

## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

After an unprecedented run of issues devoted to a single theme, *Translation Matters* has finally returned to what is perhaps its central mission – to offer a window onto the range and diversity of academic production in the field of Translation Studies. And this is a particularly varied issue. Alongside articles on themes that have been central to the discipline practically since its inception (such as literary translation, subtitling, interpreting and translation pedagogy), it also contains papers on more recent or emergent concerns, such as Artificial Intelligence, experiential translation<sup>1</sup> and (inter-)epistemic translation.<sup>2</sup>

The Epigraph sets the tone for this variety, offering an interlingual AND intersemiotic translation from a linguaculture that has barely featured in the journal till now - Turkish. The poem '*Bu Aşk Burada Biter*' ('O Amor Acaba Aqui' in Imren Gökce's Portuguese translation) was written in 1965 by the poet Atıf Behramoğlu and set to music a quarter-century later by Tuna Kiremitçi, when the composer was only seventeen or eighteen years old. Evoking the poignancy of a lovers' separation ('Love ends here as I depart/ A child in my heart and a revolver in my pocket'), the song was recorded twice in Turkey, first by Kiremitçi himself with his band Kumdan Kaleler in 1996,<sup>3</sup> and then again in 2002 by rock musician Haluk Levent for his album *Bir Erkeğin Günlüğü* ('The Diary of a Man').

This epigraph raises some interesting questions about the interlingual and intersemiotic processes involved in song-translation.<sup>4</sup> Setting a poem to music is clearly a translational act, since it involves shadowing the words with melody and activating other features of the musical code (harmony, rhythm, volume, timbre, etc.) to express the various non-denotational aspects of the poetic meaning. Cover versions are translational events too, of course, even without traversing linguistic boundaries; we can hear in the two Turkish recordings that this song has a markedly different quality when sung in lyrical or rock mode. But when the cover version also involves translation into a whole new linguaculture (as in the informal recording in Portuguese presented here by Diana Combo),<sup>5</sup> something quite remarkable happens: the rhythmic constraints imposed by the target language, combined with the luminous quality of the singer's solo voice and vocal habits she will have acquired through experience of another musical tradition, imbue it with a flavour that is unmistakably reminiscent of 'fado'. And what is more, that quality (the

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<sup>1</sup> Also known as experimental or avant-garde translation, this is concerned with translation as a springboard for artistic creation (see the Experiential Translation Network - <https://experientialtranslation.net>). This was the subject of the Autumn 2023 special issue of *Translation Matters* (Vol. 5(2)).

<sup>2</sup> This term was coined by Douglas Robinson in his 2017 *Translationality: Essays in the Translational-Medical Humanities* (2017, pp. 200-202) and has since become the subject of an international research project (*Epistemic Translation: Towards an Ecology of Knowledges* - <https://www.epistran.org>) based at NOVA/CETAPS. It was the subject of the Spring 2024 special issue of *Translation Matters* (Vol. 6(1)).

<sup>3</sup> The version given in the epigraph is from the album *Tuna Kiremitçi ve arkadaşları* ('Tuna Kiremitçi and his friends') of 2017.

<sup>4</sup> These will be explored in more depth in the special issue of *Translation Matters* due out in Spring 2025 (Vol. 7(1)) devoted to *Music in/and Translation*.

<sup>5</sup> <https://dianacombo.com/>

plaintiveness, 'saudade') seems to suit the spirit of the original poem almost better (dare I say it?) than the treatments given it by the Turkish musicians. Were Ataul Behramoglu ever to hear it, I'm sure he would approve.

Quite appropriately, the first article in this issue is also about music, more specifically about the multilingual visual melodies of American composer John Cage. **Sofia Lacasta Millera** explores three of Cage's works – *Aria* (1958), *Solo for Voice 35* (1970) and *Sonnekus2* (1985) – from the dual perspective of intersemiotic and interlingual translation, first analysing the way that the musical meaning is construed between sign systems and before translating the verbal parts into Spanish in order to highlight their formal and textual complexities. In doing so, she touches on themes of importance to all branches of Translation Studies, such as originality, authorship, interpretation and representation.

Poetry is the subject of the second article, by **Marouane Zakhir**, inflected towards the specific issue of fidelity in indirect translation. Taking as a case-study an Arabic rendering by Abdessalam Benabdellali of Goethe's poem '*Ein Gleichnis*' ('A Parable'), made via a French version by Antoine Berman, it questions whether it is in fact possible to maintain the style, aesthetic features, culture-bound words and figurative expressions of the original when the translator is not working directly from it. After reviewing the literature on indirect translation, and briefly discussing the modern Arabic free-verse tradition, Zakhir proceeds to analyse Benabdellali's version using a quality assessment questionnaire. The resulting reflection sheds light upon the various processes that were involved in this poetic transposition, bringing implications for (indirect) poetry translation as a whole.

The next article stays in the literary domain but the focus shifts to something rather more earthy: the handling of taboo language in the English translations of Chinese novel *Jin Ping Mei*. After reviewing the different functions played by swearing, author **Shuangjin Xiao** undertakes a descriptive study of two different English translations in order to assess how the translators dealt with this notoriously problematic feature. His results show the use of different strategies, though in some cases, there is a loss of pragmatic effect, bringing repercussions for how characters are portrayed and interact.

With the fourth article we pass to the world of audiovisual translation, more specifically the Portuguese subtitling of Stanley Kubrick's 1971 film *A Clockwork Orange*, based on Anthony Burgess's novel of the same name. **Madalena Feliciano Santos** is particularly concerned with how the Portuguese translators dealt with Nadsat, the distinctive argot that Burgess created for his teenagers, which borrows words from Russian, Cockney, German and other sources. Aware of the limitations of the audiovisual channel for the transmission of a fictional language and the difficulties of reproducing it meaningfully in translation, she concludes that the tendency has largely been to standardize Nadsat, with the effect that it loses much of its power in the Portuguese subtitles.

**Alexandra Ferreira's** article, which comes next, is concerned with the translation into Portuguese of Japanese manga comics, focusing on the question of onomatopoeia. She explains how onomatopoeia is a very rich and diverse code in Japanese, and an important

feature of manga, used to convey all manner of effects. Given the limited range of onomatopoeia in Portuguese, she is curious about how translators have dealt with this issue, the strategies they have chosen, and whether there is any difference between the Portuguese and Brazilians as regards their approach.

The next article moves to the Arab world, more specifically to Libya, where **Rawad Alhashmi** and **Mustafa Abdullah Abdulrahman Bashir** have been developing a course for the teaching of journalistic translation to undergraduate students. With a view to making the training more meaningful than that traditionally used in their country, they have developed a task-based approach that attempts to reproduce real-life situations in an interactive environment. Using authentic materials from international media outlets, the tasks are carefully set up and staged in such a way as to provide maximum support for decision-making, enabling the focus to be placed firmly on the translation process, over and above the final product. The article describes not only the theoretical assumptions underpinning this method, but also offers detailed information about the way in which the tasks are set up, monitored and assessed, information that will surely be helpful to translator trainers all over the world.

We stay with news translation for the next article, but this time as part of an experiment designed to test the effectiveness of automatic interpreting technology. After a thorough review of the state-of-the-art in machine interpreting (MI), **Pablo Ramírez Rodríguez** describes how a corpus of verbal idioms was extracted from the Spanish news channel *Sur Noticias 24 horas* and then translated into Russian using Yandex voice-recognition and MI systems. The results were then analysed for accuracy and naturalness in order to determine the factors affecting the system's performance. It was found that Yandex performed reasonably well with common idiomatic phrases but encountered some difficulties with less frequent or contextually more complex expressions. In explaining just why this is the case, Ramírez Rodríguez gives us an insight into how such systems work and the complexity of the technology required to achieve results comparable to what a human interpreter could achieve.

The final two articles move into the realm of (Inter-)Epistemic Translation, which of course was the subject of *TM's* last thematic issue, and of an ongoing research project at FCSH/CETAPS.<sup>6</sup> The first one, by legal scholar **Fabrizio Esposito**, looks at the epistemic gaps that exist between the disciplines of law and economics, and the misunderstandings that frequently arise because of them in the interdisciplinary field known as Economic Analysis of Law (or Law and Economics). After giving some examples of such misunderstandings from several branches of law, he argues that these should best be seen not as conceptual differences, but rather as linguistic problems which could be overcome using techniques borrowed from Translation Studies. In his last section, he attempts to put this into practice by presenting a tentative typology of translation strategies (drawn from Pym, 2018 and

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<sup>6</sup> The EPISTRAN project (*Epistemic Translation: Towards an Ecology of Knowledges*). Available at: [www.epistran.org](http://www.epistran.org).

Chesterman, 2016, amongst others) that could be used to overcome this problem and succeed in making economic insights legally relevant.

The final article, by internationally renowned translation scholar **Douglas Robinson**, looks at the contributions of Charles Sanders Peirce and, especially, Thomas Kuhn to the ongoing discussion about inter-epistemic translation. Robinson argues here that interepistemic translation takes place primarily *not* between epistemic systems (as he had previously suggested in his 2017 book *Translationality*) but rather between what Kuhn calls 'epistemological communities', such as Peirce's 'communities of enquiry' (1877), Stanley Fish's 'interpretive communities' (1980) or Lave & Wenger's 'communities of practice' (1990s). He relates how Kuhn, in a Postscript to the 1970 second edition of *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, suggested that the problem of incompatible scientific theories might be approached as a communication breakdown between different language communities, and as such, could be susceptible to translational manoeuvres. Robinson then proceeds to analyse Kuhn's proposal into its component parts, coming up with a nine-point methodology that may one day prove to have applications far beyond the contexts contemplated by either author.

For the average translation scholar (one who is perhaps more interested in interlingual transits than in abstruse debates about epistemology), the most compelling aspect of Robinson's discussion will probably be his use of Kuhn to shed light upon certain theoretical rifts in our own field of study. The long-running dispute about 'equivalence', for example, may be traced back (he suggests) to different uses of the term by luminaries such as Eugene Nida, Juliane House, Gideon Toury and Anthony Pym, who each approach it from the perspective of different paradigms. Similarly, the historical confusion provoked by Schleiermacher's use of the phrase '*das übersetzte Werk*' ('the translated work' – which could be understood as referring to either the source text, as the work that has been translated, or to the translation itself) may, Robinson says, reflect a "pre-paradigmatic state—the state before 'nature' has been forced into 'the conceptual boxes supplied by professional education'".

Nevertheless, there is something rather disturbing about the suggestion that translation scholars from different paradigms (and Robinson specifically mentions "the empiricists studying corpora and eye-tracking" versus those who spend their time "reading Judith Butler and Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida and Deleuze and Guattari") are as locked in their own worldviews as speakers of geographically dispersed languages. Though this divide has been signalled many times before since the 1990s,<sup>7</sup> this is perhaps the first time that the suggestion has been made that they might actually need to learn how to *translate* in order to be able to communicate together. This seems profoundly ironic.

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<sup>7</sup> At different times, this has been expressed as a conflict between the 'linguistics' and 'cultural studies' paradigms (Baker, 1996); between 'essentialist' and 'non-essentialist' approaches (Arrojo 1998); between 'instrumental' and 'hermeneutic' theories of language (Venuti, 2000, after Kelly, 1979), between 'empiricism' and 'postmodernism' (Delabastita, 2003) or between the 'empirical science paradigm' and the 'liberal arts paradigm' (Gile, 2005).

Hopefully, *Translation Matters*, which aims to be a broad church open to translation scholars of all persuasions (as well as outsiders like Esposito that venture in from other fields), will prove to be a platform where these different paradigms can enter into dialogue in a productive way.

Karen Bennett

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