

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION
MY SOUL LOVES FOREIGN LANDS...

This time last year, as I was writing the Introduction to Issue 2.1 of *Translation Matters*, we were undergoing the first Covid lockdown, that most severe of confinements, which left cities deserted and the roads eerily free of traffic.

It was all rather new back then, and – dare I say it? – almost refreshing! The hubbub had suddenly died down and it was as if we stepped outside the matrix and could view it all from afar. The new world actually looked rather sparkling in the Spring sunshine, I recall. Unaccustomed to the silence, we noticed birdsong, and the freshness of the air, and made idealistic predictions about this crisis being an ecological turning-point that would ultimately save the planet. On the personal level, it was an opportunity to take stock, replenish our resources, rethink our values. Many of us wondered why we had been rushing around so frenetically, what we were trying to achieve. For those of us that had not had the misfortune to contract the illness, or to have looked after or grieved for someone that had, confinement almost felt a bit like a retreat, a refuge, even a spiritual awakening.

A year on, the perspective is rather different. The second lockdown in Portugal was neither as complete nor as intense as the first, but it was longer – three months to be precise – and the experience was altogether other. This time, normal life did not come to a standstill because now the structures were in place to enable most of us to continue working from home. The birds were not singing. It was winter and there were still cars on the road. Instead of spiritual renewal, the dominant feeling seemed to be disgruntlement – disgruntlement at being confined to four walls, at having our freedoms curtailed, at having to spend all our waking hours on Zoom. Above all, there was frustration at not being able to travel. Academic tourism, holidays abroad, visiting the family “back home”: these were the things many of us most missed, once we realised that Covid was here to stay. As the weeks of captivity turned to months, those feelings of frustration mellowed to something more poignant, a lingering regret about rights and freedoms we had once taken for granted and which were now lost, mixed imperceptibly with a vague aching for places that we had never known but which now hovered beyond the horizon of our expectations, tantalizingly out of reach.

The Epigraph to this Spring 2021 issue of *Translation Matters* perfectly captures that mood. It is an expression of yearning for the faraway places that we carry with us in our imagination and which we are unable to visit in the flesh. An elegy to elsewhere, it reads (in Guilherme Braga’s sensitive Portuguese translation) like an expression of *saudade* in reverse – a longing not for that place of belonging that we called home, but for some unspecified location that is other than where we are. *My soul loves foreign lands / as if it had no homeland...*

The poem was originally written in Swedish by the Finnish modernist poet Edith Södergran, who died in 1923 aged only 31, of tuberculosis. Indeed, it may well have been

composed while its author was being treated in the sanatorium, an experience which, by all accounts, was not unlike that of being in prison.

What was Edith Södergran longing for when she wrote this poem, I wonder? All those *days and nights lying thinking / of things that never happened...* I imagine she might have been dreaming of somewhere like Portugal, or at least somewhere quite unlike her native Finland, where the sun shines brightly for more than half the year. Perhaps she had read Pessoa. It was, after all, *a foreigner that wrote the strange words on the hard slate of her soul.*

Before commercial travel became widely available, translation was of course one of the routes through which people could visit foreign lands without ever leaving their homeland. In translation, particularly the kind of translation that does *not* attempt to assimilate the foreign to the domestic but pushes the reader up against the sharp edges of an alien tongue – *the great stones on which my thoughts repose?* – words echo strangely, invitingly, beckoning us out of ourselves.

I imagine Edith Södergran lying alone in the bare sanatorium in Finland reading Fernando Pessoa in translation and dreaming of coming to Lisbon to visit him. Of such connections great works are born. *Deus quer, a mulher sonha, a obra nasce.*

* * *

Let me begin the more academic section of this Introduction by pointing out that it is highly unlikely that Pessoa was ever translated into Swedish during Södergran’s lifetime. There were few historical links between the two cultures that might have justified such a mutual interest, and neither language was sufficiently central in the world system of languages (Heilbron, 2010) to have generated a translational dynamic of its own. Even today, Guilherme Braga is a very rare creature in being able to translate directly from Swedish into Portuguese, and translators working in the reverse direction will certainly be similarly few and far between.

Given this traditional absence of connection, it is surprising, therefore, that the two articles that open this issue continue the Scandinavian theme introduced in the Epigraph. The first by **Nina Havumetsä**, from the University of Eastern Finland, concerns a Russian bestseller (a work of political non-fiction by Mikhail Zygar whose title can be literally translated as “All the Kremlin men: A short history of contemporary Russia”¹) in Finnish, Swedish, and English translation. The three versions are analysed in order to determine the extent to which information has been omitted, added or changed. Assuming information change to be a deliberate translation strategy (as theorized by Chesterman, 2000 and Pym, 2016, amongst others), she finds that the Finnish and the Swedish translations are considerably closer to the source text than the English. Reflecting upon the dynamics at work in the latter case, she concludes that the changes have mostly been made for

¹ Вся кремлевская рать: Краткая история современной России.

pragmatic reasons in order improve cohesion and readability, or to tailor the content to the new target reader, perhaps with an eye on commercial sales. This would seem to suggest that Venuti's (1995) claims about the prevalence of a domesticating translation strategy in the UK and US still hold firm, bringing additional ideological implications in the light of English's now incontrovertible status as the lingua franca of the globalized world.

The next article, by **Anabela Valente**, looks at the literary genre (or subgenre) known as Scandinavian crime fiction, or "Nordic noir", in Portuguese, focusing on the phenomenon of indirect translation. Hypothesizing that Portuguese, in its European and Brazilian variants, and the Scandinavian source languages (Swedish, Danish, Norwegian) are all too peripheral in the world system of languages (Heilbron, 2010) to have generated much direct translation, she undertakes a complex bibliographic survey designed to trace the various transit routes taken by the most successful Nordic Noir novels published in Portugal and Brazil in the period 1965 to 2019. While confirming the prevalence of English as the mediating language for indirect translations, the study also produces some unexpected results: for example, the rise in the number of indirect translations in relation to direct ones after 2005 (the year of the all-important "Stieg Larsson phenomenon") seems to contradict the "clear and irrevocable tendency to move from indirect to direct translation when contacts between peripheries intensify" indicated by Ringmar (2015, p. 155). Her findings therefore make an interesting contribution to the burgeoning literature about indirect translation.

Indirect translation also plays a role in the next three articles, suggesting that, in the Portuguese context, it is particularly prevalent.² **Maria António Hörster** and **Cornelia Elisabeth Plag**'s paper concerns the very first Portuguese translation of Freud, a version of his 1905 text *Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie*, which came out in November 1932 under the title *Sexualidade*. Through a detailed analysis focusing on features such as modalization, hedging devices and denotative shifts, the authors show not only that the Portuguese text tends to make the normally cautious and tentative Freud much more assertive than he was in German, but also that this tendency has clearly been imported from a French mediating text that had come out shortly before. Thus, the Freud that is brought into Portugal in this translation is imbued with an aura of positivism, something that was clearly acquired in its passage through French.

Imren Gökce's article also concerns indirect translation, specifically the Turkish translation of a picturebook by Portuguese Nobel laureate José Saramago, which was mediated by a Spanish version. However, in addition to being an indirect translation, this work has the particularity of also being a repurposed text, extracted from a work that Saramago had originally intended for an adult readership and reworked into a stand-alone illustrated children's book. The fact that the original full-length work had also been translated into Turkish directly from the Portuguese by a different translator gives Gökce the opportunity to compare the two Turkish versions with a view to exploring how

² This fact has already been amply demonstrated by Pieta (2012) and Assis Rosa (2017), amongst others.

repurposing affected the translation. Amongst other things, she finds that the narrative presented in the picturebook version sounds much more poetic than the other one, a characteristic that she believes is due to the way the text is presented visually in the Spanish picturebook, spread across the pages in verse-like format.

The Turkish picturebook studied by Gökce is, strictly speaking, not only an indirect translation but also a retranslation, since Saramago’s text already existed in Turkish. Retranslation is the central focus of the next article by **Tiago Cardoso**, which begins by revisiting Antoine Berman’s “retranslation hypothesis” of 1990³ and the more recent theoretical explorations of the phenomenon that have come in its wake, before homing in on a particular case study: two Portuguese translations of J. D. Salinger’s 1951 novel *The Catcher in the Rye*. The fact that the first (by João Palma Ferreira, 1962) was written in the Estado Novo regime, while the other by José Lima (2005), was produced in democratic Portugal allows him to compare the changing societal values as manifested in the two translations, focusing on issues such as religion, the family, sexuality and politeness mechanisms.

Ana Rita Brettes’ article, which follows, sets itself a similar goal, in this case comparing two Portuguese translations of Oscar Wilde’s *Picture of Dorian Gray*, the first (by Januário Leite) published in 1943 in the context of the Salazar dictatorship, and the second in 1998 (by Margarida Vale de Gato) in the democracy. Given Wilde’s reputation as a representative of a lifestyle that would have been considered abhorrent to the Salazar regime, it is perhaps surprising that his novella should have been published at all. However, Brettes finds not only that Januario Leite’s 1943 translation actually went through five editions during the dictatorship and several more after it, but also that it was supplemented by seven other translations (two during the dictatorship and five after), suggesting a particularly avid interest in the work.⁴ Through a study of the lexical choices relating to the issue of hedonism, she shows that this theme was treated quite differently in the two versions analysed in detail: while Leite portrays the central character of the work as an effusive but attractive dandy, Vale de Gato opts for a lexical set suggestive of Faustian Romantic decadism, (perhaps influenced by the horror films that were prevalent during the period when the translation was done, Brettes suggests).

From the Portuguese dictatorship of the mid-twentieth century, we pass to the Spanish one, with **Sofía Monzón Rodríguez’** article about the reception of Sylvia Plath during the Franco regime. Monzón Rodríguez starts from the assumption that the writings of Sylvia Plath, with their strong feminist content and frank treatment of matters such as sex and bodily functions, would have been anathema to this regime. She combs the Spanish censorship archives in search of evidence of attempts to publish Plath’s work in Spanish, and indeed finds censors’ reports certifying to various failed applications to translate her

³ According to this, given the inevitably incomplete nature of any translation, and its propensity to age, retranslations are not only desirable but also essential: the more the better, Berman advocates, in order to cumulatively allow the reader to get as close as possible to the original work.

⁴ This confirms my own findings with regards to the translation of Wilde’s play *Salome* into Portuguese, which also went through seven translations between 1908 and 1992 (Bennett, 2003).

novel *The Bell Jar* between 1967 and 1982. Curiously, though, the censors did not present any objection to the importation of the English original, or indeed to an Argentinian translation, which might indicate (she surmises) “either self-censorship on the part of Argentine translator or publisher, or a less stringent application of censorship standards towards books imported in relatively low numbers”. As for Plath’s poetry, though there was an unsuccessful attempt to import her most famous collection, *Ariel*, in 1968, it seems that a bilingual anthology of her poetry was actually authorized and published in 1974, perhaps reflecting the (widely testified) lenience of the censors towards what was seen as a niche genre, accessible only to an educated elite.

Andreia Sarabando returns us to Portugal with her article about the Portuguese translation of Patricia Grace’s *Potiki* (1986), a Maori novel characterised by a linguistic hybridity that has a strong ideological charge in the source culture. Sarabando is concerned with the translation’s controversial decision to include paratextual apparatus (in the form of a glossary and footnotes) to clarify the meaning of Maori words and expressions. The work thus gives her an excuse to examine the role of linguistic hybridity in New Zealand culture and to engage with the ongoing debates about how such phenomena should be dealt with in translation.

The final article, by **Sabrina Martinez**, takes us away from the almost exclusively literary concerns of all the other articles in this issue to discuss audiovisual translation research, with an emphasis on subtitling. Since 2010, there have been significant developments in the field, she tells us, not least with the application of eye-tracking and (more recently) heart and brain monitoring technology. The article is essentially a review of these and other changes and the debates they have provoked, focusing on three technical parameters – reading speed, segmentation and shot changes. The aim is to identify developments that could eventually be used to update the guidelines used in the subtitling industry, something that is particularly relevant for a country like Portugal, she concludes, where a subtitling culture prevails.⁵

With this conclusion, Martinez quite conveniently brings us back to the linguistic frame that has dominated much of this issue of *Translation Matters* – Portuguese. It is often difficult for an editor to find points of contact between the various articles in a general issue, and as a result, the links forged might sometimes seem rather contrived and artificial. However, in this case, all the articles, with the exception of those by Havumetsä and Monzón Rodríguez, are concerned with Portuguese, sometimes as a source language (in the case of Gökce), but mostly (Valente, Hörster and Plag, Cardoso, Brettes, Sarabando, and now, indirectly, Martinez) as a target language. This is appropriate because, as well as testifying to the traditional importance of translation in this country, and to the wealth of

⁵ She quotes Gottlieb (1998) in identifying different audiovisual translation cultures: in addition to the subtitling culture that prevails in Portugal, there are dubbing cultures (e.g. Spain and Italy), voice-over cultures (e.g. Poland) and countries where no translation is required because they are source language countries that rarely import foreign films (e.g. Britain and the United States). Brazil, she points out, might be considered a mixed culture, since foreign-language content on the national television networks is dubbed, while material for cable and satellite television, like cinema films, is subtitled.

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translational research that is being done as a consequence, it reflects this journal's provenance and signals its continuing (though not always exclusive) loyalty to its place of origin.

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