

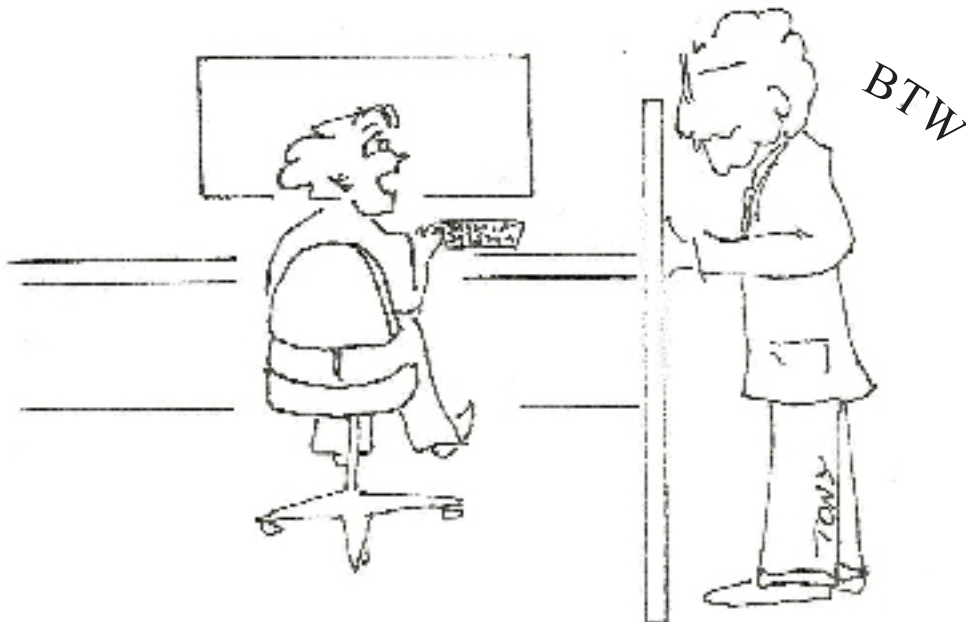
A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION
OF THE ATA'S LITERARY DIVISION

NO. 59

WINTER 2013-2014

DENMARK'S LITERARY SCENE
FEATURING MICHAEL GOLDMAN'S TRANSLATIONS OF
POETRY BY BENNY ANDERSEN

AN INTERVIEW WITH ITALY'S SILVIA ROTA SPERTI



"Ask them if they want it now or when it's ready."

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FROM THE EDITORS



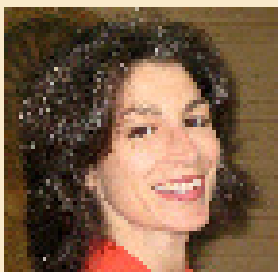
Michele Aynesworth
Editor-in-Chief



Tony Beckwith
Associate Editor



Patrick Saari
Chief Copy Editor



Traci Andrighetti
News Editor

In this Fall issue of *Source*, we're introduced to newly elected Literary Division Administrator Mercedes Guhl and Assistant Administrator Josefina Iannello and share a farewell letter from Emilia Balke, our outgoing LD Administrator.

A special focus in this issue is on Danish literature. Ingrid Lansford gives us a quick overview of Denmark's literary scene as a backdrop for Michael Goldman's translations of Danish poet Benny Andersen.

In a follow-up to ATA's annual convention, translator and academic Martha Kosir reviews Séverine Hubscher-Davidson's presentation "Intuition in Literary Translation."

Traci Andrighetti, who has done an outstanding job as our NEWS AND VIEWS editor, will be passing on the baton to a new team of NAV editors: Julie Winter, Catharine Minois, and Christopher Tauchen. Silvia Rota Sperti is the subject of Traci's farewell interview. Catharine Minot also gives us a preview of Marian Schwartz's latest projects.

In "The University of Life," regular columnist Tony Beckwith describes how his early years of wandering gave him a seemingly surreal sense of inhabiting two separate realities at once—a quality he's found useful as a translator and interpreter.

Winter 2014

The lineup for our next issue includes a passionate plea by Fr. Joseph Musoke, a trilingual Ugandan priest, for maintaining the purity of Luganda, one of Uganda's native languages. Patrick Saari, who translated Ecuador's 2008 Constitution into English, explores its key concept of *sumak kawsay*, the Kichwa concept of the good life.

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SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Submit articles up to 1600 words, font size 12,
Word or text file, single-spaced.
Indent paragraphs or put a space between them.
Include a brief bio of two or three sentences and,
if convenient, a photograph.
Illustrations and links, etc., are encouraged.
Submissions may be edited.

We encourage submissions from Asia, Africa,
and all other cultures less frequently represented
in these pages.

Send general submissions for future issues to
michele@mckayaynesworth.com.
News and Views submissions go to
juliemwinter6@gmail.com.

Submissions deadline for the next issue: Feb. 1
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New Literary Division Administrator

Mercedes Guhl

mercedesguhl@gmail.com



I have been into literary translation and translation of books in general for a time, long enough to know the importance of our task and the solitude we usually work in. Over the past twenty years I have translated a variety of books and academic texts: children's books, self-help books, academic essays on the humanities and social sciences, and adult fiction published in Colombia, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, and the US.

I have also worked as editor, free-lance copyeditor, proofreader, and reader of originals in English for translation into Spanish and further publication. As a translator, I have had to explain my interpretation and translation strategies to editors. As a translation teacher, I believe I have learned more than my students when my suggestions and explanations are questioned. Translation has been not only my means of livelihood but one of my main interests as an avid reader and someone involved in creative writing and the study of literature. It has also been my research field as an academic.

I believe that, as translators, we rely mainly on two basic skills: reading and writing. But the level required for translating is very much above average. How do we improve? By sharing readings and comments on texts. Peers, counterparts, colleagues, and friends are an essential part of refining strategies and interpretations, of getting recommendations for the best dictionaries and reference books. Therefore, facilitating the exchange of ideas, texts, references, and points of view is one of my main concerns. I envision the ATA's Literary Division as the right place to shake off the isolation in which we usually work. Having others with whom to discuss interpretations and possible solutions to translation problems is extremely helpful. Contact between colleagues (both translators and readers) improves our reading and referential knowledge and encourages creativity and resourcefulness.

Also, as literary translators, our decisions are always contested, either by editors, readers, critics, or ourselves when we see the published version. So we also need to promote respect for our work: if we can build a solid strategy for translation, it will be easier to withstand attacks. We should be able to get feedback from our editors and avoid their making unilateral changes without consulting us.

I plan to do some research on the composition of the Literary Division, to find who our members are and how they can contribute and share their questions and knowledge. Communication with colleagues is essential for us to be better at what we do and to stand our ground more firmly. I will look for ways to enrich the exchange of ideas, experiences, and points of view among our LD members.

New Assistant LD Administrator

Josefina Iannello

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Growing up, there were many things that my parents believed my brother and I could do without. There was one thing, however, that they thought should fill our lives as well as the shelves in our small apartment in Buenos Aires: books. My father used to assure us that “Che” Guevara never went anywhere without a book, and that stories were the perfect companions in life, opening up a world of feelings and experiences that became more alluring with each read. Taking these teachings to heart, I soon became close friends with books and went through every Spanish specimen I could get my hands on. When I started to learn English, however, I quickly realized that the joys of literature could be heightened by a whole new pleasure, that of discovering a different language and culture. Soon enough, translation became the inevitable consequence of reading, as I found myself spending hours -even days- searching for the Spanish equivalent of English words and expressions. It was clear that translation was to be my path, for as consuming as these searches were, they were equally fascinating.

This enthusiasm for literary translation inspired me to become the Assistant Administrator to the Literary Division of the ATA. In this position, I hope to help other literary translators in the consuming -yet fascinating- search that makes up our craft, representing our division and enhancing our communications with fellow translators, as well as promoting the visibility of our profession in the world. I look forward to teaming up with all of you to make a meaningful contribution to the growth and success of our division.

LETTER FROM THE OUTGOING LD ADMINISTRATOR

During the past four years, I received a number of inquiries relating to literary translation. Our division has two major resources, the Literary Division Listserve and our website. The Literary Division Listserve allows us to exchange information of various kinds and to post job advertisements. If you have not joined yet, I encourage you to sign up through the following link: http://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/ATA-LD_Listserve/info. Our website, although imperfect, also provides useful information.

For those of you who like to socialize, a local literary translation group may be a great resource. Such groups provide an environment in which one can learn, brainstorm, socialize, network, and even gain useful professional experience. If such a group is not available in your area, the Literary Division can help you get in touch with members of literary translators' groups who have the knowledge and experience to help you set up one. If you are a member of a local literary translation group, please send the Literary Division your group's contact information and a description of the activities

your group offers, and we can display this information on our website.

Judging by the popularity of the After Hours Café at the ATA annual conferences, the interest in literary translation among ATA members has markedly increased over the past few years. The After Hours Café was the brainchild of Slavic Languages member Lydia Razran Stone, who has continued to take an active leadership role in the annual event. The Café now attracts translators working from a variety of languages into English and from English into other languages. The Literary Division is the sixth largest among the eighteen ATA divisions, with a membership count of 2502 members as of Sept. 26, 2013.

Why is literary translation becoming so popular? What is so special about it?

Literary translation is the most challenging and, at the same time, most intellectually and professionally rewarding form of translation. The opportunities for professional improvement in this area are unlimited. Excellence in this area is recognized and achievements



Emilia Balke is a freelance translator, interpreter, and voiceover talent. She translates from Russian, German, and Macedonian into English and Bulgarian, and from Bulgarian into English.

reward the translator with a sense of authorship and accomplishment.

Literary translation makes it possible for people to experience great literary works from different cultures. Literary translators play a vital role in this process because the quality of their work determines whether literary works are accepted or rejected by foreign audiences.

Ideally, translation of creative writing is a process of immersing oneself in the original literary work of art, experiencing it, and then taking that experience and recreating both the form and content of the literary work using stylistically appropriate target language.

Literary translators perform this task at varying levels based on their overall educational background, professional experience, life experience, intellectual capacity, talent, and skills. What knowledge and skills does this process require? The edifice of literary translation is built upon a foundation of language and grammar. It is embellished with creative writing skills, analytical skills, and deep understanding of the culture and time period depicted in the original work.

Translators do considerable research during the translation process. Finding an appropriate equivalent for a loaded word or cultural reference may take days or even longer.

When translators are not deeply connected to the culture of the writer, they may not fully understand the characters, the way they think and feel, and the reality in which they live. Thus,

translators may not be able to experience to the fullest the original literary work. Many linguistic inferences and subtleties, which are an intrinsic part of creative writing, may be lost in the translation. Such translators will have a limited understanding of intricate plots or metaphors, cultural references, and historically charged words.

Literary translation is both an art form and a craft. Love of language and artistic skills largely determine one's success in this field and each translation of the same literary work has its own unique qualities.

Proponents of machine translation see it as the future of translation. Some even say that machine translation software may become so advanced that learning a second language would be useless. Some forms of technical translation have already been partially automated and this process will continue as translation memory databases grow. Yet, translation of creative writing is as likely to become automated as reproductions of great paintings are likely to replace the originals.

This is my last letter as a Literary Division Administrator. I would like to wish Mercedes Guhl and Josefina Iannello a very productive and successful term as LD Administrator and Assistant Administrator, respectively.

Always remember the importance of your contribution to our cultural heritage and never lower your professional standards.

Happy Holidays!
Emilia Balke
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Intuition in Literary Translation

A Presentation by Séverine Hubscher-Davidson
at the ATA Annual Conference, 2013

Reviewed by Martha Kosir



Séverine Hubscher-Davidson teaches translation at Aston University in Birmingham, England. She has worked as a freelance French>English translator and interpreter since 2002 and has a Ph.D. in Translation Studies. A native French speaker, her research focuses on the translation process, particularly on the links between translation and psychology. Email: s.hubscher-davidson@aston.ac.uk



Martha Kosir earned her Ph.D. in Spanish from Vanderbilt University. Her research centers on poetry, the philosophy of language, and translation studies. She has done poetry translations from English into Spanish, and from German and Slovenian into Spanish and English. She works as an Associate Professor of Spanish at Gannon University. Email: kosir001@gannon.edu

What is intuition? How do we define intuition and how does it affect our choices in literary translation? As literary translators, we all recognize that many of the choices we make when rendering a text from one language into another are based on intuition. As Dr. Séverine Hubscher-Davidson pointed out, intuition comes into play especially when we are faced with tight deadlines and when we intend to tackle tasks that appear particularly complex. But do we have a good understanding of what intuition truly is? Can we trust it and rely on it?

In her presentation, Hubscher-Davidson explained intuition as a scientific phenomenon that occurs at the unconscious level, and as such, it is generally fast, spontaneous, effortless, and associative. Although intuition is necessary to capture the implied meanings in a text and should not be dismissed, as it may prove quite useful during different stages of a translation process, Hubscher-Davidson also warned of the necessity to examine intuitions carefully in order to determine whether they in fact can be trusted and used to translators' advantage in effectively transferring implied meanings to different audiences.

Hubscher-Davidson's presentation was inspired by a study of personal diversity and diverse personalities in translation, which she conducted in 2004 as part of her doctoral work, and which eventually led her to further explore the role of intuition in literary translation. The 2004 study was conducted on twenty student volunteers pursuing an MA degree in Translation and Interpretation Studies at the University of Bath. All native speakers of English, the participants were asked to produce a translation of a brief literary text from French into English. The original text, which was published in the 1960s as *Le Guide de Paris mystérieux*, was "presented like a tourist guide of Paris but describing its mysteries and lesser-known aspects, with stories of witches, plots, secret societies and haunted places" (Hubscher-Davidson 2009, p.179). As such, it was not a merely descriptive text typical of standard travel guides but literary in character instead. Participants were asked to translate these lines: *La lune est pompeuse ou fugitive, au hasard des arrondissements. Elle étale sa lueur glacée sur l'Esplanade des Invalides ; ailleurs elle passe en 15 secondes tant le ciel est étroit.*

Participants were not allowed access to dictionaries, but were also under no time constraint to produce the translation. Before beginning their task, they were asked to fill out a background questionnaire and then verbalize their translation experience through a method known as *Think Aloud*. These verbalizations, also called 'think-aloud protocols' (TAPs) were carefully analyzed, as was their written rendition of the text in translation. In order to remain completely objective, graders other than the author of the study evaluated the translated texts. After completing the translation and their verbalizations, the participants were asked to fill out a retrospective questionnaire along with a personality test.

As Hubscher-Davidson explained, the verbalizations were used to reveal students' feelings, thoughts, decisions and strategies during the translation task. In other words, TAPs could help to reveal "the mechanisms of intuitive behavior during the translation process" (Hubscher-Davidson 2013, p.219). Although Hubscher-Davidson presented a total of six verbalizations, for the purpose of this review, two examples will suffice (the text in red was highlighted by Hubscher-Davidson):

Example 1:

"ailleurs elle passe en 15 secondes (4 seconds pause) the sky is so straight, so narrow (4s) ok so over the *Invalides* it's being pompous (2s) it's showing itself, it's got time (2s) elsewhere (2s) it's less visible, it's cut out by the, by the buildings (2s) I assume. (2s) ok, so the moon is (2s) pompous I don't know, I don't really like pompous here, umm I don't think it lends itself very well to the, well I suppose it is metaphorical language actually so (2s) there's no reason to stay quite literal **but my instinct is that it's not** (2s) I prefer imperious."

Example 2:

“Cos I’m not quite sure what, what the French is getting at by saying it’s pompous (2s) but I suppose no, I mean I don’t know, the moon is pompous, it’s a point of view (10s) see I’m not really sure whether that’s my (2s) hesitation with the word pompous is to do with **uh a well informed instinct** or a lack of appreciation of (2s) the meaning of the passage as a whole, so I’ll just put a note over that one. So the moon (2s) is pompous or (2s) **I’m tempted to say** fleeting but that doesn’t really (2s) convey the same meaning as fugitive or (2s) the moon is pompous (4s) or (2s) coy I suppose, I can’t really think of another meaning, word, right now to, for fugitive (4s).”

As is clear from Example 1, the translator ponders the use of the adjective *pompous*, deeming it inappropriate in this context, as it appears to be lacking metaphorical qualities that the passage seems to contain. Using rationalization, the translator concludes that there is no need to “stay quite literal” in this particular task, especially because his own ‘instinct’ says that it is not. As such, instead of *pompous*, he opts for *imperious*.

In Example 2, a similar deliberation and even frustration with the adjective *pompous* is expressed, which ultimately leads to a consideration of other adjectives to describe the moon over Paris, such as *fleeting* and *fugitive*. By means of rationalization and subjective analysis, the translator is trying to establish whether the reluctance to use *pompous* is attributed to a ‘well-informed instinct’ or simply to a lack of true understanding of the text.

Using other examples of participants’ verbalizations, Hubscher-Davidson demonstrated that intuitions were generally swift and subsequently followed by rationalizations, which served to validate translator’s choices. Overall, the verbalizations revealed that in many cases, intuitions were difficult to ignore, they were not always used, and they even created tension in the decision-making processes. This, however, in no way reduced their importance and their necessary consideration in the translation process.

Although Hubscher-Davidson focused her presentation predominantly on the discussion of participants’ verbalizations (TAPs), these could not be fully appreciated without a reference to her study of personality types, which was carried out concurrently with the analysis of TAPs during her 2004 study. The analysis of translators’ personality types helped her to understand a more effective use of intuitions in certain personalities.

The personality test that she utilized in her study was a version of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) test based on the Jungian psychological types originally developed in 1921 (Hubscher-Davidson 2009, p.181). The MBTI test measured four subscales: Introversion/Extraversion, Sensing/Intuition, Thinking/Feeling, and Judging/Perceiving. Of the four subscales, her study focused particularly on the Sensing/Intuition subscale as it proved to be the most valuable in examining “correlations between personality traits and TT [target text] quality” (Hubscher-Davidson 2009, p.184).

The results of the study indicated that the students who most successfully completed their task were natural intuitors, while those least successful were proved to be sensors. Sensors, according to the type theory mentioned above, exhibit practical approaches to tasks and are less likely to resort to imagination, while intuitors demonstrate a greater use of imagination and inventiveness in the completion of their task. As such, the intuitive type is likely to be more successful in capturing the hidden nuances of a text, in recreating the imagery and, as Dr. Hubscher-Davidson observed, in displaying greater “awareness of, and sensitivity to, an end-user” (Hubscher-Davidson 2009, p.187). All these factors are naturally crucial in producing an effective literary translation. Other factors that influence the quality of a translation and should not be ignored in its assessment are also “experience, linguistic competence, time spent on the task, etc.” (Hubscher-Davidson 2009, p.188).

During her presentation, Hubscher-Davidson discussed two main types of intuition: ‘problem-solving’ and ‘creative’. Problem-solving intuition is developed by means of repetitive translation tasks, that is to say, through knowledge acquired through experience and repetitive patterns. It is considered rather reliable as it is based on the translator’s specific domain of expertise. Creative intuition, on the other hand, is not dependent on previous knowledge but instead draws knowledge from different types of experience. As such, it creates new combinations of knowledge by making connections in innovative and unexpected ways. Creative intuitions “are also said to be preceded by an incubation period” (Hubscher-Davidson 2013, p.216), which Dane and Pratt define as “an antecedent to the rapid, holistic, and associative operations that produce the intuition” (in Hubscher-Davidson 2013, p.216-217). Many translators continue to ponder translation problems at the subconscious level even after a translation task has been completed. This explains why, as Hubscher-Davidson pointed out, literary translators may come up with solutions for things they have read many years before.

Following Sinclair’s terminology, Hubscher-Davidson referred to the problem-solving intuition also as ‘inferential’ intuition and to the creative intuition as ‘holistic’. Since inferential intuition is largely based on pattern recognition and matching, it is particularly useful for technical or domain specific translation, while holistic intuition is “particularly well-suited to a literary translation task where problems are likely to be complex in nature and require integration of knowledge from different domains” (Hubscher-Davidson 2013, p.217).

In the translation process, both types of intuitions are experienced. Translation problems can be processed on both conscious and non-conscious levels and sometimes the translator chooses intuition over analysis. Hubscher-Davidson emphasized that intuitions, despite everything, do not work well when not analyzed and checked against reality. What is more, she noted that intuitive responses could actually inspire feelings of confidence in the wrong answers, and, as such, in poor translation results.

Successful translations are a product of intuition and careful analysis, combined with extensive translation experience. Semi-expert translators may know

enough to be cautious in making lexical choices but not enough to be effectively intuitive. Intuitions, however, as Hubscher-Davidson, pointed out, can be honed through repeated training and practice. Translators' mindfulness, focus, and tuning-in to oneself can help them become more aware of their thoughts during decision making. Experiencing new learning situations can likewise result in acquiring new domains of knowledge and experience and consequently in developing a more effective use of intuitions.

Hubscher-Davidson concluded that different kinds of intuitions should be (re)considered at different stages of the translation process because they can substantiate individuals' translating effectiveness, especially in complex tasks such as literary translation.

In summary, Hubscher-Davidson's presentation was enlightening and thought provoking. It generated much interest and a lively discussion on the part of the audience. Especially enriching was its demonstration of the complexity of thought processes and the subconscious workings of the mind during the exercise of literary translation, a subject that, as Hubscher-Davidson pointed out, most definitely requires further study and consideration in the field of Translation Studies.

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Denmark, Small Country with a Lively Literary Scene



by Ingrid Lansford

Ingrid Lansford holds a Ph.D. in English from the University of Texas at Austin. Her many prose translations from Danish, English, and German have appeared in journals and anthologies; she is also the translator of Ib Michael's novel The Pope of the Indies, an e-book by Gyldendal. Ingrid received the Leif and Inger Sjöberg Translation Prize of the American-Scandinavian Foundation in 2004 and grants from Denmark's Kunststyrelsen in 2007 and 2011.

Approximately one fourth the size of Florida, the Kingdom of Denmark is the smallest of the Scandinavian countries. Much of it consists of islands, with the political and cultural capital, Copenhagen, on the east coast of the largest, which is connected with the mainland by causeways. At different times of its long history, Denmark has ruled over England, Norway, Iceland, Greenland, and some of present-day Germany, plus several tropical colonies. Greenland and the Faroe Islands are still partly governed by Denmark today.

Though the first Danish poems appeared on rune stones, it took until the 18th century for Danish literature to catch up with that of other European countries. The so-called Danish Golden Age soon followed, and the middle of the nineteenth century brought Hans Christian Andersen and Søren Kierkegaard, who also wrote novels. More good writers, including J.P. Jakobsen and Herman Bang, arrived with the "Modern Breakthrough" a few decades later, but remained virtually unknown in the U.S. Because few of their works were translated, hardly anyone in the English-speaking world remembers Denmark's three Nobel laureates in Literature, whereas most of us have heard of Karen Blixen, a.k.a. Isak Dinesen, who, beginning in the 1930s, wrote in English, immediately drawing a large international readership, and whose autobiographical work *Out of Africa* became the basis for a famous movie. In the late 20th century, due to good translations, Peter Hoeg, author of *Smilla's Sense of Snow*, became known worldwide. Ib Michael's *Prince* enjoyed acclaim in 1999, and by the early 21st century, we could also read English versions of books by such poets as Inger Christensen, Henrik Nordbrand, and Niels Frank, and novelists like Peter H. Fogtdal, Morten Ramsland, and Jussi Adler Olsen.

Danes and other Scandinavians are generally well informed about their own major authors and accord some of them celebrity status. Large and small

poetry festivals take place every year. As in most European countries, fiction authors contribute to newspapers. If you ride the train soon after the latest railroad magazine comes out, you may be treated to a short story or interview with a literary personality—if someone else hasn't taken it home. Denmark is a nation of readers with a bookstore for almost every town with a square, and numerous stores in Copenhagen. Libraries are busy places. In 2010 alone, there were over 1,700 new fiction books published in the Danish language for a small country of only 5.5 million. Culture is well supported by private and government grants. In addition, every year a dozen or more prizes are awarded to various deserving authors. Because Danes are eager to export their culture, their government (see www.Kunststyrelsen.dk) pays for translations from Danish. If you have a Danish work in mind and have published some translations, your application is likely to be successful.

While theirs is a good literary climate, Danish authors now face more obstacles to publication than before. The reasons are mainly threefold: competition from foreign books and electronic media, as well as the economic recession. In fiction, whose sales lag behind nonfiction, translated bestsellers from the U.S. by writers like Dan Brown, Tom Clancy, and Dean Koontz are on display in most bookstores. Besides, as in the U.S., the young also spend much time with movies and computer games and increasingly download the less expensive e-books onto their tablets. Even Gyldendal, a giant of the Scandinavian publishing world, can no longer sell nearly as many traditional books as before. The company has decided, "If you can't beat'em, join'em."

Most Danes know English fairly well, as they've learned the language in school and can also watch English-language TV. Writers tend to be familiar with the American and British canons and be inspired by them. They dream of having their works translated and published in Great Britain and the U.S., thus gaining a larger readership. Sadly few of them make it. Before you decide to translate a Danish book, or any foreign-language book, check on its success in other countries, as that's what U.S. publishers do.

Because Denmark is such a small country, many of its poets and writers know each other personally. Some years ago they organized an authors' soccer league that practices in Copenhagen every week during the warm season, playing against a team of newspaper critics. The Danish authors take on a neighboring country's authors' team once a year. When during the academic year 2004/2005, instructor and writer Kristian Himmelstrup wanted to bring a series of writers from his country to the University of Texas to talk about their work, he turned to members of his authors' team back home. Apart from the fact that football is king in the U.S., a soccer match for top authors would be unworkable here, where distances are so great. But doesn't it sound like fun?

POETRY BY BENNY ANDERSEN

TRANSLATIONS BY MICHAEL GOLDMAN



This photo of Michael Goldman, left, with Benny Andersen was taken in Humlebæk, Denmark by Jette Goldman, August 2012, on Benny's back patio.

Michael Goldman taught himself Danish over 25 years ago to help him win the heart of a lovely Danish girl—and they have been married ever since. Recently he has found another use for his love of language—to bring across the Atlantic another Danish treasure: the poetry of Benny Andersen. He lives in Florence, Mass.

Benny Andersen is the best-known and best-loved poet and lyricist in Denmark today. His works are renowned for their humor, expressionistic wordplay and colloquial depth. He has won a multitude of literary honors including the Danish National Arts Award for Lifetime Achievement. Now 83, he continues to write and to perform to sold-out audiences in Denmark.

Readers wishing to know more about how Michael Goldman began translating and more about Andersen and his work can watch the following two Youtube interviews:

2011 Interview: <http://youtu.be/qc4mKu10tto>

2012 Interview: http://youtu.be/CX7G8M_MBc4

Morgenbøn

Levende morgen
skil surt fra sødt
og inderst fra yderst,
lad lysets knive skrab bort
mit inderste sure hovmod,
at jeg kan frygte
når frygtens time slår,
at jeg kan høre
hvor jeg skal falde ind
når den store musik begynder.

Benny Andersen ©1960

Morning prayer

Living morning,
separate sour from sweet
and innermost from outermost,
let the knife of light scrape away
my innermost sour arrogance,
so I can be afraid
when the fearful hour tolls,
so I can hear
where I should step in
when the great music begins.

Yppelse

Før i tiden prøvede man at stifte fred
når nogen yppede kiv
det er man mere og mere gået bort fra
At stifte er for besværligt og tidsrøvende
at yppe er langt mere effektivt
Følg med tiden og de ypperste kanoner
yp fred
yp til med det samme
før nogen overhovedet tænker på
at komme op at yppes
yp først
med alle rådige midler
panservogne cykelkæder skærper smæk
I dag står kampen mellem yppere og stiftere
yp dem under bælttestedet
under fodsålerne
under alt
yp så det kan mærkes
til vi opnår en ypperlig verden
hvor ingen behøver at leve i frygt for nye stiftere.

Instigation

It used to be that people tried to negotiate peace
when someone instigated a quarrel
we have moved away from this more and more
To negotiate is too difficult and time consuming
to instigate is much more effective
Go with the times and the big shots
instigate peace
instigate it right away
before anyone even has a chance to think about
starting to instigate something
instigate first
with all available means
tanks bicycle chains intensifications slaps
Today the battle is between instigators and negotiators
instigate them below the belt
under the soles of their feet
under anything
instigate so they can feel it
until we achieve a greater world
where no one needs to live in fear of new negotiators.

By Benny Andersen ©1969 "Yppelse"

Reserveret

Jeg har set afbildninger.
De to kamre,
højre, venstre, for- og bag-,
en corona af arterier, vener, aorta
skønsomt klippet af a la gasslange
af pladshensyn.
Jeg har hørt og læst om hjerternes
møde/svulmen/afgrunde/forhærdelse
ganske kønt og interessant
men noget overspændt.
Selv har jeg kun firkantede erfaringer,
bor i en kasse,
har mad i en kasse,
penge i sparekassen,
lytter til radiokassen,
ser på TVkassen.
Mit hjerte er kasseformet.
Hjørnerne gir fæle sting.
Mit hjerte er en kasse,
muligvis en kiste,
denne banken holder mig vågen om
natten.
Muligvis en kiste.
Jeg tør ikke lukke op.

Reserved

I have seen depictions.
The two chambers,
right, left, front and back,
a corona of arteries, veins, aorta
judiciously cut off like a gas line
due to lack of room.
I have heard and read about the heart's
meeting/filling/bottom/hardening
very nice and interesting
but rather exaggerated.
Me, I have only square experiences
live in a box
have food in a box
valuables in a bank box
listen to a boom box
watch the idiot box.
My heart is box-shaped.
The corners give nasty stings.
My heart is a box,
maybe a casket,
this beating keeps me awake at night.
Maybe a casket.
I don't dare open up.

Lettere svimmel

Jeg har skyer og rutefly i øjnene
kirkeklokker i det ene øre
trafikpropper i det andet
næsen er fuld af hyben og hyld
jeg holder børnebørn i hænderne
forsøger at holde tungen lige i munden
for lige under mine fødder
er der en kæmpe stor jordklode
som roterer med rivende hast
ikke så sært
at jeg af og til blir lettere svimmel.

Benny Andersen ©2009

A little dizzy

I have clouds and airplanes in my eyes
church bells in the one ear
traffic jams in the other
my nose is filled with roses and elderflowers
I'm holding my grandchildren's hands
trying to keep my balance
because just under my feet
there's a gigantic globe
rotating at a furious pace
not so strange
that sometimes I get a little dizzy.

Sommeraften

To træer hvisker hvisker fortroligt sammen
bagest i haven
lange skyggefloder løber gennem græsset
men det varer længe
før solen går ned

Fra TV-antennen på taget
holder solsorten et glimrende foredrag
man behøver ikke være ekspert i solsortsk
for at fatte hvad det går ud på
nemlig at dagen i dag
har været endnu bedre end gårsdagen
men morgendagen vil simpelthen
slå alle rekorder

din hånd i min
og solen stråler af glæde
som et lille barn der har fået lov
til at være længere oppe.

Benny Andersen ©1993

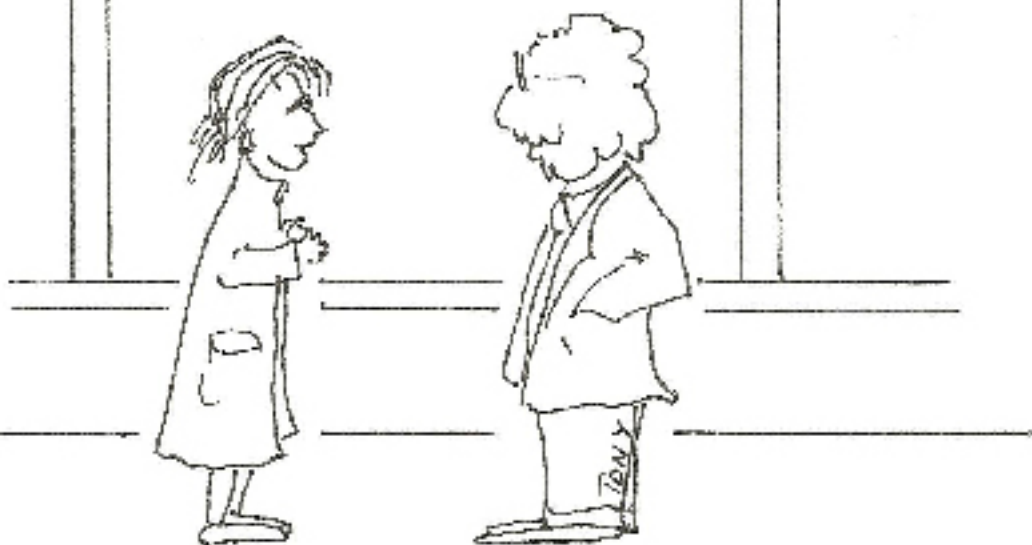
Summer Evening

Two trees whisper confidentially together
furthest back in the yard
long rivers of shadow run through the grass
but it will be long
before the sun goes down completely

From the TV antenna on the roof
the blackbird gives a brilliant lecture
you don't have to be an expert in blackbirdish
to get the gist of what it's about
namely that the day today
has been even better than yesterday
but tomorrow will simply
break all records

Your hand in mine
and the sun is radiant with joy
like a small child who has been allowed
to stay up longer.

BTW



"Lately I've caught myself fearing fear itself."

NEWS AND VIEWS



Traci Andrighetti
News and Views Editor

PROFILE: SILVIA ROTA SPERTI



Silvia Rota Sperti is a professional literary translator who works for Italy's most prestigious publishing houses. She started her translation career by travelling, earning a degree in Russian and English language and literature, and then putting her passion for language and culture into practice. To date, she has translated both classical and modern authors such as Oscar Wilde and D.H. Lawrence, Joyce Carol Oates, Ray Bradbury, Jack Kerouac, Larry McMurtry, Anna Funder, and Jonathan Coe. As a self-educated translator, she views herself as an artisan who will never stop learning.

Traci Andrighetti: How did you become a literary translator?

Silvia Rota Sperti: I became a literary translator because of my interest in foreign literature and music. I was finishing my university studies in Russian and English literature in England when I came across a novel by Nick Cave, *And the Ass Saw the Angel*. At the time, I didn't know exactly what I wanted to do for a living. Then I found out that this novel was still unpublished in Italy and, thanks to the advice of a librarian friend of mine, I approached a few Italian publishing houses with a sample translation of the first few pages of the book.

After a while, I got a telephone call from Mondadori, which is the biggest publishing house in Italy. I went to their office and got to know one of their editors who understood my passion for music and liked the way I wrote. The Cave novel was my first job as a professional translator: underpaid, very young, but, of course, very enthusiastic about it all.

The novel sold very well, and the editor at Mondadori gave me the opportunity to work on other texts: Ray Bradbury, Jack Kerouac, short stories published in *McSweeney's* [San Francisco literary journal], and others. In the meantime, other publishers began contacting me. My passion slowly became a real job, and since 2001 I have done nothing but work with books: translating them, editing them, scouting for them in England and Norway, reading, and advising publishers.

TA: You've translated many novels for Giunti, one of the oldest and most important publishing houses in Italy. Can you describe your professional relationship with them?

SRS: I started work with Giunti about three years ago. I knew Donatella Minuto, an editor who had just taken over the foreign literature section, and liked her taste and way of working very much: young, courageous, fresh.

One day Donatella approached me about translating a book for them. She was starting a "more literary" section in Giunti's catalogue, which I was really excited about. So I accepted, and since then I've been collaborating with them on similar books.

Generally speaking, for me a book must have "literary" depth, a style that teaches me something, and content that challenges my way of thinking. And so far, the editors at Giunti have asked me to translate authors who meet these standards. So, working with them has always been a pleasure and a way of growing as a literary translator.

TA: You are so fortunate to be able to work closely with specific editors and especially with such respected publishing companies! Are you only working with Giunti now?

SRS: Besides Giunti, I work a lot with Feltrinelli, Garzanti, and Il Saggiatore. It's important for me to deal with many different realities: it enhances my knowledge of the contemporary publishing world, new trends in literature, and the tastes of the Italian reading public, besides, of course, giving me wider opportunities to choose which works to approach. Part of my job consists of keeping connections and making new ones, dealing with different editors about literary trends and the like. Unfortunately, though, it's not a well-paying job in Italy. So, it's always best to give oneself as many options as possible.

TA: As a literary translator, what would you say are the main differences between working in Europe and working in the United States?

SRS: The literary translation situation in the United States is quite different from that in Italy (and in Europe, in general, with the exception of the United Kingdom). In the U.S., there is only a small, albeit increasing, number of books translated from other cultures—roughly five percent. The situation is similar in the U.K., and I think it is mainly because of the predominance of English and American authors in the publishing market, in terms not only of number but also of visibility.

Nowadays in Italy, about twenty percent of our books are translations. The market is more open toward Anglo-American novels and also books from countries like France, Germany and Asia. Indian writers are also very successful in Italy right now, and there is even some interest in Eastern European and Middle Eastern authors.

Of course (and unfortunately), what gets translated depends on the dictates of the market. In the publishing world, some cultures and languages prevail over others, so the media discuss them, and there are festivals and prizes that increase their visibility to the detriment of the lesser-known (but not less interesting or valuable) languages. That's why the literary translation is so different around the world, and why we have so many Anglo-American writers translated in Italy compared to the paltry number of Italian authors translated in the U.S. Generally speaking, it's like talking about Italian or French fashion: the culture dictates excellence, the market follows, and so everything tends to revolve around certain products rather than others.

Thus, on the one hand, Italian translators have a major advantage over others because their choice is wider and the volume of work is larger. This openness is stimulating and provides readers with cultural enrichment. On the other hand, in Italy we have a very small percentage of readers compared to that of northern Europe and the U.S., and the market of books is much smaller. Plus, even though working as a literary translator continues to be challenging and fascinating, it is difficult to earn a living at this profession in Italy, and there are few guarantees from employers. It's like being in an environment with a great potential (books translated from many other cultures) but not being able to fully take advantage of this opportunity. I guess the reality in the U.S. is quite the opposite.

TA: You've translated extensively from English into Italian, and yet you also have a degree in Russian. Have you published any literary translations from Russian?

SRS: I haven't translated any Russian books, except some texts and poems at university. Russian authors are still not very popular in Italy, and the publishing

world is more oriented toward other cultures nowadays. So, there are just a few Russian books in translation compared to the English and American ones. It's a pity, but I guess it has something to do with cultural differences and, in particular, the Western-centered market.

At the moment, I'm doing some scouting of Russian authors for Italian publishers, reading books, and researching new literary trends, but that's all.

TA: What is the favorite book you've translated, and why?

SRS: The favorite book I've translated so far is Jonathan Coe's *Like a Fiery Elephant*. It's a great story/biography about the life of B.S. Johnson, one of the greatest (and most extreme) authors of English avant-garde of the last century. Johnson is a very controversial, difficult and courageous character, and Coe is a master in rendering all the nuances of his life and genius. I was attracted by the format, a mixture of novel and biography, and of course by Coe's ability to build fascinating, perfectly structured plots. And I haven't been disappointed. Reading and translating Jonathan Coe is always a lesson in style and being able to master the magic of words with no pretentiousness and great, great taste is also a lesson in humility.

Although B.S. Johnson was quite unknown here in Italy, Feltrinelli took a chance on this book, and the great reviews it received have demonstrated, once again, that great authors like Coe can attract readers even if they write about uncommon, less "easy" subjects.

TA: If you could translate any book you wanted, which would you choose?

SRS: I've always wanted to translate authors who can teach me something in terms of style and plot. Joyce Carol Oates and Jonathan Coe have been two of my greatest masters: working on their novels has taught me a lot about translation because their writing is both very challenging and deeply satisfying.

At the moment, I dream of translating Don DeLillo's works and another Oates novel. The more controversial and difficult an author is, the more I find him or her worth my efforts. That's why I also love translating poetry. It's the greatest challenge of all because you have to find the perfect and most graceful synthesis for translating a thought, a feeling. And when you are able to do that, to catch that particular sensation in your own language, it's magical.☺

PROFILE: MARIAN SCHWARTZ

BY CATHARINE MINOIS

Catharine Minois is a freelance translator with a particular interest in grey literature and primary source material written in regional varieties of French and Italian. She also enjoys playing with words and admits a fondness for contrepèterie.



Marian Schwartz

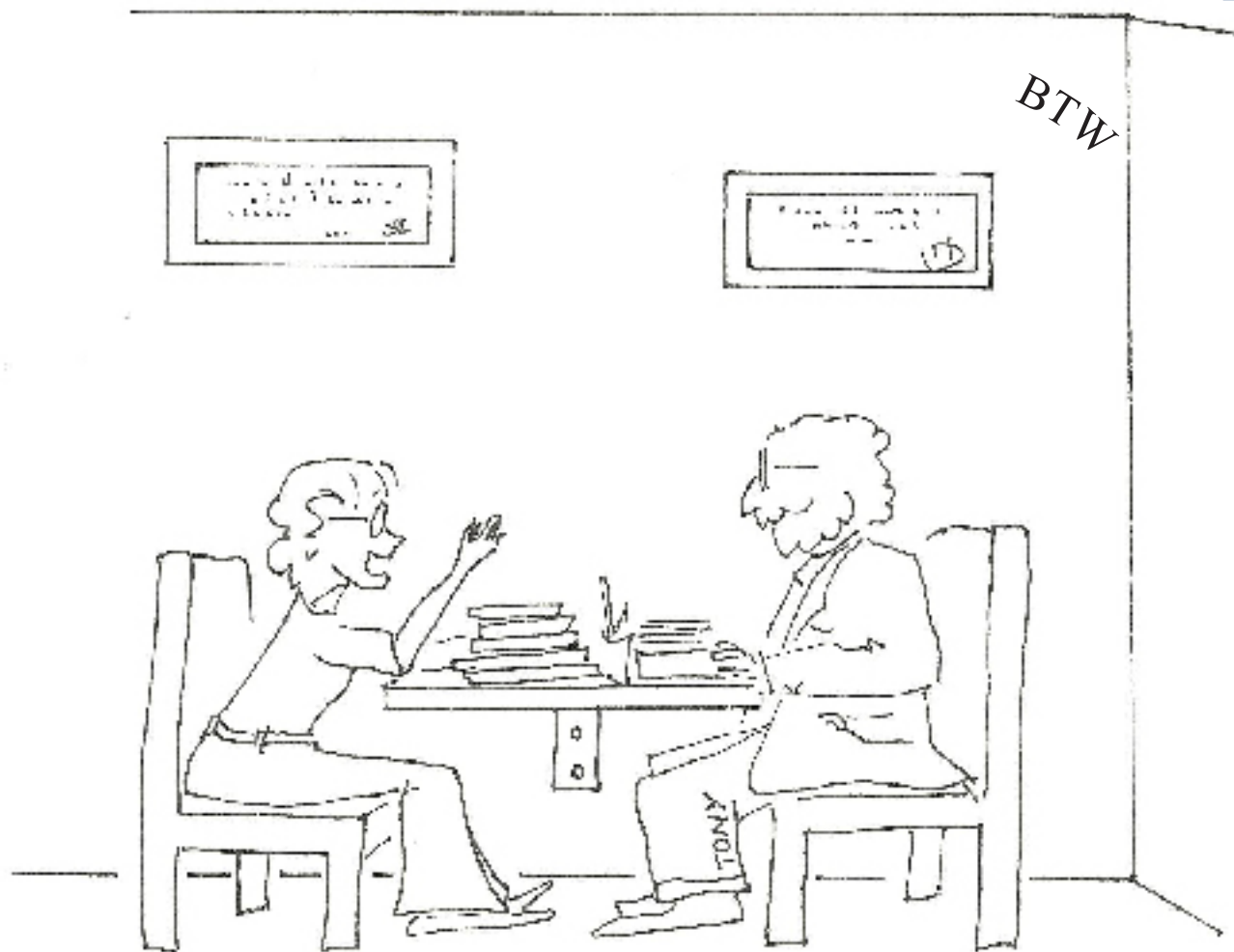
Though her work is not limited to literary endeavors, Marian Schwartz has served as the president of the American Literary Translators Association and is currently a member of the American Translators Association's Literary Division. She regularly translates various types of material such as historical documents and journal articles out of personal interest. The variety of texts, Marian explains, helps to expand her vocabulary and mastery of different styles of writing. These two elements play an important role in determining how she approaches two very different types of literary text: retranslations of canonical works and contemporary fiction.

Marian mentions that the starting point of much of her work, including her upcoming translation of Lev Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* (Yale University Press 2014), is Timothy Sergay's idea of retranslation as conversation. "A classic text has a different reader, a different level of scrutiny [than a contemporary text]," she states. "Subsequent translations [of a classic text] require that stylistic elements be considered, not just the story [whereas] in contemporary fiction, the natural pressure is to make the text more accessible because readers want a good novel." In both cases, however, esthetic elements remain critical to her work.

Marian's latest project, a translation of *High Society Dinners: Dining in Tsarist Russia*, takes her esthetic considerations in a new direction. Supported by the Prokhorov Foundation's Transcript Program, food studies scholar Darra Goldstein, editor of the English edition, collaborated with Marian to bring Yuri Lotman and Jelena Pogosjan's Russian book, based on the album of an illustrious family of politicians in nineteenth-century Russia, to an English-language audience. The text includes receipts, menus, newspaper clippings of the day, as well as some personal correspondence by family members. An introductory essay by the book's authors provides academic commentary and insight into the significance of the selection of both the food and the guests. Marian enjoyed the project in part because of the mysteries held in the historical documents. Was a particular dish base on lamb or mutton? Skeptical that the aristocracy would prefer mutton, she consulted with Goldstein who confirmed that, because of the popularity of strong, vinegary sauces, mutton was indeed an accurate translation. A far cry from the black-and-white original, this English language edition supports a full sensory immersion into the aristocratic circles of nineteenth-century Russia with illustrations from contemporary newspapers and color photographs of porcelain from the State Hermitage. *High Society Dinners: Dining in Tsarist Russia* is scheduled for publication in 2014.



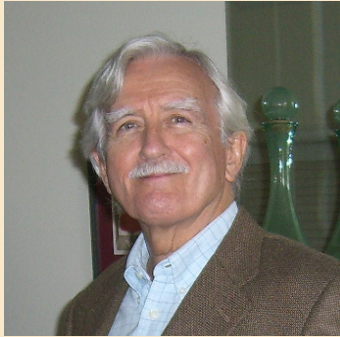
Catharine Minois



"Surely, as a translator, I'm entitled to claim a syntax deduction?"

BY THE WAY

BY TONY BECKWITH



THE UNIVERSITY OF LIFE

I was at a cocktail party last night when the conversation turned to the subject of college education. When it was my turn to talk I was able to say “Actually, I didn’t go to college” quite comfortably, with no trace of the old awkwardness or embarrassment. It wasn’t always this way.

When I finished high school my father wanted to send me to his (and his father’s) old school in England to get a university education. But I balked, and said that further academic study was of no interest to me because I wanted a career in advertising. My uncle was in advertising, you see, and he was my hero so my path was clear. My father said, “To me, the whole point of education is to learn how to think. I imagine if you can learn that from the University of Life you will probably do just fine.” And then, in his usual quiet way, he set about finding me a job at the Montevideo headquarters of the J. Walter Thompson Company. It was the smallest branch office of the largest international advertising agency in the world. I began as the office boy—which made me the lowliest employee in the global JWT hierarchy—and I reasoned that from there I could only go up. I was right.

JWT had an office in Uruguay to take care of international clients, but it was a very local affair that was actually run out of the much larger office just across the river in Buenos Aires, an hour away by plane. After I’d been there for a couple of years, during which time a string of local managers had proved unsuitable for one reason or another, the bosses in BA decided to try something different. By then I was the account executive and the latest manager’s right-hand-man. This hapless fellow was paralyzed by fear and a very domineering wife and never made a move without checking with his superiors. That showed that there was no real need for a manager as such after all, just someone to handle the clients and represent the agency. The handful of employees had been dealing with the bosses across the river for years

and knew exactly what they were supposed to do, so they didn't really need much in the way of supervision or direction. I was at the right place at the right time and, most importantly, I spoke English, so I became the token head of the branch office. I was a few months shy of my nineteenth birthday.

I resigned a year later because I wanted to go to England, the land of my forebears, which in those days I considered to be the epicenter of the world. I was told that I was mad to walk away from my promising career at the agency, but I knew I had to go and blithely assumed that I would find another job once I got to London. I sold my Vespa and traveled north through the Americas for a year, visiting friends and looking around, learning to think for myself. Icelandic Airlines had the cheapest fares across the Atlantic at the time, and one day I flew from New York to London. It was the mid-1960s and Britain was in a bad way. Nobody was hiring green account executives from the boonies that had dropped out and been on the road for a year. So I had to make do with waiting tables and a clerical sort of job in the ad department of a printing company. Things looked bleak and I began to understand why my forebears had left and gone to South America many years ago.

But one day my luck changed and I got a job at a multi-national advertising agency in Madrid. I was like a fish in water again, happy as a clam at high tide. It was a big agency, with international accounts, and once again I was hired largely on the strength of my ability to speak English. I had an office with French windows onto a balcony and a view of the snow-capped peaks of the Navacerrada mountain range where I went skiing whenever I could. I loved living in Spain, and stayed for three years. But then I was ready to move again and the next thing I knew I was in Australia. My traveling companion and I went bush for a while, wandering from town to town out in the country, doing odd jobs here and there. We were what the Australians call *jackaroos*. I saw parts of Australia I would never have seen if I'd gone straight to work in Sydney, and met people I would never have encountered in the city. It was, in a very real sense, like stepping through the looking glass into an unfamiliar dimension. There was a profoundly surreal quality about life in the outback that taught me to appreciate abstraction and the sense of inhabiting two separate realities at the same time. After a few months we packed it in and returned to the city, where I got a job at JWT again. In time I noticed that all my fellow executives had college degrees but had never been out of Australia, and discovered that this time I had not been hired for my ability to speak English but for my worldly experience. It was another great fit. I became an account director with an expense account and a company car, and

I spent five great years with the firm. Until, one day, I dropped out and went to Mexico.

Life in the lovely colonial town of San Miguel de Allende, in northern Mexico, once again made me feel as though I had stepped into a different dimension—in this case one that was far removed from modern city life. It was here that I discovered translation when I joined a group of literary-minded expats at weekly rooftop gatherings. I had always liked to write, and had always written, and although as an Anglo-Argentine-Uruguayan I had inevitably been a *de facto* translator, I had never considered it as a profession. I certainly enjoyed it, and vaguely thought: “Who knows? Maybe one day.” Many months passed at a leisurely pace and then it was time to replenish funds so I came to the United States and worked as a cook on an offshore oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico. I had learned a little cooking along the way, and after some hands-on kitchen training I spent a wonderful year living on a small metal island out of sight of land, in the company of about twenty-five roughnecks and roustabouts from the Deep South. In the meantime my wages were piling up in a bank in Houston. I think of that experience as my ‘Foreign Legion’ period.

In 1980 I came to Austin, Texas for the weekend and am still here. I fell in love with the place and never wanted to leave. So I stayed and got into the restaurant business. Managing a restaurant is a complex process that requires an eclectic range of skills. My advertising experience stood me in good stead, since a waiter is essentially an account executive and the kitchen is the creative department. My stint on the oil rig, where supplies were delivered once a week, taught me about taking inventory and planning carefully and not running out of things when they were most needed. And my checkered background had exposed me to many different types of people, which helped in dealing with staff and customers. My restaurant period lasted about a decade, by which time I was tired of dealing with employees and payroll and long hours on my feet, and wanted to do something different, something that was just me. I remembered my brief fling with translation all those years ago, and wondered whether it might become my third career. One thing led to another and one day I threw my hat into the ring and became a freelance translator.

At that stage it had been about thirty-five years since I had turned down my father’s offer to send me to university, and never once had it been an issue of any kind. None of the positions I had held or the jobs I had done required anything

more than a high school diploma, so my lack of college credentials had never come up. But now, as I started moving in translation circles I realized that I was virtually the only one with no college background at all. This awoke in me a state of anxiety I had not experienced since I was a teenager whose parents would not let him wear long pants until he was fourteen. It was of some, but not much, consolation to learn that passing the ATA certification exam indicated that I was functioning at the intellectual level of a college graduate. I actually had few doubts about the skills I already possessed, but fell victim to a nagging sense of inadequacy when I contemplated my total ignorance of the academic world. It suddenly seemed that there were so many things I had never thought about, a venerable structure and discipline I had never experienced, and so many books I had never read. Not that all translation is of an exclusively academic nature, of course, not at all. But the kind I was interested in—literary translation—seemed to be dominated by academics with a lifetime of literary experience and letters after their names. And the wider world of technical and commercial translation was populated by college graduates with business degrees or engineering degrees or legal degrees. I confess to feeling somewhat intimidated, and it made me think long and hard about some of the choices I had made. In those circles the subject of one's college education came up quite often, and I sometimes pretended I hadn't heard the question, or sidestepped it with some vague segue to something else. Though no one ever gave me any reason to feel this way, I was embarrassed to admit that I had not gone to college. I knew I was being silly but it made me feel inferior and that was all there was to it. It did not, however, seem to impair my translating skills.

Over the years, like many others in the field, I translated a typically varied assortment of birth certificates and college transcripts, brochures and posters, newsletters and manuals, video scripts and documentaries, poems, tangos, and novels. Time went by and I drifted into a niche translating art books and catalogues. It happened as most projects of this kind do, with a referral and a project that leads to another project that eventually leads to a book. Art catalogues usually include essays by curators and art historians, theoreticians and critics—people with university degrees and letters after their names. There are biographical statements about the artist that often have technical and aesthetic descriptions of the work involved. There are reviews that explore paintings or sculptures and discuss their nuances in highly contextual and critical terms. These documents can contain subtleties of meaning that flutter through the words like butterfly wings. They can express abstract, theoretical ideas that exist in a dimension of their own. And where the words go, the translator must follow.

As with any other form of translation, I read the original text and decide what research I need. As the research progresses, I work with the text to understand the rhythm and get a feel for the narrative flow. I think about what the author is saying, studying the words through an analytical lens that has been polished by the survival skills a lifetime can teach. Once I am ready to write the new version I summon up the surreal sense of duality I experienced in the Australian outback, on an offshore oil rig, and in the mountains of Mexico and approach the text from there. During this process I feel detached from any intellectual structure or discipline of any kind. I feel that I am floating free, communing with the words on a purely intuitive level, looking for meanings I can picture and feelings I can capture. I flow back and forth between the source and the target languages, building the translation word by word, and imagine how pleased my father would be to know that I am a graduate of the University of Life.