, Tips, and Review of Mercedes Guhl’s presentation “Translating Books: A Race for Endurance Runners, Parts I and II”

By Ángeles Juarans Font

Mercedes Guhl jumped into translation while working in the book industry in 1990. Since then, she has been involved in different parts of the publishing process (e.g., editing, copyediting, proofing), but translation (English>Spanish) remains her main activity. With a degree in philosophy and literature, an MA in translation studies, and over 60 published translations, she has also gone into teaching, training translators at the undergraduate and graduate levels in Colombia and Mexico.



Mercedes Guhl

I came back from the ATA Annual Conference in NOLA in a mood of optimism, armed with practical advice from lecturers. In contrast, last year at the ATA Conference in Washington, D.C., I did not experience the same enthusiasm because there were few sessions on literary translation, although I picked up helpful tips about book translation at the Literary Division meeting. As a newcomer, I was looking for ways to identify the right candidates for a career in such a complex field. I found many answers. I appreciated the thorough presentations and input on literary work and translation delivered at ATA 59. Aspiring literary translators need to hear from highly skilled professionals at ATA Annual Conferences because these experts can provide insights to future generations of linguists, all of whom share a common goal: to promote the fine art of literary translation.

Mercedes Guhl’s session, “Translating Books: A Race for Endurance Runners, Parts I and II” piqued my interest and helped me delve more deeply into the subject matter. Her presentation was instructive and rich in practical advice for the aspiring and experienced literary translators who filled the conference room. Audience members were interested in both fiction and non-fiction literary translation and came from a wide variety of specialized fields. The lecture clarified that working with books requires plenty of stamina, continuous training, time planning and management, and a high level of expertise. I gained a realistic overview of the publishing industry’s requirements and expectations for anyone wishing to embark on a literary translation career.

Aspiring literary translators must have access to many resources if they are to develop a significant professional grounding. Literary criticism articles, reading books by the same author or a variety of translations of the same piece or author, writing or reading book reviews and studying material in the source and target languages to emulate style all “fill the linguistic and stylistic toolbox.” The background required of literary translators reminded me of the demanding work I had to do for my own MLA (Master of Liberal Arts) creative writing project, a novel in my second language. Reading fiction and non-fiction books to develop a personal style; carrying out historical research in order to write a historical novel; and literary criticism—reviewing authors’ pieces and students’ creative writing projects in school workshops—were some of the tools available to MLA students producing a literary work. The process of crafting or translating books is painstaking and entails a deep commitment to the literary world. Hardworking writers with mastery of a second language and an inquisitive (as well as a critical) mind are potential candidates for literary translation. A professional creative writer and translator possesses the creativity and the knowledge required to choose appropriate equivalencies in terminology due to their extensive analysis of languages. Many renowned authors like Jorge Luis Borges, Julio Cortázar, and Fernando Pessoa are outstanding examples.

There are different ways to approach book translation. One such option involves discovering a book and turning it into a translation project to be submitted to a publisher instead of going directly to the author. Mercedes gave me her wise advice on this subject when I talked with her about the idea of offering my translation services to an author I worked with at school. In her considered opinion, a translation project involving a publisher was a superior alternative. Going directly to authors may have unanticipated consequences because they may not be in a position to pay for the translation. Moreover, authors may have no way of knowing what material translators are producing in an unknown language. Her suggestion put me right on track to jumpstart a plan for a future literary translation project as a marketer of my own product.

In addition to literary projects, translators can follow other paths to find work in the publishing business; namely, publishers, translation agencies, translation platforms like Babelcube in which publishers and translators get together to create and sell books in many languages, or publishing houses. From my own inquiries, I have learned that agencies and translation platforms are perceived by some commentators as a controversial option. Be that as it may, working in the field on a regular basis necessitates direct contact with publishers. They find translators by getting recommendations from editorial staff, through association directories, and consulates—but never simply through a resume, a sample of a translator’s work, or an interview. Negotiation of personal fees with publishers is also possible, but being an experienced linguist is a prerequisite for dealing directly with publishers and engaging in financial negotiations. Literary translation fees are based on expertise and capacity “to do culturally sensitive reading in order to produce a well-crafted translation.” The session covered samples of standards on how to set fees. For instance, translators should consider time for research in their fees and charge per word, per line, per character, or per page, but not in bulk. Working on a weekly quota of words or pages and producing 2,500 words per day is ideal, according to the lecturer. Hence, lack of experience is a drawback for a new literary translator.

Given that publishers only work with seasoned linguists, “working in a publishing house could be the way to become a literary translator if we learn how to fit in there.” Therefore, this route is probably more advisable for novice linguists who wish to learn other language crafts like proofing and copyediting. Proofing literary texts equips the prospective translator with a strong command of a language, an eye for solving translation problems and honing skills to carefully select words and meanings implicit in the text, a skillset that meets publishers’ requirements. The session went on to explain what editors expect from translators, namely, being an avid reader and an experienced writer; being acquainted with the workings of the publishing industry; and possessing linguistic competence and stamina. A publishing house provides a toolkit for language experts who can thus aspire to be free-lancers qualified to deal directly with publishers and negotiate personal fees. This career track is also a good choice for inexperienced translators seeking training and a fixed income in a full-time career as literary writers. Otherwise, combining the translation of literary pieces and of technical or legal projects can help create additional sources of income until the needed level of expertise is attained.

Since literary translation calls for endurance from highly skilled professionals, the presenter described how to plan and manage time to rest “to avoid overexerting ourselves during the long run.” Not working on weekends and planning longer stretches of work were some of the suggestions. Outlining a personal plan makes it possible to fulfill other responsibilities. Additional recommendations included: adding another week to read the book and get into the mood before starting the translation and counting on an additional week for revision and time to insert corrections depending on the length of the book. “Translation is an intellectual pursuit and we are not machines.”

Moreover, the presentation urged translators to avoid burnout by using a set of Computer-Assisted Translation (CAT) and Non-CAT tools to become efficient professionals fit to run the marathon of the book business. There is a divergence of opinion on CAT tools such as dictation software: voice recognition is bliss for some translators yet awkward for others because of the monotony of voice the software requires. Likewise, Scanner+OCR could be helpful for certain features of a book. Translation Memory (TM) tools can contribute to solving specific problems of a particular project; however, they are generally of limited usefulness. Non-CAT tools like post-its and visible color pens are also beneficial. Other reference materials recommended were bilingual and, preferably, monolingual dictionaries (Davies BYU and RAE in Spanish); specialized dictionaries; Corpora: bilingual/contrasted resources (Linguee, Reverso, etc.).

Because of the diversity of cultural traditions, the literary translation industry differs across countries. An important observation raised during Kevin Quirk’s session “Stand up for your rights in literary translation!” is that contracts in Latin America are generally oral rather than written (as they ought to be). Kevin Quirk, president of the International Federation of Translators (FIT),

agreed with Mercedes' opinion although he subsequently acknowledged the oral cultural tradition in publishers from some countries. However, he encouraged translators to explain to publishers the importance of drafting contracts to avoid misunderstandings and preserve their rights by including all details such as the licensing of rights, obligations of the publishers, royalties, moral rights (rights of attribution to refuse translation changes), remuneration, and publishers' acceptance of the translation. Contracts should not leave the door open for publishers to reject the translation.

Signing a written contract detailing the translators' rights of attribution furnishes them with authority to discuss questionable changes and reject them if necessary to preserve their professional reputation as translators. This idea made me reflect on a book I translated for an NGO where I had no chance to see the translation's final version after editing. Although this was an unpaid job, it is of paramount importance to safeguard the translator's professional work by arguing specific points of the translation process either in writing, preferably, or by oral agreement.

Literary translation can be quite intimidating for newcomers, but this comprehensive lecture showed me what it takes to become the right candidate for such pursuits. I felt empowered to think about a career plan and make the courageous decision of joining a literary group of experts. When I came back from NOLA, I became a member of the Austin Area Translators and Interpreters Association (AATIA) and met with LitSIG, their literary interest group. I had the privilege of listening to experienced literary translators talking about their projects and discussing how to become self-published. ATA and AATIA presentations have equipped me with the most relevant tools and tips for the beginning of my journey as a literary translator. It is a demanding and strenuous career suitable only for those who have the calling and strength to persevere in the exhaustive study of languages.

Ángeles Juarans Font, born in Comodoro Rivadavia, Argentina, now living in Austin, Texas, holds undergraduate degrees in Scientific-Literary Translation and Legal Translation from Universidad del Salvador (USAL) and a Master of Liberal Arts from St. Edward's University.

The author wishes to thank Neil Langdon Inglis, ATA member for over 25 years.



Ángeles Juarans Font

Some afterthoughts on The Painter, the Lover, the Knave, and the Nerd: Translators Adding Value in Literary Translation... or balancing loss and gain?

By Mercedes Guhl

Ellen Sowchek has been an ATA-certified French>English translator since 1990, focusing on legal and human rights documents. As a sub-specialty, she has worked extensively in the entertainment industry as both a translator and interpreter, translating legal documents, etc., for many films. She has also interpreted for many French and Francophone film and theater events. She is a former editor of ATA's French Language Division newsletter and is currently a grader for ATA's French>English certification exam.



Ellen Sowchek

Stephanie Delozier Strobel is a mechanical engineer turned technical translator, providing freelance translations on a variety of heavily technical subjects since 2001. She recently completed her first literary translation of a popular science book. She studied French and mechanical engineering at Drexel University and the Advanced Studies Program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She has also participated in writing workshops for translators at the "Translate in..." conferences.

This was an extremely entertaining session about the wide-ranging role of a translator when translating a book and the very interesting parallel between two different books and two different translators. What do they have in common? Both translators work from French into English, both come from fairly specialized fields (Ellen Sowchek focuses on legal and human rights documents, but has also worked in the entertainment industry as both a translator and an interpreter; Stephanie Delozier Strobel has a background in mechanical engineering and in 2001 started translating technical texts in various subjects), and both ended up translating a book that was related to their field of expertise. One of the books was fiction based on historical facts around Impressionist painter Edouard Manet, and the other was a text about science for non-scientists, written by a YouTuber. The session tackled the process of translating both books as case studies in order to show how the translators had intervened or manipulated the text.

As a translator who has also worn the editor's hat for a couple of publishing houses, it was a great relief to find a session addressing this topic and debunking the rigid idea of fidelity that first-time

book translators usually subscribe to. Translating a book requires a lot of rewriting, adaptation, and creativity if one is to be faithful to the original. And that's exactly what Sowchek and Strobel did, each one in her book. As they said, "all translations have value, as they introduce a text to a new audience." But this introduction has to take into account the different situations, in terms of culture and context, of both the source and the target reader.

Strobel explained the changes she had suggested to the editor, from the adaptation of puns to the addition of new ones, where the English allowed it. As an engineer, she benefited from the expertise needed to do this without undermining the scientific accuracy of terms and notions. She even noted corrections to be made, as no book is ever free of errors. Translating a book by a YouTuber also meant watching the videos, in order to get a feeling for the author's voice and reproduce it in the English version.

Sowchek's part showed a similar commitment to research and documentation. She explained how she had worked in tandem with a native French-speaking translator, so that no nuance in the original would be lost in her reading. This "in tandem" translation meant working together on every single sentence of the book. The presenter explained some of the errors that had been corrected by the translators and explored the huge contribution they made to the text: creating an art database for all the paintings described in the book. The English edition of the novel includes this art guide, which is a great addition for the reader. But putting together the whole list sure required a lot of research!

While translating their books, Sowchek and Strobel acted not only as mere translators but also as editors, which is an important asset in the publishing industry. Not every single part of a book can be carried over successfully into another language and culture. Book translators should be acquainted with the readership that will be receiving their books and be able to determine the details and parts of the book that will need some tweaking if they really want to get through to the reader. It is important to remark that book translators are not as autonomous as book authors and that a translated book is the product of team work: translator plus editor, copyeditor, and proofreader, at least. So the ideal book translator is the one who anticipates problems and provides options to solve them. The final decision to solve that problem, or just to smooth it out, belongs to the editor. But proposing viable options, as these two colleagues did, is one of the most valuable qualities of a book translator.

With examples of their case studies, Sowchek and Strobel attempted to demonstrate how a translator can "add value" to a translation: 1. increasing accuracy; 2. clarifying information; 3. reinforcing the author's voice; and 4. improving accessibility. As a book translator and copyeditor, I'm all for correcting errors and adding information that can help the reader understand cultural references. I strongly stand for the adaptation of humor and the deletion of dispensable details in the translation (bits and references that may be important for the source

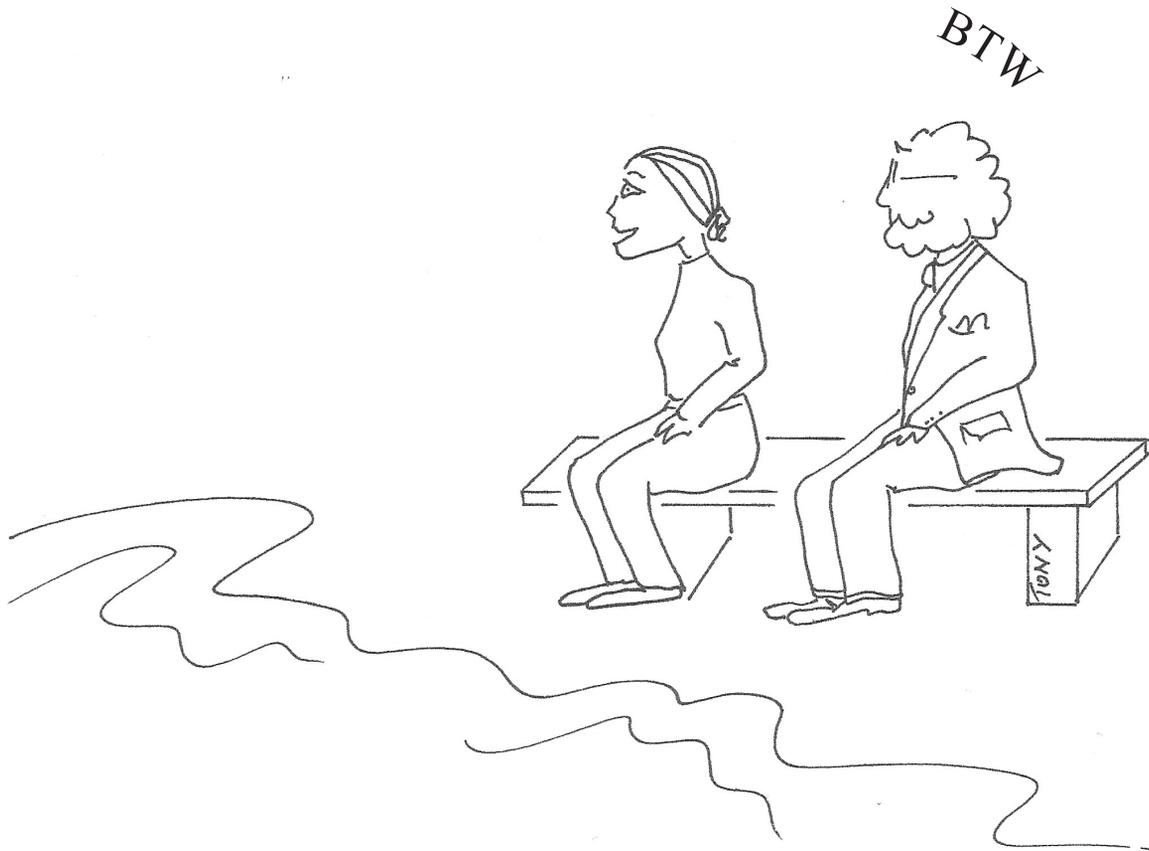
reader but are lost on the target reader). And those aspects cover items 1, 2, and 4 of the above-mentioned list. I hesitate at the third item, and I am convinced that the reinforcement they suggested was nothing other than reshaping and recasting the author's voice. There is no need to reinforce it but to work on finding it in the target language.

My only qualm as a book translator myself (and as a trainer of translators) is a matter of word choice. The idea of "adding value to a text" means, to me, that the translation is better than the original. I don't think translators should improve a text, but just make sure that the original does not get lost in translation. Or at least to try to minimize the loss!

I would restate those 4 items about adding value by saying that the translation of a book should retain the value of the original even when it bridges the cultural gap. Fidelity in a book project does not mean sticking blindly to the original but delving into the deeper dimensions of the text in addition to paying due attention to its seemingly endless string of words. Aspects such as individual details in the text's structure or the author's intention in writing the book also steer the translator's work and give her leeway to exercise creativity in certain passages. This controlled use of creativity is exactly what a book translator should aim for, while respecting the limits set by the original and the author's plans.

In this metaphor of adding or not adding value, we can imagine a tightrope walker balancing loss and gain in translation. As translators, we know we are always bound to lose something when transferring texts from one language into another. But book translators (and not only them) should be on the lookout for opportunities to compensate that loss by small gains interspersed throughout the book. And those gains are the by-products of the translator's creativity, albeit anchored by the book's masterplan. Sowchek and Strobel did a terrific job of minimizing loss and spotting how to introduce gain in their translations. Their session gave us a fantastic view of this tightrope balancing act between loss and gain.

Note: For photo and bio of reviewer Mercedes Guhl, see page 18.



"When geese get excited, do they get goose bumps?"

WORDS, WORDS, WORDS

The Porous Border between English and Spanish

By Mercedes Guhl

We have long been hearing and reading about the constant outcries over the huge number of English words barging into the Spanish language with high expectations of staying there forever. These insertions are sometimes unneeded, because they do nothing more than replace fine words that are already there in Spanish, although it may be that those adopting the English terms are unaware of them. In this case, the protest is justified. Nevertheless, words seeping from the English language into Spanish are sometimes inescapable because they pertain to objects, actions, or situations that are new and for which a term has not yet been coined. And that is when the complaints are groundless, because that type of linguistic borrowing (loanwords) has been one of the driving forces behind the evolution of language.

Be that as it may, many Spanish speakers feel entitled to join a kind of “border patrol” between Spanish and English to identify and apprehend any term that crosses the border without due process of law. And it may be that, in these linguistic policing activities, we risk losing sight of historical perspective and neglecting the fact that, along the shifting and translucent border between the two languages, English has not always been the sole exporter of migratory terminological commodities nor has Spanish always been the host language. The areas of contact between both have benefited from the exchange of words and objects, sometimes in one direction and sometimes in the other.

In the Age of Discovery, during the Spanish Conquest, and for a substantial part of the colonial period of the Americas, Spain was a powerful empire over which “the sun never set.” It extended outward all the way to the Philippines in Asia and to the colonies of the Americas from the Southern Cone up to North America in the Western Hemisphere, so that in the sixteenth,

The mainstreaming of English words into the Spanish language is a point of contention, especially when there are already many words in Spanish for a wide range of concepts. But that is not the only direction in which words have travelled. Indeed, many words have crossed the border from Spanish into English as well.

seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, it was impossible for night to fall on Spain's entire dominions. At that time, however, England was but a small island off the shores of the European mainland, with ambitions to expand its reach, but as yet without the full political, administrative, naval, trade, or religious scaffolding to do so on such a large scale.

Because they were the first to reach the Western Hemisphere, the Spaniards were building cities and ports, engaging in trade, and subjugating the first-nation inhabitants of those lands earlier than others. Predictably, when the English eventually did come into contact with these inhabitants, they adopted the names of products from the Americas in what initially was the border area between the two languages, that is, the Caribbean Sea. It may well be that these first words did not have Spanish origins, but nevertheless it was through the Spanish language that they made it into English, from indigenous languages such as Taíno, from which words like "hammock," "hurricane," and "barbecue" were adopted, albeit first by way of the Spanish words *hamaca*, *huracán*, and *barbacoa*. From the Nahuatl language came words such as "chocolate," "tomato," and "avocado." As for the word "potato," it came from the Kichwa word *papa*, which on the Iberian Peninsula had been transformed into the word *patata*, which subsequently hopped into the English language as "potato," adding that special Spanish flavor to it, charged as a cross-border tariff so to speak. Words such as "cannibal" and "cannibalism" came from the Caribbean peoples living at the time in what is now northern Colombia, Venezuela, and the Lesser Antilles. There are even words that had to cross several cultural borders before they could comfortably fit into the English language. There is, for example, the term *agniappe* from France's former Louisiana Territory and which is still used in New Orleans: it comes from the South American Spanish word *la ñapa*, which in turn comes from the Kichwa word *yapa*, which means a small gift or extra portion that is added to a purchase (in Mexico better known as a *pilón*).

The above-mentioned smattering of words jumped from Spanish into English, although they had originally come from languages other than Spanish. Nevertheless, there are areas where American English vocabulary was built on the foundations of Spanish, as in the case of breeding and training horses for cattle ranching. The trouble with talking about this subject is that it involves debunking at least one of the main symbols of America's Far West: herds of free-roaming wild horses. It also involves tarnishing the iconic image of the Native American chief wearing a feathered headdress and riding a horse, his rifle at the ready. Neither the horse nor the rifle of this picture have their origins in North America. They were brought by the Spaniards, who were the ones who spread them throughout the vast expanse of the region they conquered, because the horse was a strategic military asset and an instrument of authority, as well as a means of transportation, communication, and farming. The wild horses roaming America's Far West were the descendants of the domesticated horses used by the Spaniards to travel to where they had built their missions and forts (*presidios*). And the horses that the Comanche, Dakotas, and Blackfoot rode were also originally Spanish.

In all Latin American countries, there are still clear traces of that deep-rooted Spanish culture built around horses, with common threads extending to North America's Far West as a result

of the many missions, garrisons, and settlements established by Spanish troops and religious communities in what are now the states of Texas, New Mexico, California, and Arizona, where they settled with their horses and cattle taking advantage of the land for cattle raising, more appropriately known as *vaquería* in Spanish. These activities left their imprint on the English language: “lasso” (from *lazo*), “cinch” (from *cincha*, the strap that fastens the saddle under the barrel of the horse and which is also known as a saddle strap or girth), mustang (from *mestengo* or *mesteño*, which is a domesticated animal living in the wild), “rodeo,” “wrangler” (supposedly from *caballerango*, a Mexican term for a boy who grooms and saddles horses in California), “buckaroo” (from *vaquero*, meaning cowboy, especially used in the Mississippi-Missouri river basin and California), “stampede” (*estampida*), “ranch” (*rancho*), “corral,” and “patio.”



Karl Bodmer (1809-1893), a painting from life of a Blackfoot warrior ca. 1840-1843

To describe the territory's topography, the English language also kept the following Spanish terms: "mesa," "canyon" (*cañón*), and "chaparral." And even clothing accessories, such as the cowboy hat, that is, the Far West's typical ten-gallon hat, whose name does not come from its high crown (which could not hold even one-tenth of the volume claimed by its name) but rather from either the Spanish expression *tan galán* (*un sombrero tan galán*, meaning a "very gallant/elegant hat) or the Spanish word *galón*, the braided ribbon or string that goes round the hat's crown. The fact that, in 2005, the University of Oklahoma Press published the book *Vocabulario Vaquero/Cowboy Talk: A Dictionary of Spanish Terms from the American West* and has been promoting it as an important reference work for linguists and historians interested in exploring the many interconnections between Spanish and English is more than telling.



Painting of a *vaquero* (Spanish cowboy) in action roping cattle with a *lazo* (lasso) and wearing a *sombrero tan galán* (elegant precursor of the ten-gallon hat) with a *galón* (braided band around the crown) during 1830s Spanish California.

There is no doubt that many words in Spanish are widely used in American English, ranging from geographical names, food, and farm produce to kitchenware and architectural features. But cattle ranching, as it was carried out one or two centuries ago, makes it easy for us to illustrate this phenomenon, which we have more recently seen happening but in the opposite direction, that is, from English into Spanish, mostly terms from scientific and technological breakthroughs, from the field of business management and administration, and from the entertainment and fashion industries being borrowed by the Spanish.

Note: It would have been impossible to write this article without references from the following book: *Bill Bryson, Made in America: An Informal History of the English Language in the United States*, Harper Collins Publisher (Kindle edition).

Article originally published in Spanish in the blog ¡Al rescate del español! (formerly Cuatro mosqueteras): <https://www.rescatadelesp.com/la-porosa-frontera-entre-el-ingles-y-espanol/>

English translation by Patrick Saari

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Photo of New Orleans by permission of the photographer, Salvador Virgen.

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Hippolyte Sebron (1801-1879), *Giant Steamboats at New Orleans* (1853). The steamboats “Gipsy,” “Grand Turk,” and others at the Sugar Levee and the wharf busy with stevedores, oil on canvas, Tulane University of Louisiana, New Orleans. Wikimedia Commons.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hippolyte_Sebron_-_Bateaux_A_Vapeur_G%C3%A9ants_1853.jpg

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Karl Bodmer (1809-1893), A painting from life of a Blackfoot warrior ca. 1840-1843. Wikimedia Commons

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Painting of a Vaquero in action roping cattle during 1830s Spanish California.

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