SOURCE

Photo taken in Joshua Tree National Park by Mercedes Guhl

ATA'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE PALM SPRINGS 2019

FEATURING

REVIEWS OF ATA PRESENTATIONS BY:

- **Ann Goldstein, Distinguished Speaker for the Literary and Italian Language Divisions**
- **Ruth Martin, German Language Division Distinguished Speaker**
- **Martha Kosir**
- **Nanette McGuinness and Mercedes Guhl**
- **Shelley Fairweather-Vega**
- **Jost Zetzsche**
- **Sarah Stickney and Diana Thow**

Tony Beckwith: Toons
Dan Aynesworth: The Meaning of "Is"

L
LITERARY DIVISION

ata
American Translators Association
The Voice of Interpreters and Translators

IN THIS ISSUE

From the Editors

Michele Aynesworth
Editor-in-Chief

Patrick Saari
Associate Editor

Mercedes Guhl
Associate Editor

This spring issue of *Source*, which brings together coverage for what is traditionally the winter issue, provides reviews of Literary Division presentations at last year's ATA conference in Palm Springs, California.

On this occasion, Editor-in-Chief Michele Aynesworth has reviewed three of the LD sessions that she attended. First, the one by Ann Goldstein, chosen by both the Literary and Italian Language Divisions to be their Distinguished Speaker and to speak about her many years of experience translating into English the beloved Italian authors Elena Ferrante and Primo Levi.

Her second review focuses on the session "Kapow! Graphic Novels Deconstructed for Translators" given by our editor Mercedes Guhl and frequent contributor to *Source,* Nanette McGuinness, both translators of literature for children and young adults. They highlight the intricacies and specificities of working on graphic novels. As for her third review, Michele writes about the presentation by frequent ATA speaker Jost Zetzsche, German-American translator and expert in technical solutions for the translation industry, about his project Translation Insights and Perspectives (TIPS). This project translates words, phrases, and passages from the Christian Bible into hundreds of languages and then back translates them into English.

In turn, Mercedes Guhl and Nanette McGuinness have reviewed together the two presentations by German Language Division Distinguished Speaker Ruth Martin, an experienced freelance literary and academic translator. Ruth Martin's first presentation is on "Building and Maintaining a Healthy Professional Network" and the other focuses on "Moving Sideways: Breaking into Book Translation and Working with Publishers." Mercedes and Nanette have also worked together to review Shelley Fairweather-Vega's presentation on "Decolonizing Central Asia Through Translation."

As for Shelley Fairweather-Vega, she has contributed to this issue by reviewing two of the presentations she attended. One is on "Understanding and Translating Humor" by Martha Kosir, who uses her translation of Slovenian author Josip Osti's novel *The Spirits of Heinrich Böll's House* to disentangle the difficulties of transmitting humor from one culture to another. The other is on the presentation "Reframing Accuracy in Poetry" by Sarah Stickney and Diana Thow, who examine fidelity in translation, specifically focusing on their collaboration to translate Italian poet Elisa Biagini.

Finally, in the Words, Words, Words column Donald Aynesworth gives a succinct overview of the pre-Socratic Greek philosopher Parmenides by focusing on the Ancient Greek word *estin* (to be).

Source editors look forward to contributions from readers on indigenous languages and cultures for this year's summer issue.

ABOUT THE EDITORS

Michele Aynesworth specializes in translating Argentine and French authors. E-mail: mmaynesworth@gmail.com

Patrick Saari, born in Pasadena, California, now living in Quito, Ecuador, writes, translates, and interprets in English, French, and Spanish. Email: patricksaari@netlife.ec

Mercedes Guhl translates English into Spanish for publishing houses in Mexico. She specializes in children's and young adult fiction and graphic novels. Email: mercedesguhl@gmail.com

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 SUMMER 2020 ISSUE:

- As 2019 was the International Year of Indigenous Languages, for our summer issue we are looking for articles focusing on the languages and cultures of the world's indigenous, aboriginal, native, and first peoples. Contributors are asked to follow the format guidelines below.

- **Submission deadline for the Summer issue:**
  ### 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 **mmaynesworth@gmail.com**

LETTER FROM THE LD ADMINISTRATOR

Dear LitDiv members,

As a former LD Administrator (2013-2015), I am glad to be back in the saddle, with Michele Rosen, our Assistant Administrator. One of our administration's endeavors will focus on connecting professional translators with the book industry, so that both parties can establish closer ties, learn more about each other, and work harmoniously.

With full support from Paula Arturo and Amanda Williams, our preceding division officers, we started working on the questionnaire for a survey we had decided to conduct as Leadership Council members. Our intention was to secure a clearer profile of division members. The survey was launched in November 2019, and about 200 people, accounting for about 10% of all division members, answered the survey. The results will be published on the division's webpage and will be announced to the LD membership.

After ATA's very interesting conference in Palm Springs last year, which is being reviewed in this issue of *Source,* we started the year by getting ready for ATA's 61st Annual Conference, to be held in Boston on October 21-24. We look forward to a good number of sessions on literary translation and the book industry. We are also planning new additions to the division's activities. Stay tuned for news about our distinguished speaker and the After Hours Café! Our next project has to do with one of the problems of emerging literary translators: isolation. We plan to compile a list of groups, collectives, and circles of literary translators who meet to chat, share, and work together all over the country and make it available to division members interested in contacting more colleagues.

If you'd like to get more involved with the division, contact me or Michele Rosen. Working together for the division is another way to combat isolation.

Best,
Mercedes

Mercedes Guhl *translates English into Spanish for publishing houses in Mexico. She specializes in children's and young adult fiction and graphic novels.*

Michele Rosen *is an editor, translator, and former communications professor. 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.*

Literary Division Administrator: Mercedes Guhl**,** mercedesguhl@gmail.com
Assistant Administrator: Michele Rosen, michele.rosen@gmail.com

Ann Goldstein on
THE ART AND CRAFT OF TRANSLATION

Ann Goldstein *began her career working for* Esquire *magazine, then switched to* The New Yorker*, where she became head of the Copy Department. Along with a few colleagues, she began studying Italian, ultimately tried her hand at translation, and is now celebrated as a translator of Italian authors Elena Ferrante and Primo Levi.*

Ann Goldstein began her presentation as Distinguished Speaker for the Literary and Italian Language Divisions by telling us how she got started doing translations: she came through a side door to simply doing it as an exercise to improve her Italian.

Her method of translating, she said, is to do a first draft with some alternatives, but trying to stay close to the original text. In her second draft, she focuses on solving larger issues of meaning and sense. Printouts and synonym dictionaries are favorite tools.

As for challenges, Ms. Goldstein bemoaned the fact that the structure of English is less flexible than that of Italian. This is owing to the conjugation of verbs, the agreement of adjectives, the gender of nouns, etc. Though the subject in Italian need not be expressed, the translator must supply one, even if it is not clear who the subject is.

Italian can get by with several "-issimo"s, while in English the repetition of "very" quickly becomes cloying. Italian suffixes allow for concision and a more interesting vocabulary: *stradona* = big street, *stradina* = small street.

Allusions, of course, are always a challenge. Although Ms. Goldstein tries to avoid footnotes, she pointed out that geographical, cultural, or historical references sometimes require one, as when Primo Levi makes an allusion to Dante.

Translating Elena Ferrante—the translation work that made them both famous—Ms. Goldstein had to convey the important distinction in the author's novels between dialect, the language spoken at home, and Italian, the language one learns in school. When translating dialect, Ms. Goldstein said she had to choose between saying "They said in dialect" or resorting to American slang and colloquial language.

Ms. Goldstein's presentation was very well received, as was her later interview.

—Reviewed by Michele Aynesworth
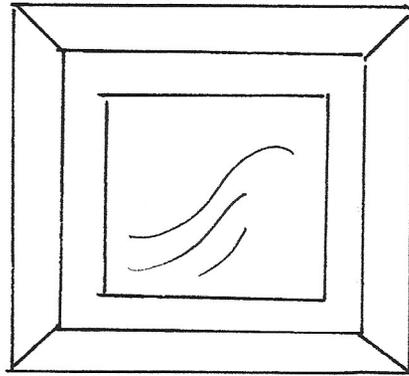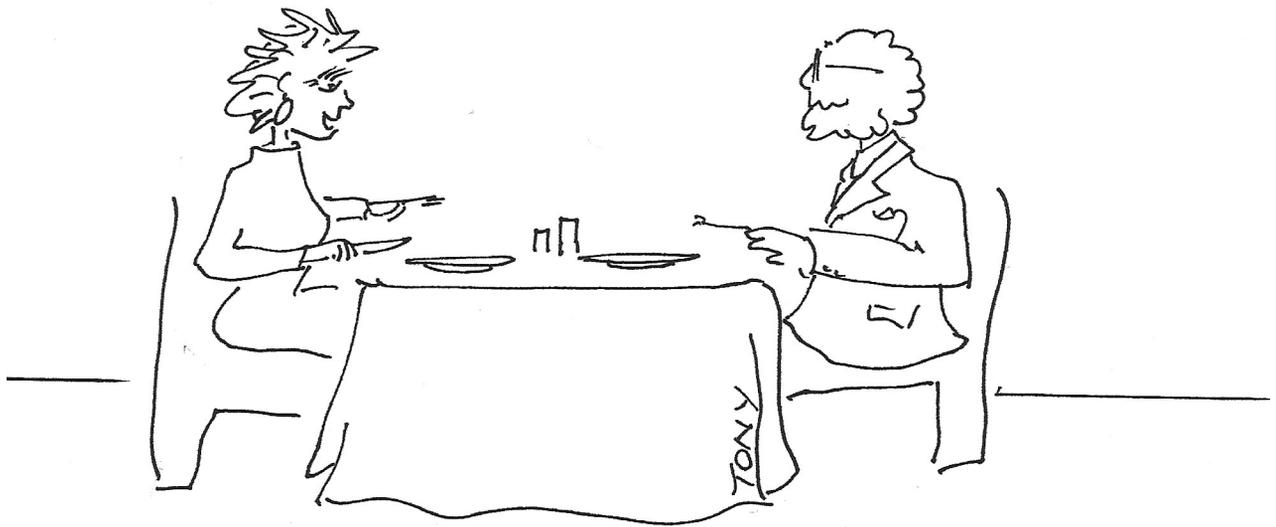
"When all is said and done, what are we going to say and do?"

WISE WORDS FROM RUTH MARTIN

(German Language Division Distinguished Speaker)
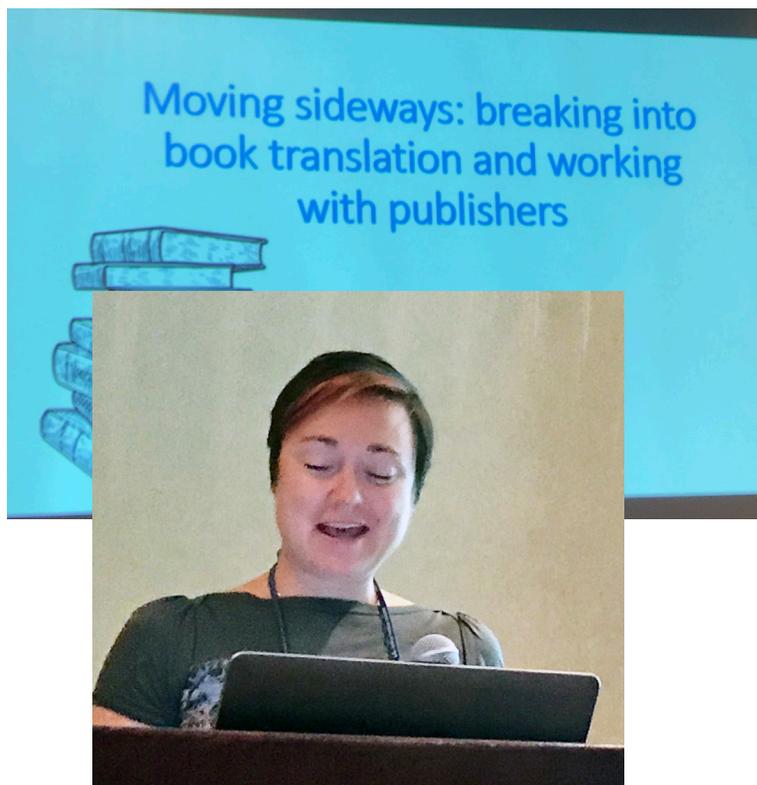
Ruth Martin

In her own words, Ruth Martin is a "freelance literary and academic translator… with a broad experience of working with publishers in the UK, US and German-speaking countries," as well as the co-chair of the UK's Translators Association and helps run the Emerging Translators Network (ETN). Her accomplishments and credentials made her the perfect choice to present a matching pair of sessions as the German Language Division's Distinguished Speaker at ATA60 in Palm Springs. The two sessions—entitled "Building and Maintaining a Healthy Professional Network" and "Moving Sideways: Breaking into Book Translation and Working with Publishers"—were chock-full of useful information on translating books for experienced and beginning literary* translators alike.

Martin presented her first session on Friday; she included a condensed, two-slide précis of it in her second presentation, on Saturday morning. Both sessions dealt with wandering down what is, for most ATA professionals, the "road less traveled," with the first session examining how to prepare for such a side trip from a more traditional commercial translator's path, and the second looking at how to establish a network to be able to pursue this different path. Because the descriptive titles involved are long, we shall refer to the two presentations as Session I and Session II.

In Session I, Martin used images and graphs to show the web-like complexity of a book translator's potential client network. Her main point? In the book industry, a translator's client network is not "merely" a two-way relationship between clients and translators, but rather a many-sided 3D shape, as clients can come from many different sectors: publishers, authors, magazines, cultural organizations, etc. Clients' roles and relationships to a literary translator may even change over time. Hence, even though, at first blush, the title of Session I may have seemed like a ho-hum reprise on an oft-mined topic for those many jaded attendees who have been subjected to the deafening roar of tips and recommendations on how to promote and market their translation services, regardless of their field of specialization (blah, blah, blah, *ad nauseam*, rinse and repeat), Martin's presentation was anything but.

Martin's first session made it clear that, although an aspiring book translator can and should try to catch the brass ring of translating whole books, there are myriads of smaller-scale translation projects in the book industry that can keep income flowing steadily while also establishing the translator's bona fides and making connections for future book translations. Such projects include: author samples—whether commissioned by an author or by a publisher looking to sell rights to foreign publishers; interpreting for a touring author; working for a publishing house press/media division; translating reviews, praise, and other promotional and marketing materials, etc. She pointed out that the relationships a translator builds with other translators, professional associations and cultural organizations can also boost one's name and give others a boost along the way, too.

Why should you try to do this? Making your name and worth known in more than one way can help you, as a translator, to navigate the choppy waters of book translation more smoothly.

Although such networking may look like a difficult juggling act, Martin showed that, rather than creating a desperate juggling act of pins that threaten to crash down on the beleaguered book translator's head at any moment, these many different projects are an important part of a book translator's safety net. In other words, sexy book projects come and go at the publishing market's whims, whereas the smaller-in-scale-but-still-interesting projects will keep a literary translator's

lights on during the inevitable lulls.

What **were** Martin's tips for building a sturdy network? She favored the old-fashioned, face-to-face approach: attending book-related events to meet authors and publishers, and translation events to get to know other translators. She suggested asking open-ended questions, being memorable in a positive way, and then following up afterwards. She also examined how you can expand your network online, using virtual forums and groups, social media, emailing queries to publishers in their own language about future translation possibilities, and sending sample translations to literary agents, especially because translating catalogs for book fairs can be another good source of regular work. She highlighted the importance of doing your homework: rather than sending materials out willy-nilly to every possible publisher and agent, it is far more rewarding to take the time to learn about publishing houses, their authors and specific books. Moreover, understanding how cultural organizations and institutes work and how they can be useful to a translator is crucial.

Moving from present to future, Martin then talked about the importance of maintaining your professional network after it's built. Her suggestions were both intuitive and logical: follow up on the people you meet, stay in touch, and keep an online presence. To these common strategies, she added something new to consolidate your network: giving back by supporting publishers and volunteering for associations. Form translator collectives, collaborate, co-work, answer a query, and/or be available for a chat. Contacting colleagues pays off in the long run as it makes a tangible difference for your own work, as well as for that of other translators.

The last slide in Session I summed things up neatly: "Add me to your network."

Martin's Session II was itself a two-parter. She began by painting a picture of who book translators are, based on a fascinating survey conducted by the Emerging Translators Network (ETN), of which she is a founder. According to the survey, despite strong qualifications, only one-third of ETN members work as full-time translators; the remaining two-thirds combine translation with other occupations, ranging from teaching and book trade to completely unrelated jobs, such as bicycle mechanic, artist's model, musician, lawyer… the possibilities are endless, of course.** Many ETN members also reported doing commercial translation, and as part of the survey they shared their thoughts about this: the pros and cons of the two activities; the balancing act that doing both entails; the personal satisfaction gained from having a book translation

published; and the value of commercial translation as an apprenticeship for later undertaking anything literary.

Having established a general description of literary translators, Martin then zeroed in on how a translator should build a profile, an artist's portfolio as it were, and in so doing, building a network. Social media and online presence play a huge role in this, naturally, as does connecting with fellow translators and future colleagues. (Kudos, therefore, to all book translators who attended ATA60!) A hopeful book translator can and should submit translations to literary journals as a way of building a profile; doing paid sample translations for publishers to help them promote their books to literary agents and foreign rights directors is another way.

For the second part of Session II, Martin focused on how book translators should ideally work with publishers, covering two primary topics: contracts and the editorial process. Addressing the arcane world of contracts, she enumerated the many aspects of a translation agreement that are negotiable and showed attendees the PEN America model contract. Martin also provided an interesting and counter-intuitive takeaway from her discussion of contracts: a book translator's participation in the final stage of their book's early life—collaborating with the publisher for its promotion—is both optional and can be handled via the contract. Possibilities should be discussed, as not all translators are willing to take part, nor do all like to be out there in close touch with readers.

Moving to the editorial process, Martin gave a fascinating glimpse of red pens in constant motion as different editorial eyes pore over a text. She made it clear that the chrysalis of a translator's raw text undergoes numerous changes—transmogrifications, even!—before emerging butterfly-like as a newly printed book. As part of the butterfly-book's emergence from its cocoon, it is important to understand that translators ideally interact with numerous people, copyeditors, production editors, proofreaders, etc., and that dealing with suggested edits is important in a book translator's work flow and should be included in planning the time a book will take, as a book translator rarely just turns in the translation and walks away into the glowing sunset, every word approved.

In sum, Martin's two rewarding presentations were filled with insight and knowledge for commercial translators curious about moving sideways into the field of literary translation, as well as for published practitioners and tyros.

*NB: In this review, we shall use the terms book and literary translator interchangeably.
**Admittedly, given the title of the network (emerging), this is to be expected, but among network members are a number of well-established book translators, including one of this review's co-authors.

—*Reviewed by Nanette McGuinness and Mercedes Guhl*

"He found that the grass is indeed greener on the other side,
but he still has to mow it."

ON UNDERSTANDING AND TRANSLATING HUMOR:
The Spirits of Heinrich Böll's House
Presenter: Martha Kosir (Gannon University)

Martha Kosir is *Professor of Spanish at Gannon University. She translates poetry from English to Spanish and from German and Slovenian to Spanish and English. Her translations have been published in the literary magazine* Sirena: Poetry, Art and Criticism, *the journal* Contemporary Slovenian Poetry, The International Poetry Review, The Drunken Boat, Solstice, SlavFile, *and* Source . *She is also the poetry editor for* SlavFile. *In addition to literary translation, her interests focus on translation theory, philosophy of language, and foreign language pedagogy.*

ATA annual conferences offer a wide array of general sessions on the art and business of translation broadly applicable to translators in various fields and various stages of their careers. Often the sessions focus on a particular industry sector or a particular language. In rare cases—in the types of sessions that are my personal favorites—we are treated to a close look at one translator's take on one specific text. As much as I relish that kind of session, it seems that at ATA conferences the more specific the topic, the smaller the audience. Such was the case with Martha Kosir's presentation on her translations of stories by Josip Osti (but only at first!).

Osti is a prolific and prizewinning Bosnian-Slovenian poet, novelist, essayist, and critic. Kosir's presentation focused on his "kaleidoscopic novel" *Duhovi hiše Heinricha Bölla* (*The Spirits of Heinrich Böll's House*), specifically on how to convey Osti's humor in English translation. Kosir recounted that she was afraid her translations of Osti's many jokes and humorous anecdotes were falling flat in English, and she wanted to find out why.

Before delving into the specifics of her translations, Kosir led a more academic discussion on humor theory (sources for further reading are listed in the box below). In order to effectively translate humor, we need to have an understanding of what, exactly, humor is. What makes a joke funny? Kosir provided an overview of several social theories of humor, which seem to revolve around four aspects:

1. Humor as a form of play, a shared social experience.
2. Humor as a tool for fostering socialization or reinforcing social hierarchies, based on in-group, out-group experiences.
3. Humor as a result of the possession of "knowledge resources" that help informed audiences (but not unknowledgeable audiences) identify a situation as comical.
4. Humor as deviation from a set of accepted cognitive rules, or a surprise.

These definitions help to explain what can be so difficult about translating humor. Translation is not just the transfer of a text from one language to another, but also a move between cultures: this cultural dislocation lifts a joke out of its comfortable environment and places it into a cultural milieu that relies on a different set of shared experiences, cognitive rules, and knowledge resources. In the process, there is a genuine risk that everything that makes a joke funny in one culture will be lost in the new culture (and language).

The complications multiply when the funny part of a source text specifically involves language itself. A source text that is funny because it pokes fun at someone's accent or dialect may be impossible to translate with the joke intact, because that accent or dialect is specific to the original language and *only* the original language. Puns are another obvious example of jokes that rely so heavily on their native language that they are unlikely to survive in any other tongue. This is one place in which the "in-group" nature of humor comes into play—only those who are "in" on the original culture will also feel "in" on the joke, both before and after translation.

None of this is to say that humor is actually untranslatable. Instead, translators have a few options to consider when encountering difficult-to-translate humor in a source text. Sometimes a joke or pun that won't work in translation can be replaced by a different, but similar, joke or pun in the new language, either in the same place in the text or a different place, so that at least the quantity of jokes remains unchanged. Other times, wordplay can be replaced in translation with a different kind of idiomatic expression, one that will strike readers of the target text as similarly amusing or lighthearted. In certain instances, the humor can even be ignored (though this reviewer, personally, thinks that is rather a dangerous idea).

Sometimes the best option is not to translate specific punch lines, but just the idea that this is a funny text. One theorist, cited in Chiaro (see below), insists that "what's important is that [the target text] works. In the case of humor, as long as recipients recognize the text as being non-serious in scope, then its ... purpose has been achieved."

In many instances, however, a joke translates quite nicely from the source culture to the target culture, even functioning the same way linguistically. Kosir provided one example:

| Preden je Mirko Kovač iz Zagreba, v katerem je v sedemdesetih preživel nekaj let, vrnil v Beograd, ga je novinar vprašal: "Ali ste vi, gospod Kovač, Srb ali Hrvat?" Odgovoril je: "Sem!"	During the 1970s, Mirko Kovač spent a couple of years living in Zagreb. Before he moved back to Belgrade, a journalist posed the following question to him: "Mr. Kovač, are you Serbian or Croatian?" He responded, "I am!"

Here, the Slovenian and the English happily provide the same linguistic apparatus for making the punchline work: in both languages, a speaker can surprise a listener by answering an either-or question with "Yes!" or something similar, thereby dashing expectations (in a funny way) that the speaker will commit to one option or the other.

Kosir also provided examples, however, in which the translator does not have such an easy time. Many of these involve specific cultural knowledge that target-text readers would be unlikely to have (the way schoolwork is graded in the source culture, what a source-language speaker means by "dressed like an American," and more). For these examples, Kosir provided her English translation, and led the audience in a discussion of what worked and didn't work, and why. There was also time to brainstorm additional solutions to those translation puzzles, with enthusiastic participation from session attendees. By that point in Kosir's talk, the audience had probably quadrupled in size, making the discussion all the livelier, and more fruitful, too.

Theoretical sources for further reading:

☐ Chiaro, Delia. "Humor and Translation." *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Humor*. Routledge, (2017): 414-429.

☐ Vandaele, Jeroen. "Humor in Translation." *Handbook of Translation Studies 1* (2010): 147-152.

☐ Zabalbeascoa, Patrick. *"Humor and translation—an interdiscipline."* (2005): 185-207.

—*Reviewed by Shelley Fairweather-Vega*
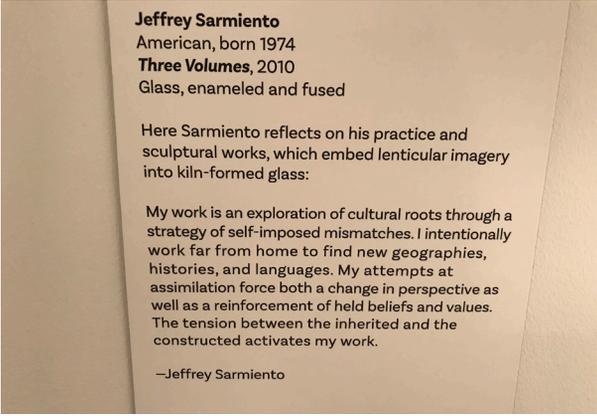
Jeffrey Sarmiento, "Three Volumes", photos taken at the Palm Springs Art Museum
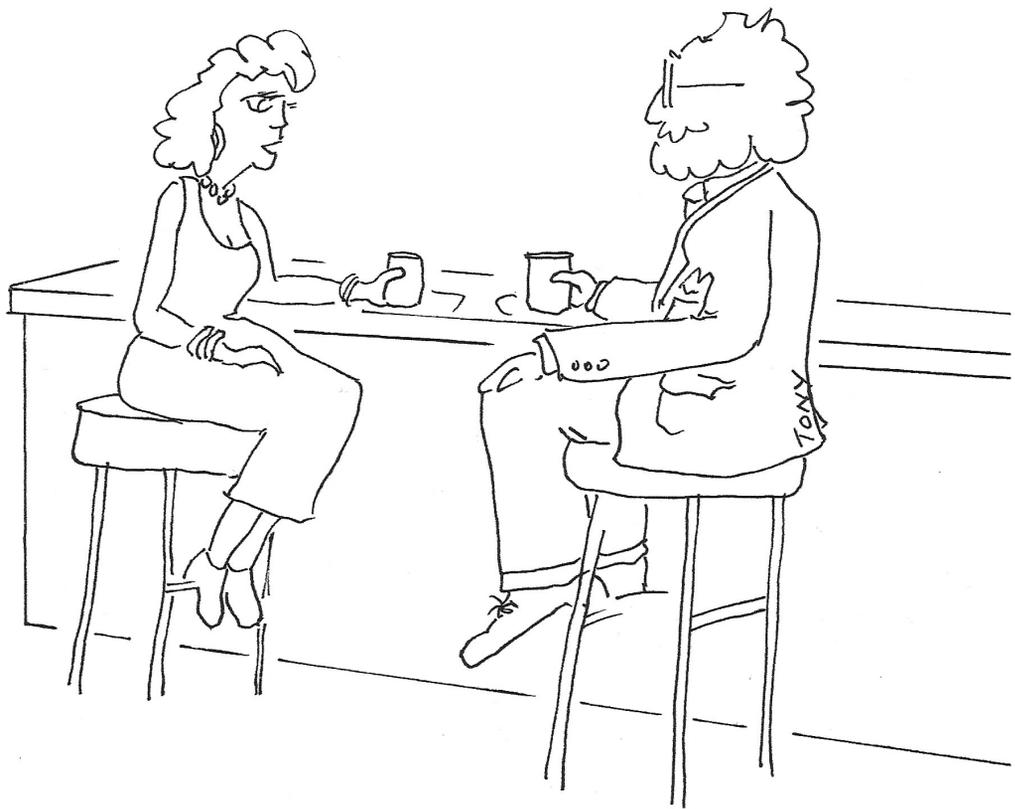
"*Please listen carefully, as some of my menu options have changed.*"

KAPOW! GRAPHIC NOVELS DECONSTRUCTED FOR TRANSLATORS

Presenters: Mercedes Guhl and Nanette McGuinness

Award-winning opera singer **Nanette McGuinness** *is the translator of over 50 books and graphic novels for children and adults from French, Italian, and German into English, including the well-known Geronimo Stilton Graphic Novels. Two of her latest translations,* California Dreamin': Cass Elliot Before the Mamas & the Papas *and* Luisa: Now and Then *were chosen for the YALSA's Great Graphic Novels for Teens. Her most recent translations are* Who Killed Kenny *(NBM Publishing, 2019) and* The Sisters, vol 5: M.Y.O.B *(Papercutz, 2019). She blogs monthly for the Global Literature in Libraries Initiative›s #WorldKidLitWednesdays.*

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 eighty published translations, she has also gone into teaching, training translators at the undergraduate and graduate levels in Colombia and Mexico.*

In their excellent and well-attended presentation, Mercedes Guhl and Nanette McGuinness tossed the ball easily back and forth as they went through the basics of translating graphic novels. The two translators, with over fifty graphic book translations between them, wanted to familiarize us with terms and techniques so that those wishing to enter this hot publishing market would not sound like newbies.

We were introduced to some colorful terms used to refer to aspects of a graphic layout: SFX (sound effects), gutter (the space between boxes), and captions (for narration), not to mention whiskers, balloons, and tails.

A couple of potential challenges they mentioned are dealing with low-resolution pdfs and short, tight deadlines. We learned not to be shy about asking for help in these cases, but always early, not as deadlines approach.

On the plus side, it was pointed out that a great deal of creativity is involved, given the frequency of onomatopoeia (kapow!), slang, jokes, puns, and rhymes, curses and interjections that need to be adapted and localized. And since most text in graphic novels is speech, the translator must have an ear for voice.

Mercedes illustrated her use of Word templates to key translations to the source text using corresponding identifiers. An example:

48.1.1   indicates: Page, What, Panel

Both Nanette and Mercedes showed their use of templates (Word, in most cases, but Excel sometimes as in manga) to key their translation to the source text, including page number, panel and caption or balloon for each line of text.

Another challenge of translating graphic novels is fitting the text into the same space on a page. Translating from Spanish to English usually requires condensing the text by such maneuvers as leaving out fillers and creative rewording. To match the space, Nanette goes so far as to count words, characters, and lines. Mercedes, translating from English to Spanish, just types her translation into Spanish and compares it to typed text from the source. In any case, we were assured that publishers can resize text bubbles if necessary.

In addition to the novel itself, there is often considerable front and back matter to translate, including dedications, maps, glossaries, bios, and jacket blurbs.

Compensation, finally, is usually a flat fee or fee per page (to balance the inconsistent number of words per page).

I enjoyed watching Nanette and Mercedes switch off so smoothly, resulting in an entertaining and coherent presentation complete with slide illustrations. They kept our attention and left us with a clear idea of what translators of graphic novels do and how they go about it.

—*Reviewed by Michele Aynesworth*

Handout for Kapow! Graphic Novels Deconstructed
(for Translators)
©Nanette McGuinness and Mercedes Guhl

Resource List

A Few Online Resources on Terms and Types:
http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson1102/terms.pdf
https://www.thinkib.net/englishalanglit/page/13891/graphic-novel
https://gettinggraphic.weebly.com/vocabulary.html
https://sites.google.com/site/graphicnovelclassroom/vocabulary
https://sdmoss23.weebly.com/types-of-graphic-novels.html

<u>Online Talks on Graphic Novels:</u>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qAyEbgSPi9w
https://www.ted.com/talks/scott_mccloud_on_comics?language=en
https://global.oup.com/us/companion.websites/9780199380046/res/tex/
     (a list of videos)

<u>Selected Books on Creating and/or Understanding Graphic Novels:</u>
Jessica Abel and Matt Madden, *Drawing Words and Writing Pictures: Making Comics: Manga, Graphic Novels, and Beyond* (First Second Books, 2008)
  Brian Michael Bendis, *Words for Pictures: The Art and Business of Writing Comics and Graphic Novels* (Watson-Guptill, 2014)
J.P. Coover, *Maker Comics: Draw a Comic* (First Second Books, upcoming 10/22, 2019)
Will Eisner:
    Will Eisner Instructional Books, particularly,
    Graphic Storytelling and Visual Narrative (W.W. Norton, 2008)
     Comics and Sequential Art: Principles and Practices from the Legendary Cartoonist (W.W. Norton, 2008)
Paul Gravatt, *Graphic Novels: Everything You Need to Know* (Harper Design, 2005)
Scott McCloud:
    Making Comics: Storytelling Secrets of Comics, Manga and Graphic Novels (William Morrow Paperbacks, 2006)
    Reinventing Comics (William Morrow Paperbacks, 2000)
    Understanding Comics (William Morrow Paperbacks, 1994)
    Dennis O'Neil, *The DC Comics Guide to Writing Comics* (Watson-Guptill, 2001)
  Todd James Pierce and Ryan G. Van Cleave, *Visual Storytelling: An Illustrated Reader* (Oxford University Press, 2015)
  Carl Potts*, The DC Comics Guide to Creating Comics: Inside the Art of Visual Storytelling,* (Watson-Guptill, 2013)

<u>History and background</u>
https://www.britannica.com/art/graphic-novel
https://durhamtech.libguides.com/graphicnovels
https://entertainment.howstuffworks.com/arts/comic-books/graphic-novel.htm
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graphic_novel
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comics

SHELLEY FAIRWEATHER-VEGA DISCUSSES "DECOLONIZING CENTRAL ASIA THROUGH TRANSLATION"

Shelley Fairweather-Vega *is an ATA-certified Russian>English translator and an enthusiastic Uzbek>English translator who lives and works in Seattle, Washington. Specializing in both legal and creative texts, she translates mainly for authors, attorneys, activists, and academics from Russia and Central Asia. Visit her online at* https://fairvega.com.

Shelley Fairweather-Vega

It is a truism that the language we use affects how we think—and vice versa. Seldom has that been more made clear than in Shelley Fairweather-Vega's insightful, incisive talk "Decolonizing Central Asia Through Translation" at the 2019 ATA Conference.

Certified in Russian-to-English translation since 2012 and having recently translated three books from Uzbek and Kazakh into English,* Fairweather-Vega has the ability and background to speak with great authority on this topic—one that resonates across continents and cultures. Using well-thought-out, often humorous slides, complete with side commentary, she interwove history, geography, linguistics, and translation into her presentation, making several excellent points about their intersection.

Fairweather-Vega began by giving attendees a broad view of the region, its recent history, and what colonialism there has looked like. It became clear that even understanding what and where Central Asia is can be tricky! As part of her discussion of geography, she noted that, although Central Asia was originally assigned by the U.S. Department of State to the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs (including Russia, Turkey, and the Caucasus states), the area is now instead within the purview of the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, which includes Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and other predominantly Muslim states, and this can subtly affect our

perception of the region. Fairweather-Vega herself said she loosely defines the region as made up of five former Soviet nations: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Perception of these nations from abroad, however, is, to this day, still heavily influenced by Russian filters.

As a lead-in to colonialism and its effect on the region, she noted that, historically, Central Asia was misperceived in the twentieth-century West via two different points of view. The first—an old, patronizing, racist point of view towards the East—can be summed up in the term "Orientalism," which harks back to centuries of distorted accounts by Western travelers and merchants and the tales they brought back. Regional colonialism can be seen as an extension of this viewpoint, with one nation—the so-called "patron"—dominating the other's economic and cultural existence and seen as "inherently" superior. The other—a more recent but equally patronizing point of view—added Soviet *Realpolitik* to the preexistent racist stew by insisting that, since colonialism was solely a function of Western capitalism, it could not, by extension, be an activity the Soviet state partook in (as the state extolled self-determination by all peoples). Nevertheless, when the Soviets' primary actions towards the five countries in Central Asia—resettlement, economic exploitation, control over daily activities, and imposition of power—are examined, it becomes clear that colonization was taking place. In the case of Central Asia, despite the loosening control resulting in the five countries' separation into independent nations in their own right, the imprint of that Soviet colonization continues to drive external and even some internal perceptions.

Moving from the larger, historical view to specifics, Fairweather-Vega showed how Russia's viewpoint still also influences Western perceptions of the region, drilling down into the ways in which spelling, alphabets, and even names can be quite different depending on the translator's approach. As a neutral example of orthographic issues, she pointed out that English and Uzbek phonemes are more similar to each other than to Russian, making transliteration into English from Russian—instead of directly from Uzbek—problematic for translating Uzbek words into English.

She then moved on to discussing the far more loaded example of meaning via an Internet-forum debate known to cognoscenti as "the great *jigit* (or *dzhigit*) controversy." Beginning with common words—such as *yurt* and *dombra*—that have subtly different cross-cultural meanings, she showed how different takes on the word, *jigit,* quickly became stereotypes over the course of heated Internet discussions, graphically illustrating how a language and culture can turn a common word into one loaded with connotations not originally there. Fairweather-Vega brought her point closer to the linguistic home of this year's conference in California, connecting *jigit* with the somewhat parallel Spanish word, *hombre*: much like *jigit, hombre* can take on many shades of nuanced meaning depending on the linguistic lens applied to it. As she explained it, the native Kazakh meaning of *jigit* is neutral: it's simply a term for a "guy," or even a "nice guy." However, those who came to *jigit*

through Russian enhanced it with negative connotations, linking the word to a reckless, "macho" male character! Quite a change, and one entirely derived from the speaker's linguistic origin and reference point.

All these examples, in her opinion, are where a mindful translator can and should make a difference, letting a language's many voices speak, by making thoughtful, conscious choices, and knowing your sources rather than unconsciously perpetuating historical stereotypes from an externally imposed culture. Fairweather-Vega's main point? A translator who wants to give a piece of Central Asian prose its most authentically native point of view must explicitly de-Russify vocabulary and orthography. She suggested using the U.S. Board on Geographic Names for a neutral online reference source.

The overall takeaway for attendees from this presentation? Translation is not neutral. A translator can make a real difference in decolonizing a region's literature by speaking out, choosing works to translate that don't perpetuate rosy-colored, falsely romanticized external viewpoints, being flexible about spelling, questioning stereotypes, knowing sources, consulting an author about terminology where possible, and acknowledging the multiplicity of languages and cultures in an area. Nor is the takeaway region-specific: her insights apply to all transnational languages and texts from former colonies—whether labeled as such or not.

It was a fascinating, eye-opening discussion of an important, timely topic.

*The three books are *A Life at Noon*, by Kazakh author Talasbek Asemkulov, *Gaia, Queen of Ants* and *Of Strangers and Bees*, both by Uzbek writer Hamid Ismailov.

—*Reviewed by Mercedes Guhl and Nanette McGuinness*

A letter to SOURCE readers from Loie Feuerle—

AFAR, a travel website, just recommended a list of translated books to introduce readers to the culture, life and historic events in a variety of countries in relatively recent times. And AFAR goes beyond just writers from Europe. While it is true that the little blurbs do not go into great depth nonetheless they actually mention the translators of each of these books by name: https://tinyurl.com/AFARbest

I think it's fantastic that literary translators are getting a shout out in . . . a quasi mainstream media! It reaches a whole different segment of the reading public.

TRANSLATION ON STEROIDS: HOW LOOKING AT THOUSANDS OF TRANSLATIONS ENHANCES UNDERSTANDING

Presenter: Jost Zetzsche

Jost Zetzsche *is a professional translator who lives on the Oregon coast. Originally from Hamburg, Germany, he earned a Ph.D. for a dissertation on the history of Chinese Bible translation at the University of Hamburg in 1996. In 1999 Jost co-founded International Writers' Group, LLC, on the Oregon coast. Since 2016 he has been contracting with United Bible Societies to help create and maintain the Translation Insights and Perspectives (TIPs) tool.*

Jost Zetzsche's presentation introduced us to his fascinating project, TIPS: Translation Insights and Perspectives. A work in progress, it is housed online at https://tips.translation.bible/.

Jost describes the project as an ongoing collection of "stories"—words, phrases, or verses from the Christian Bible translated into hundreds of the world's languages. In this searchable database, one can browse, look for a specific term or verse, or make one's own contribution to the site.

The project is supported by United Bible Societies, an umbrella for national biblical societies, and Jost works with biblical translation consultants and a skilled programmer. At the time of Jost's talk, the website had some 3181 "stories"—narratives regarding how a phrase, etc., is being translated into one of some 534 languages.

To understand why Jost calls the contributions "stories," read this one about how, in the Aekyom language, our abstract English notion of "years" is transformed into the very concrete counting of "turtles":

> In Aekyom, years are counted as "turtles."
> Norm Mundhenk tells this story:
> "Recently I was checking some New Testament material in the Aekyom language of western Papua New Guinea. It seemed relatively clear until suddenly we came to a passage that started, 'When Jesus had 12 turtles,…' Surely I had misunderstood what they said.
> 'Did you say that Jesus had 12 turtles?'
> 'Let us explain! Around here there is a certain time every year when river turtles come up on the banks and lay their eggs. Because this is so regular, it can be used as a way of counting years. Someone's age is said to be how many turtles that person has.
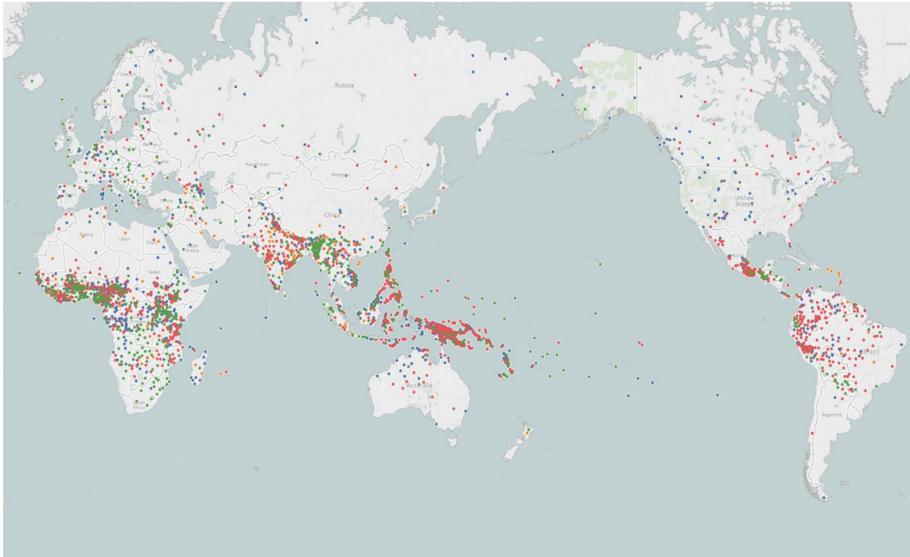
This map shows the state of Bible translation worldwide. It is copyrighted (©) 2018 by SIL International with data from progress.bible. The green dots refer to the complete Bible translated in individual languages, the red dots to translations of either the Old or New Testament, the blue dots to Bible selections, and the yellow dots to biblical stories. See https://tips.translation.bible/ for a larger image.

So when we say that Jesus had 12 turtles, we mean that Jesus was 12 years old.'
It was of course the familiar story of Jesus' trip with his parents to Jerusalem. And certainly, as we all know, Jesus did indeed have 12 turtles at that time!"

Though not as detailed, the following stories, providing back-translations of the word *forgiveness*, are just as concrete:

- Miskito (indigenous language of Nicaragua & Honduras): "take a man's fault out of your heart"
- Western Parbate Kham (Sino-Tibetan Magaric language of Nepal): "unstring someone" ("hold a grudge" is to "have someone strung up in your heart")
- Koonzime (Bantu language of Cameroon): "removing the bad deed-counters" ("The Koonzime lay out the deeds symbolically—usually strips of banana leaf—and rehearse their grievances with the person addressed.")
- Similarly, in Lamogai (Austronesian language, island of New Britain, Papua New Guinea) there is no noun for love, so God's love is translated as "His insides go to his people."

Jost also talked about some of the structural differences among languages that his website makes visible:

- The pronoun "we" may or may not include "you."
- In the Fijian language, a "trial" (3-person) pronoun makes clear what Paul said, that he *and two others* wrote the letters in the Bible.
- To cut something may require a verb specifying cut with *what*.
- The Chinese have a special pronoun for God that transcends gender.

After exploring more examples of semantic, societal, and cultural differences among languages made evident at his TIPS website, Jost noted that 2019 was the UN's International Year of Indigenous Languages, focusing on the importance of languages in our lives and on the endangered status of many indigenous languages.

Source in fact will be featuring indigenous languages in its next issue, and we hope to feature an article by Jost on the topic.

—Reviewed by Michele Aynesworth

LA BELLE INFIDELE:
REFRAMING ACCURACY IN POETRY TRANSLATION

Presenters: Sarah Stickney (Deep Springs College) and Diana Thow (UC Berkeley)

Diana Thow *is a doctoral student in Comparative Literature at the University of California, Berkeley. She specializes in Italian, English and French literature as well as translation studies. Diana's work as a translator includes an English translation and annotation of Amelia Rosselli's* Impromptu *(Guernica Editions, 2015) and* Hospital Series *(Otis/Seismicity Books, 2017).*

Diana Thow

Sarah Stickney *is a former Fulbright grantee for the translation of Italian poetry. Her translations have appeared in publications such as* Poetry Northwest, Drunken Boat, *and* Two Lines. *She is a professor of poetry and literature, currently serving as the Dean of Deep Springs College. Her manuscript* Portico *was selected by Thomas Lux as 2016 winner of Emrys Press's annual chapbook competition.*

Sarah Stickney

Stickney and Thow have collaborated on two editions of Elisa Biagini's poetry: The Guest in the Wood *(Chelsea Editions, 2013), which won the Best Translated Book Award for poetry from Three Percent in 2014, and* Close To My Teeth *(Autumn Hill, 2020).*

Sarah Stickney and Diana Thow addressed the issue of what "fidelity" means in the translation of poetry. Their session at ATA used examples from French and Italian poetry to explore their topic.

As the presenters pointed out, the notion of fidelity in translation has changed over time and varies according to fashion. There was a time when literary translation, all the more so the translation of poetry, was expected to improve upon the original rather than reproduce it accurately, and was (and often still is) characterized as being "either beautiful or faithful, but not both." They encouraged us to think twice about that comment, and explore how and why the terms "faithfulness" and "fidelity," with their connotations of emotional and often sexual loyalty and duty, are used in this context. They also noted that, as a changing, societally driven concept, "the idea of fidelity can be imposed from without, rather than applied by the translator," so that fidelity might not always be the translator's priority or even a matter of personal interest or concern. Indeed, they argued, traditional ideas of fidelity could be considered an antiquated way of judging both sexual relationships and translation. And in any case, they noted, translators always think they're being faithful, and other translators always disagree. The question in poetry translation is always this: *to what aspect(s)* of the original poem is the translator being faithful?

Rimbaud, "Voyelles"

A noir, E blanc, I rouge, U vert, O bleu : voyelles,
Je dirai quelque jour vos naissances latentes :
A, noir corset velu des mouches éclatantes
Qui bombinent autour des puanteurs cruelles,

Golfes d'ombre ; E, candeurs des vapeurs et des tentes,
Lances des glaciers fiers, rois blancs, frissons d'ombelles ;
I, pourpres, sang craché, rire des lèvres belles
Dans la colère ou les ivresses pénitentes ;

U, cycles, vibrements divins des mers virides,
Paix des pâtis semés d'animaux, paix des rides
Que l'alchimie imprime aux grands fronts studieux ;

O, suprême Clairon plein des strideurs étranges,
Silences traversés des Mondes et des Anges :
—O l'Oméga, rayon violet de Ses Yeux!

Stickney and Thow's first example was a poem often cited in translation discussions: Rimbaud's sonnet "Vowels" ("Voyelles" in French). It is a difficult poem to translate, first of all because of the ambiguity in meaning of the original. There are several competing theories about what exactly the poet meant when assigning a color to each vowel or what meaning lies behind the imagery. It is also a poem about language, in particular the French language, so moving it successfully into a new idiom is especially complicated. Finally, the Italian sonnet form of the original is almost nonexistent in English-language poetry, so translators have to find a strategy for reckoning with that difference as well. By comparing just two translations into English (there are probably dozens of published and unpublished English translations), the presenters were able to highlight how one version strives to recreate the rhyme of the original, while a second focuses more on replicating the meaning of each line and the overall tone of the poem. The second version happened to have been more popular with American cultural figures in the 1960s, demonstrating how an individual translator's interpretation of a poem may or may not find cultural resonance with a particular audience at a given time and place.

Next the presenters moved to Italian poetry and shared several examples of their own work on the poems of Elisa Biagini (born 1970, Florence). Stickney and Thow work closely with each other and with Biagini in producing their translations in a collaborative effort. Biagini has a good command of English, which the speakers reported can be both a help and a hindrance to the translators' work, and her poems, while seemingly about quite mundane, everyday things, come from "a different connotative universe" from a poem originally written in English. Her poetry can therefore be deceptively difficult to translate. The presenters recounted how neither translator fully understood the story behind one of Biagini's poems until she told them the family

history behind it. They were relieved to have a better understanding, but then faced a new challenge: What could they do to convey the same sense to readers of their translation, who did not have access to that backstory? This also helps to remind translators that even readers of the original language may not fully understand a poet's language or intent. What is the translator's responsibility in that case?

Questions from the audience focused less on poetry and more on the collaborative process between the translators and poet. Stickney and Thow met when they were living in Italy and thus able to work out their own style of collaboration around the kitchen table. Now living in different parts of the United States, they continue to discuss ideas and problems by phone.
Because the idea of faithfulness remains so persistent in translation, translators will need to continue to reckon with it. The presenters believe that bilingual editions of poetry collections, with original and translation presented side by side, will only cement the practice of examining translations for fidelity. Whether translators and other readers continue to judge them for their faithfulness or lack thereof remains to be seen.

— *Reviewed by Shelley Fairweather-Vega*

Tam Van Tran, Nonceptual Space, *2009.*
Acrylic, spirulina and staples on paper and museum board

—Photograph taken at the Palm Springs Art Museum

Photo taken at Joshua Tree National Park taken by Alejandra Garballero

WORDS, WORDS, WORDS: ἐστί(ν)

Philosophically Speaking: What the Meaning of "Is" Is

By Donald Aynesworth

For many years, **Donald Aynesworth** *taught in the French & Italian Department, as well as in the Humanities Program, at the University of Texas/Austin. He hosts a monthly philosophical discussion and is currently at work on a book called* **Sequels: Some Literary and Philosophical Versions of Alienation**. *E-mail: daynesworth@utexas.edu.*

Donald Aynesworth

In the third-person singular, active indicative, the verb *ἐστί* (ν)—*esti(n)*— is the fundamental metaphysical expression of the ancient Greeks. English has a range of terms that translate this word. The *Dictionary of Untranslatables* suggests several possibilities: "there is, there exists, it is possible that, it is the case that, it is, exists, is; to be, to exist, to be identical to, to be the case."[1]

In his book *Conquest of Abundance*, philosopher Paul Feyerabend describes this verb as a premise that is assumed without argument. This assumption holds, however, only as long as one conceives *ἐστί* to be semantically self-sufficient, in which case one might think of it, as does Feyerabend, as the first conservation law: "The premise, *estin*—Being is—is the first explicit conservation law: it states the conservation of Being."[2]

In the work of Parmenides, now considered to have been the first metaphysician, *ἐστί(ν)* is generally unqualified and, for the most part, positively used. Take, for example, his phrase "**νῦν ἔστιν ὁμοῦ πᾶν, ἕν, συνεχές**" — *nyn estí omou pan, hen, sunehes*—"now it is, all at once, a continuous one" (translation by John Burnet).[3] Since Parmenides conceived being as one and indivisible, however, the statement I have just quoted is, in effect, a tautology. In other words, *hen*, "one," is the verb itself, "is," transformed into its predicate. The one in question exists atemporally and must be conceived or spoken of accordingly.

In a poem, Parmenides warns his student that he will not allow him to say or think that "what is" came to be from what is not:

That it came to be from what is not I shall not
allow you to say or think, for it is not sayable or thinkable
that it is not.[4]

ἐστί is most impeccably itself, most conservative, when it is unqualified and undivided. To divide ἐστί against itself, that is, to negate this verb, is, Parmenides thought, to misuse it and, in the event, to court paradox. Try as he might, however, the great philosopher was not always proof against the temptation to negate. In the poetic statement above, the negatives multiply.

For the sake of argument, I assume that Parmenides is doing things with words, "doing" in philosopher J. L. Austin's sense of the word: performing a speech act. What he does initiates the history of what we now call metaphysics and so makes of himself a different kind of philosopher. It may also be that he is seeking to disarm or to neutralize the opposition he foresees to his peculiar construction of *einai* "to be."

But one might equally well say that the warning identifies the irony inherent in any such utterance. In order to argue against the reality of time, past and future, for example, Parmenides must negate it and so argue for it, thus producing the first paradox in the history of western philosophy. Paradox epitomizes the failure of argumentation to conserve the idea thus expressed: *nyn estí . . . hen.*

To Parmenides, past and future were logically inconceivable. He thought that truth, *aletheia,* was limited to that which does not change. Only being or what-is, *to eon*, which remains immutably one and the same and is, one might suppose, strictly identical to itself, is logically and ontologically fundamental to philosophical reflection. Thus, insofar as time presupposes change, it also presupposes, arguably, that time itself came to be from whatever preceded it, which is or was nothing at all. But this, to the Greeks, was nonsense. Since they did not believe in the generation of something from nothing at all, there was no logical way to argue for such a momentous change. Thus, to paraphrase Jean Grondin, "what is" neither begins to be nor ceases to be, for granting change would entail the generation of what is from what is not and, equally, its degeneration into what is not, which would mean that what-is is temporally grounded in its opposite and thus is not identical to itself.[5]

NOTES

1   Marco Basachera and Barbara Cassin. "ESTI [ἐστι], einai [εἶναι].»
Dictionary of Untranslatables. Edited by Barbara Cassin, Emily Apter, Jacques Lezra, and Michael Wood. Princeton University Press, 1st edition, 2013.
2   Paul Feyerabend. *Conquest of Abundance*. Chicago UP, 1999, p. 61.
3   Parmenides. "Poem of Parmenides," Section VIII.5, trans. John Burnet,
http://philoctetes.free.fr/parmenidesunicode.htm. Accessed 3.8.2020
4   Jonathan Barnes. *Early Greek Philosophy*. Penguin Classics, 1987, p. 134.
5   Jean Grondin. *Introduction to Metaphysics: From Parmenides to Levinas*. Trans. Lukas Soderstrom. Columbia UP, 2012, p. 11.

CREDITS

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Graphic of Bible translations map courtesy of SIL International, with data from progress.bible.

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Photos taken at the Palm Springs Art Museum
during the ATA conference by Michele Aynesworth:

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Photo of Nancy Callan's glass sculpture "Flamingo Cloud"

Glass sculpture Flamingo Cloud,
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