ABSTRACTS

Friday 15th April

Keynote Address

Dr James Corby (University of Malta)

Originary Translation in Cormac McCarthy’s The Road

In her essay ‘Translation as Culture’, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak sketches an account of something she refers to as ‘originary translation’. By this, she means the developmental process through which a child comes to terms with the wider world, negotiating ‘private and public grammars’ in a manner that is constitutive of ethical subjectivity. Drawing on the work of Aristotle, Lyotard, Bachelard and Agamben, this paper further develops this notion of originary translation and argues that it provides a compelling framework through which to understand some of the principal concerns of Cormac McCarthy’s 2006 novel, The Road.

Panel 1 – Translations across Time

Kat Deerfield (Cardiff University)

‘Instant Nostalgia’: The Retro-Turn in Digital Photography

In 2010, The New York Times illustrated a cover story on the ongoing war in Afghanistan with a series of images which appear to have been taken with an old, low-quality consumer camera. Unlike most journalistic photographs, these show the ravages of time that standard digital photography was designed to withstand. Yet the photos are, in fact, digital, and the effects of age and damage are merely pixellated filters applied by ‘Hipstamatic’, a popular camera application for the iPhone. Hipstamatic is part of the growing trend of ‘retro’ photography – not old photographs, but new images made to look old. There is a wide range of retro-styled cameraphone applications available for the iPhone and other smartphones; there is even a physical digital camera, the Digital Harinezumi, designed according to the same principle of going back to a simpler photographic time. These devices are marketed as creators of ‘instant nostalgia’, and they sell the ‘dreamlike’ beauty of retrospection applied to the recent. In the face of increasing technological capacity, the retro camera bases its appeal on a sense of ‘fun’ born from intentional imperfection. Between the physical properties of these devices and the marketing strategies employed by their developers, this movement raises questions about accuracy and our connection to the near past which I will investigate using theories of temporality and nostalgia. Svetlana Boym argues that ‘the nostalgic feels stifled within the conventional confines of time and space’ and that nostalgia is sometimes ‘not directed toward the past [...] but sideways.’ I will examine how this style of contemporary photography represents this ‘sideways’ temporal movement, and how the visual language of these photographs is translated across the distant past, the recent past, and the present moment.
David Andrew Griffiths (Cardiff University)

Feminist Apes: Patriarchy and Resistance in Anachronistic Narratives of Evolution

One of the barriers for feminism and queer theory is the very conservative public conception of the natural. In many cases the natural refers to, or supports, a contemporary social conception of the normal: for example in the naturalisation of gender roles such as the division of labour, or the ubiquity and insidiousness of heteronormativity. One of the ways that ideas of the natural are supported is through narratives of evolutionary descent, which is supported by the anachronistic notion that contemporary social structures are best explained by the actions and bodies of prehistoric, prehominid apes. My paper will discuss feminist attempts to subvert conservative narratives of evolutionary descent such as Edward O. Wilson’s *Sociobiology*. In particular I will focus on Elaine Morgan’s *The Descent of Woman* and the development of the Aquatic Ape Hypothesis. Morgan attempted to reimagine the male-centred narrative of evolution that leads to the justification and legitimation of patriarchal social structures. Morgan’s Aquatic Ape Hypothesis reveals the ways in which social norms, values and assumptions structure the theory and practice of science, and represents an early attempt to subvert these norms. I will argue that even though Morgan’s own anachronistic narrative does not mediate successfully between biological determinism and social constructionism, and reproduces the patriarchal structures that she is trying to subvert, her work has critical potential from a postmodern standpoint. I will conclude by considering ways in which postmodern gender and sexuality studies can use the connections, or translations, across time and species in evolutionary narratives so as to subvert the conservative conception of the natural.

Mari Lowe (Cardiff University)

‘Yesteryear Multiculturalism’: Cultural Diversity, Representation, and Cardiff’s Muslim Community

Cardiff is often cited as having one of the earliest Muslim communities in Britain. Many of the earliest Muslim inhabitants are known to have arrived through the coal-shipping trade via Aden. Welsh steam coal was transported through the Suez Canal to Aden where men signed on to tramp steamers returning to the Welsh capital. This shipping route set up a unique relationship between Aden and Cardiff and facilitated the growth of early Muslim communities in the city. Muslim communities grew in Cardiff’s dockland area from the late nineteenth century but became more ‘visible’ during the 1940s. Researchers and reporters became increasingly interested in recording the dockland area and accounts of mosque openings and festivals, for example, were widely published. Accounts of Islam in Cardiff from this period can be found in newspapers, pamphlets and other literature. In addition to the written archive, members of the docklands community have been interviewed in recent decades by Butetown History and Arts Centre and others. These audio recordings significantly alter the content and cultural politics of the archive on Islam in Cardiff. However, the recordings also raise questions about memory, oral testimony and the relationship of the recordings to existing archives. Using archival material from the 1940s I will explore the construction of images of Islam in Cardiff. I will examine the relationship between the different archives in representing Islam in Cardiff. I will also argue that the presence of Muslim individuals and the visible presence of Islam in Cardiff are central to historical narratives of a multicultural Cardiff. This research forms part of a wider project on media and memory in the construction of race and cultural diversity in Cardiff Docklands.

Panel 2 – Comparative Cultural Translations

Maria Teresa Galli (Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa)

Cultural Memories of Greek Tragedy in T.S. Eliot’s Dramas: *Oresteia and The Family Reunion*

Between 1935 and 1959 Eliot wrote five pièces, as he says, modelled on Greek dramas: *Murder in the Cathedral* on *Agamemnon*, *The Family Reunion* on *Oresteia*, *The Cocktail Party* on *Alcestis*, *The
Confidential Clerk on Ion and The Elder Statesman on Oedipus at Colonus. The aim of the paper I propose is to investigate, referring in particular to Family Reunion, the adaptation of a complex system such as Greek drama to a modern literary work. The intent is to show that what Eliot did belongs to the range of ‘translations’ in a broader sense: not a verbatim translation, but a translation in its first definition of ‘transference, conveyance’ from something to something else.

What Eliot chose to ‘translate’ from the antique to the modern is not single cues or dialogues, which could sound far from the everyday life of the audience. He ‘translated’ something macroscopic, that he himself called ‘the situation’: a wide concept that includes themes, images, ideas, and above all the pattern, the global structure of the model. Inside it he built modern settings and dialogues, in a successful hybridisation of classical and contemporary elements, conciliating tradition and modernism.

This fusion led to some losses: the chorus and the politics were so tightly bound to the Greek culture that they were untranslatable, and so they had to disappear. The divine couldn’t be understood, and so it was replaced by psychology. But there were also some gains, like new metaphorical, symbolical and ironical nuances, and an increased number of characters. In a balance with these phenomena linked to the mediation between the ancient and the modern, I will try to show how in Eliot’s dramas the past is renewed by the present, and the present is supported by the past, in a constant and mutual ‘translation’ of life.

Claire Udras Ellis (University of Malta)

Translated By Time: Reflections on Reading Romantic Poetry in our Time

This paper considers cultural translation in terms of the transference of literary texts across time to reflect on ways in which the historical method of literary interpretation, which has arguably become the dominant procedure for studying British Romantic literature in the Anglo-American academy, may be re-directed to allow for a reading strategy which situates the works of the Romantic Period within the historical and cultural context in which they are encountered by contemporary readers.

Jerome J. McGann’s argument as expressed in The Romantic Ideology that it is ‘difference’ which makes works of art relevant to the present, and the influence of this notion on subsequent socio-historic criticism in Romantic Studies is considered. It is subsequently argued that the value of Romanticism may lie not only in its contribution to the establishment of a clearer picture of a historically-specific segment of culture that produced literary works, but in the ways that it may be understood to be translatable into contemporary debate on literary, philosophical, scientific and cultural issues within which present readers are concerned.

Sarah Micallef (University of Malta)

‘In a mirror that mirrors the soul’: A Psychological Blueprint of the Decadent Movement in Literature through Wilde and Huysmans

Shoshana Felman asserts in Literature and Psychoanalysis that ‘translation is what psycho-analysis is all about; the unconscious itself, in Freud’s writings, is often compared to a foreign language [...] the barrier between languages foreign to each other is therefore the locus (and sometimes the means or the alibi), of repression.’

Moreover, in Lacan’s rereading of psychoanalysis, the emphasis on the function of language, according to Young, initiated the belief in the possibility that psychoanalysis owed more to literature than was previously assumed – for example, the literary basis and conceptual use of literature in psychoanalytical terms such as the Oedipus complex and narcissism. In light of this, one may rightly conclude that psychoanalysis is, in this way, rooted in literature. However, can one say that this is also true vice versa?

Through a consideration of the Decadent movement of the late nineteenth century and its correlations with psychoanalysis, this paper will endeavour to show how decadence may be considered a cultural phenomenon that illuminates and is in turn, illuminated by psychoanalysis, by virtue of its ability to ‘translate’ from one cultural mode to another.
Panel 3 – Translating Desire and Gender

Lucas Gaspard (University of East Anglia, Norwich)

From Body to Technology: Re-casting the Terms of the ‘Female Dick’ as Presented in the Television Series ‘Criminal Minds’

Crime fiction has long been regarded as a genre rooted in male terms. Crimes enacted against the female form or an active figure of a male detective empowered to bring order to a world in chaos have helped shape this view. The presence of a female detective or investigator has often been represented as an unnatural phenomenon whose position in a text is generally regarded in terms of masculinity. The ability to look, sound or act like her male counterpart has long remained the conditional terms upon which her status in such texts are accepted. In the majority of instances such a position can only be enacted through the process of isolation, whether through design or by default. The attempt here is to reconfigure that status whereby the loneliness of the ‘body’ is not the only means by which women in that role can be perceived. Breaking out of the traditional low-skilled low-status technology roles which increasingly segregated the modern office space along gender lines, a movement towards design, manipulation and mastery of information technology, of fore-fronting brains over brawn, opens opportunities for the female investigator to disrupt both an essentialist and existentialist attitude towards female interaction with information based technology. Abandoning the masculine ‘hard-systems’ approach to technological design and development, the female investigator can recast technology in a guise which favours socialisation and the ability to work co-operatively. In this sense the ‘female dick’ can move from a position of confinement to one of favourable expression allowing them to pursue equality of role on their own terms. Contained within Criminal Minds, the characters of FBI Agents Elle Greenaway and Penelope Garcia provides for exploration of this movement from fixed knowable states to ones which force the dominant ideology to at least look back onto itself if not to question its status.

Maria Theuma (University of Malta)

‘Don’t be a drag, just be a queen’: The Translation of Desire into Performance, from Lady Godiva to Lady Gaga.

Lady Godiva here dressed so demurely
[...]
Draperies wrapped gently ‘round her shoulder
‘Lady Godiva’s Operation’, White Light/White Heat, The Velvet Underground1

In 1968, The Velvet Underground transform the Lady Godiva figure into a transwoman, whose body eventually ‘lies bare’ and suffers death, as s/he undergoes sexual reassignment surgery. The woman who, in 1040, rode naked through Coventry, as an act of revolt against male leadership and imposed exactions, becomes a figure with potentially plural sexual identities. The ambivalently-gendered self becomes a theatrical self, the body which desires, and is desired, becomes a site of performance and performativity, disrupting normative sexual signs. The female who performs, the Juliette, infamously played by Brigitte Bardot, who mambo dances to the primitive beatings of drums at the end of Roger Vadim’s Et Dieu créa la femme, defies the attribution of identity and downplays the significance of gender difference. Performance, as an articulation of desire and as an expression of being at odds with the legitimate, removes all essence from identity, rejects sexual binary oppositions and celebrates the queer. Feminist discourse often attempts to interpret female theatricality as triumphant and self-defining, as seeking to terrify and destroy misogynistic and patriarchal authority. The body is placed as allegory, even if it risks becoming pornographic in occupying this status. However, this paper attempts to move beyond labelling such feminine gestures as pornographic and manipulative, by uncovering the essence of the feminine beneath the artifice it displays when it faces and relates to masculine forces.

This paper proposes to read feminine masquerade and a woman’s search for identification with other dominant figures of femininity not as symptoms of hysteria, but as an exercise in hybridity.

Daniel Cini (University of Malta)

Forster, Wells, and the Other Country: The Quest for Sexual Freedom in Edwardian England

Among the most eminent exponents of the movement for sexual reform in Edwardian England, E. M. Forster and H. G. Wells seem to stand out from the rest in their unique representation of this salient cause. As their characters seek to understand their sexuality, and challenge the stifling repressions of the long Victorian age, they often have to face the reality that this is only attainable outside of England.

This paper will be exploring the various journeys these Edwardian men and women embark on as they determine to escape from their confining English society. Forster’s Italian romances Where Angels Fear to Tread (1905) and A Room with a View (1908) will provide ample examples of the significant role Italy played during this era. In these novels, the restrained English temperament of Forster’s protagonists is significantly liberated by the uninhibited southern nature of Italy and its people. This paper will also be looking at Wells’s treatment of the other country in one of his most controversial early twentieth-century novels; The New Machiavelli (1911). Here, Wells’s hero is on a constant journey of self discovery, and determinately resolves to fulfil his sexual desires regardless of his surroundings.

This paper will be taking into consideration the distinct means these novelists employ to bring out the cultural differences which their characters have to confront in these foreign lands, and will also highlight the way Forster and Wells seek to translate their protagonists’ sexual feelings through the other country.

Panel 4 – Translating Alterity

Cristina-Georgiana Voicu (Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Laşi, Romania)

Translations between Borders: A Metaphor for Constructing Cultural Otherhood

Translation today is as much about the translation of cultural, political, and historical contexts and concepts as it is about language. With a broad interpretation of the concept of translation, I will look at the principles, concepts and symbolic values of borders and boundaries. The paper starts from a more cultural and philosophical perspective while not forgetting the colonialism dealing with principles, concepts, symbolic values of borders/boundaries, and suggesting ‘translation’ as the way of dealing with it in a democratic spirit. The field of translation studies has come a long way in the past two decades from the margins of the linguistics to today’s central position in the field of cultural studies and critical theory. I will start from António Sousa Ribeiro who traces how translation has become a fundamental and dominant metaphor for our time and how the act of translation has wider repercussions on our notions of multiculturalism, identity, and cultural practices. On the basis of this, Ribeiro sketches out how translation can provide for ‘mutual intelligibility without sacrificing difference in the interest of blind assimilation’. I oppose translation to the concept of ‘dialogue’ as it appears in some contexts where it forces an apparently symmetrical dichotomy, but really hides a hierarchy. I mean here the idea of a ‘dialogue between cultures’ (implying closed communities with defined borders as agencies), as opposed to contextual translation among individuals and languages. Another theory is that of Paul Gilroy who builds the concept of Black Atlantic upon the two-way translation of which one direction only – from North to South, from White to Black Atlantic – is recognised. Throughout my paper, I will engage in dialogue with central perceptions of contemporary translation studies. I am referring to topics such as the problematisation of the concept of the original and the priority of the original; the notion of translation as a way of negotiating differences and of rendering difference manifest; translation as not just an intercultural, but also an intracultural phenomenon; translation as a condition of the self-reflexivity of cultures in the wake of Homi Bhabha and Lawrence Venuti.
James Borg (University of Malta)

‘...as if speech were irresponsible’: Speaking the Language of the Other in Maurice Blanchot’s L’Arrêt de mort

‘[...]'do not go about/ Choosing your words without some carelessness,’ writes Paul Verlaine in the Art Poétique. Where does this imperative to write irresponsibly come from? Does the literary word have any bearing on an ethics of responsibility, or is that responsibility waived by authorial license? And what does one make of Verlaine’s dictum when we transpose it onto a translational level?

Maurice Blanchot’s L’Arrêt de mort [Death Sentence] gives us an indication of why the temptation to speak irresponsibly in the language of another – to say very little of why one does so in one’s own language – might be so alluring. In one particular passage of the récit, in fact (the scene shared between Nathalie and the narrator), the question of translation is dealt with frontally. Pinned down in the Parisian metro during an Axis air-raid, the narrator ineptly speaks Nathalie’s native Slavic, whilst observing to himself: ‘I...felt irresponsible in this other language, so unfamiliar to me; and this unreal stammering….drew from me things that I never would have said, or thought, or even left unsaid in real words[...]’

As a literary theoretician with deep allegiances to the question of Otherness (‘This Strange Institution Called Literature’) and the juridical, binding nature of performative statements (Demeure), Jacques Derrida’s observations on L’Arrêt de mort in Living on: Border lines expose these two idées fixes of the Derridean oeuvre to an unrelenting explication de texte of Blanchot’s narrative: the notion of otherness is there in the Franco-Slavic exchange between the narrator and ‘N.’, and so too is the performative oath, as the narrator promises to marry Nathalie; not in his own language, however, but in hers.

In collusion with the Derridean reading of L’Arrêt de mort, this paper will argue that the irresponsibility displayed by Blanchot’s narrator casts considerable light on the ethical and emotional weight present in the act of translation (‘All right, then I’m going to translate it,’ she was seized by real panic at the thought that I might hit on it exactly, so that I had to keep both my translation and my presentiment to myself.’) Moreover, by drawing out the affinities between Blanchot’s text and Verlaine’s Art Poétique, this paper will also attempt to illustrate why the temptation to write carelessly (Verlaine), or irresponsibly (Blanchot), factors in the aesthetic theories of so many authors.

Corey M. Johnson (University of Oxford)

‘From the Utmost Parts of the Sea’²: The Metropolis in the World-System

Arjun Appadurai’s recent scholarship pinpoints the circulation of forms and forms of circulation as key touchstones of our globalizing world.³ Following in this vein, I explore how iconographic renderings of space in material culture produce and reproduce spatial dialectics between different parts of the globe. I trace this to our inheritance from the post-Enlightenment discourses of explorers, scientists, and missionaries – centered in the metropolis but concerned with its obverse. Taking the Pacific as my field of reference, I use the concrete literary geography of Robert Louis Stevenson’s late fiction as a proxy for measuring degrees of cultural distance and acculturation against a global ecumene. I will also suggest how this measure of distance continues to underwrite the production of visual culture a century later by attending to the grammar of the postcard as a regularised and regularly circulating form. I ground Appadurai’s criticism in Benedict Anderson’s discussion of the serialisation of places in print culture, published as Anderson’s own expansion of his seminal Imagined Communities.⁴ More generally, my discussion scrutinises how the absolute space of local knowledge is transformed and translated – i.e. becomes relative space – in order to resonate with an imagined and broadly defined ‘audience’ in the distant metropolis. I build on the scholarship of Henri Lefebvre and Edward Soja, but move beyond the metropolis as a singular point of reference. Instead, I question how the metropolis mediates the flow of

cultural capital, the pace and perception of modernisation in locales outside of its bounds. My intent is to explore how global perceptions of space can be framed within the productive and consumptive practices of everyday lived experience.

**Keynote Address**

Prof. Chantal Cornut-Gentille D'Arcy (University of Zaragoza)

**Comedy as a seductive cultural mediator of regional, national and linguistic pluralism in a borderless Europe: the case of L'Auberge Espagnole (Klapisch, 2002)**

One of the political objectives of the Maastricht treaty (1992) was to encourage linguistic and cultural diversity in contemporary Europe through the institutionalisation of student and teacher mobility. This intention, which materialised in the creation of major exchange programmes such as **Erasmus** (1986), **Lingua** (1989), **Tempus** (1990), **Socrates** (1995), and more recently in the implementation of the Bologna process, is fast creating a new, increasingly internationalised, setting for the actors involved. Released in the thick of these processes, Cedric Klapish’s largely humorous film, **L’Auberge espagnole** (2002), which centres on the chaotic flat-share experiences of a group of European students on a university exchange in Barcelona, has invariably been classified or categorised as a comedy, and as such, exposed to the criticisms of scholars and reviewers who tend to see in it no more than an over optimistic, light-hearted, simplistic portrayal of current realities. Rather than add to the number of analysts who accuse the filmmaker of crafting a purely entertaining story, crammed full of clichés and stereotypes, my aim in this paper is to vindicate Klapish’s use of the comic as an enticing coder or conveyor of cross-cultural meanings respecting ourselves and neighbouring “others” in a ‘united’ Europe.

Focus on comedy’s potential to inform and/or challenge existing preconceptions will require me to develop three broad frameworks within which **L’Auberge espagnole** might be evaluated as an astute exercise in ‘the ways in which texts can become cultural capital across cultural boundaries’ (Bassnett & Lefevere, 1998, 138). I shall therefore look into, first, the way lived experience as a “crossbreed” European citizen and spectator may have influenced my own critical stance vis-à-vis the film; secondly, the question of how comedy nowadays might usefully be thought about as a distinctive cultural mode; and thirdly, the extent to which the film’s multilingual mode of narration subverts generic comedy conventions in order to comment on aspects specific to the European Union.

**Panel 5 – Translating Memory**

Janice Sant (University of Malta)

**Relating Elsewhere: ‘Nostalgeria’ in Hélène Cixous’s Si Près**

Imprisoned outside, not inside, Algeria, the young Hélène Cixous is refused ‘entry’ into the country of her birth. Born to Jewish parents in French-occupied Algeria, Cixous is doubly ostracized; for the French, she is a Jew, for the natives, she is a French colonizer. Neither here, nor there, she finds herself determined by the lack that defines her on both sides. Hence, the desire to cross over to the shore on the other side of the Mediterranean: France holds the vague promise of hospitality and the freedom from hostility. It is in Paris, however, that she experiences ‘the true torments of exile’. Displaced from a (non)originary to multiple (non)others, for Cixous the two-fold relation between the original and its translation multiplies into a many-sided polygon. ‘If the world is square,’ she writes, ‘I am on the four sides’.

In her recent work **Si Près**, Cixous’s journey to Algeria after a 30-year absence may be read as a last attempt to arrive at the country that never granted her belonging. Following Jacques Derrida on the impossible path to the originary (that does not exist), this paper sheds light on what Derrida calls ‘absolute translation’ or ‘a translation without pole of reference’. Lacking the primary source to which to return, Cixous paradoxically feels ‘nostalgeria’ for a country that she could never call ‘home’. This
Ruth van den Akker (VU University, Amsterdam)

‘Ou libéré?’: Identity and Re-memory in *Breath, Eyes, Memory*

Edwidge Danticat’s novel *Breath, Eyes, Memory* develops around Sophie who immigrates from Haiti to the U.S. Sophie becomes alienated from her homeland Haiti as well as from the U.S.; this double alienation creates a fragmentation in her identity and a sense of loss. In this paper I indicate the importance of re-memory in Sophie’s search for identity and healing by showing her initial alienation from Haiti, her internalisation of traumatic memories and alienation, and the way in which re-memory is a solution to both her alienation and internalisation of trauma. Within this context, it will become apparent that the body functions as a place of trauma and memory and a site of history. The body will therefore be considered as crucial and meaningful motif in *Breath, Eyes, Memory*. Furthermore, language, food, and cultural traditions are deployed in the novel as signifiers of Sophie’s alienation and as means through which her alienation can be overcome. Sophie, however, does not merely experience an alienation from Haiti as a country and physical place. Haiti symbolises her history, both personal and cultural, and a cultural gendered femininity, from these aspects she experiences alienation as well. The several layers of alienation which are represented in the novel and expressed in Sophie’s body by bulimia and difficulties with sexuality are discussed in this paper.

Panel 6 – Translation as Dis-/Re-/Col-Location

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Panel 7 – Transculturations

Gillian Maria Darcy (La Trobe University, Melbourne)

The Question of the Cultural Translation of Valenciá

The role of language within societies that are multilingual is linked essentially to the need to communicate on both an instrumental as well as a representational level. The repertoire of languages available to the multilingual speaker forms the cornerstone of the cultural memory and identity of that society. Cultural translation is also central to the formation and structure of that identity both essentially (forming the assertions and biases of the individual) and politically (through the modern notion of ‘nation-states’).

In his book, *Language, Culture and Identity* (2007), Philip Riley defines ‘culture’ as ‘the worldview of a people, expressed in and through their language.’ Such is the case in Valencia. As an autonomous region that sits comfortably within the Spanish political devolution, but that is also ethnically and linguistically linked to the ‘Catalan Nation’, Valencia is a melting pot of historical and cultural influences that have each contributed to the construction and emergence of a distinct regional ethnic identity within a Spanish national identity. Through the use of its languages, Spanish and Valenciá (a dialect of Catalan), Valencia has also maintained a unique linguistic situation where the interplay between the sometimes politically conflicting languages, the situations in which they are used and the attitudes of Valencians toward their use is central to the assertion of their identity. However, the question remains, what is Valenciá today? Is its use or disuse merely a cultural translation of Catalan or Castilian, or is it simply an emergent translation in its own right?
A Previously Unrecorded Tradition? Cultural Translations of the Khoikhoi in Zakes Mda’s *The Heart of Redness*

The Khoikhoi and the San (often grouped together as the Khoisan) are the indigenous peoples of Southern Africa. Very few groups of Khoisan people have survived the violence of colonialism. Their way of life has largely been destroyed, and their languages, for the most part, are no longer spoken, but instead are extant only in ethnographic grammars.

In this paper I focus on the translation and preservation of Khoikhoi culture in two texts: 1) the 19th century German philologist Theophilus Hahn’s *Tsuni-ilGgoam: The Supreme Being of the Khoikhoi* (1881) and 2) a celebrated post-apartheid text, Zakes Mda’s *The Heart of Redness* (2000). In his novel, Mda, a first-language Xhosa speaker, proposes an unbroken line of oral tradition from the Khoikhoi, groups of whom married into Xhosa clans, to contemporary Xhosa speakers, and indeed to his own work, albeit an English-language print text. Mda has stated that his mother is the source of the Khoikhoi stories he reproduces in his novel and that these stories are ‘previously unrecorded’ in print. But there is a print record of the traditions Mda recounts, namely Hahn’s book. In this paper I read Mda and Hahn’s differing works of ‘cultural translation’ alongside each other, and consider the continuities and discontinuities between their projects. What cultural transactions are at work in each case, and what relationship can be proposed between Hahn’s text and Mda’s? Finally, I suggest, following David Attwell, that the term ‘cultural translation’ is too weak to describe the processes of exchange that inform South African cultural production, and that the historical phenomenon of ‘transculturation’ described by Fernando Ortiz might provide a more useful lens for reading South African literary history.

Panel 8 – Historical Cultural Translations

Nicola Lugosch (Durham University)

Cultural Translation in Transmissions of the Life of St Agnes

Iceland, converted to Christianity in the year 1000, presents a unique case of translation history in both the cultural and the literary realms. Some of the earliest manuscripts from Iceland are the saints’ and apostles’ lives, originally composed in Latin but translated into Old Icelandic. Because of their non-native provenance, however, they have been largely dismissed in the field of Old Norse studies. Recently, though, scholars have taken more interest in these works, and the resultant research has lead to a better understanding of early Icelandic cultural history.

In my paper I aim to examine several of the female saints’ lives in the context of both their original composition and their uniquely Icelandic qualities. By highlighting certain critical passages, namely, those regarding the character of the saints and the tropes of female virtue, I hope to first identify source material and then delineate the qualities of the translation that render the final product a truly native Icelandic work, not merely the same work in a different language.

Moonika Oll (University of Birmingham)

Cultural Translations and Historical Research

This paper seeks to explore how the theory of cultural translation can be applied to historical research. As Carbonell (1996) has pointed out, contemporary cultural theory deals with the relationship between the conditions of knowledge production in one given culture, and the way knowledge from a different cultural setting is relocated and reinterpreted according to the conditions in which knowledge is

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produced. The linguistic translation is used merely as a tool or metaphor in analysing the transformation in cultures. Despite the lack of a coherent theory surrounding the idea of cultural translation so far, many concepts and ideas developed inside this fairly new and exciting discipline can be used to construct a historical research framework which will then be used to analyse the introduction and impact of Babylonian learning and religious knowledge into pre-existing Greek thought-system.

From historical perspective, the theory of cultural translation and the question of translatability in general have so far only been shortly examined by Jan Assmann (1996), who distinguished between syncretistic, assimilatory/competitive and mutual translations. However, more recently Manuela Foiera has applied the cultural translation theory onto the study of an originally Japanese religion in the Western context. Her approach is underpinned by an assumption that religion and knowledge systems can be approached as texts. Similarly, I propose to look at several case studies (e.g. astronomy, astrology, religion) in my thesis as ‘Source texts’ in their original Babylonian context and ‘Target texts’ in the Hellenistic and Roman world. The study of such ‘texts’ in two different contexts will expose the relationship between the cultural systems in which they are embedded. However, this paper will also examine how historiography can make more use of concepts like cultural repertoire, textual and conceptual grids, and theories about the forces active in the processes of transfer and transformation.
Keynote Address

Prof. Chris Weedon (Cardiff University)

Homeland & Diaspora: Strategies for Survival in the Novels of Nadeem Aslam

Since the 1950s writers from South Asia, Africa and the Caribbean who settled in Britain, together with British born and for educated minority writers, have published widely on migration and settlement and life across generations in the diaspora. Cultural translations figure centrally in this work, which addresses homeland, diaspora, generation, culture and religion. In this talk I explore these issues in the work of Nadeem Aslam.

Aslam was born in Pakistan in 1966, the son of a communist filmmaker, and he moved to Britain at the age of fourteen. He has published three novels to date: Season of the Rainbirds (1993), Maps for Lost Lovers (2004) and The Wasted Vigil (2008). The main focus of the talk is Maps for Lost Lovers (2004), which addresses life in the diaspora where first generation Pakistani migrants seek and largely fail to recreate a new sense of home. It is set in a northern English city in 1997, but includes memories from childhood and life in Britain prior to the 1990s. The novel explores the effects of isolation, religious conflict and so-called traditional culture in a working class, diasporic Pakistani community and includes issues of domestic violence, child abuse and ‘honour killings’.

Aslam’s non British-based novels offer significant insights into issues raised in Maps for Lost Lovers, in particular the formation of subjectivities in Pakistan, fundamentalism and Islamism. Season of the Rainbirds evokes the nature of the homeland to which migrants often look with nostalgic longing, depicting the social and political power relations affecting everyday life in small town Pakistan in 1982 with particular emphasis on the role of religion in sustaining the oppressive political and social orders. It serves to contextualise the forms of religion and culture that first generation migrants bring with them to the UK and on which they draw in building diasporic communities. The Wasted Vigil is set in Afghanistan and across the border in Pakistan, where many Afghani refugees and Pakistani and international Islamists gather. Its context is war and religious fundamentalism and it provides insights into Pakistani and Afghani as well as US perspectives on the nature and effects of recent Afghani history, the involvement of Soviet and Western powers in the region and the nature of jihadism. Read intertextually, each novel throws new light on issues that cut across borders, showing the transnational nature of the issues at stake. All three novels deal in different ways with the relationship of the religious to the secular and the political. They also address the role of traditional cultural norms and forms of kinship in creating communities and reproducing oppressive forms of power.

Panel 9 – Philosophical Translations

Vanessa Psaila (University of Malta)

The Multiple, Not the One: Translating the Infinite in Badiou’s Inaesthetics

Plato famously postulated the existence of a higher world of reality — the realm of Ideas or Forms — unchanging, eternal, and absolute, and in doing so lays the foundations of metaphysics in Western thought by underpinning a prominent dichotomy at the basis of conceptions of existence. Highly influenced by Plato’s own preoccupations, Badiou’s magnum opus, ‘L’Etre et l’événement’ (1988), puts forward a carefully structured schema of truth that is a powerful reinstatement of universal values and a simultaneous de-mystification of them. This paper is a brief exploration of the relationship between ontology, truths, and the work of art in the thought of Alain Badiou. Its purpose is twofold. Firstly, it points out that Badiou’s subtraction from the One is paralleled by a corresponding rejection of the

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7 Other significant themes in this work are historical re-imaginings of slavery and colonialism. See in particular the work of David Dabydeen, Fred A’guir and Caryl Phillips.
Anton Bonnici (University of Malta)

Imagining the Real: When Representation becomes Reality

In his *Hamlet in Purgatory* the founder of New Historicism Stephen Greenblatt explains how in the late twelfth century the Catholic Church implemented a process of an exchange of representation and reality through which the concept of Purgatory was reified into the mind of the English people via fiction. Through this process of exchange from a theoretical theology Purgatory became a reality solid enough in the imagination of the masses for it to be regarded as an actual physical location that influenced and motivated directly their behaviour and lifestyles for nearly five hundred years. In this short paper I shall be focusing on the process of exchange of representation and reality as described by Stephen Greenblatt and I shall apply the concept to the field of popular science writing with specific reference to Mary Midgley’s critique of Richard Dawkin’s Selfish Gene theory.

Dustin J. Cauchi (University of Malta)

Being Non-Singular – Being Non-Plural: A Reflection on the Ethics of Concealment

We depart from a position that reads translation – first and foremost – in terms of a priori openness. Translation, therefore, intended as an event that departs from a necessary a priori openness, followed by appropriation, and that concludes with change.

The act of translation promises, and in most cases enables, a cultural exchange that involves the transferring and appropriation of culturally informed concepts through a linguistic structure. Although we are aware that one of the layers of sophistication in the event-translation insists on being read through linguistic difference and cultural-linguistic accessibility, we have carefully opted for a reading that focuses on conceptual-change vis-à-vis the subject, intended: 1) as the transferring and appropriation of concepts through the event-translation 2) as a condition that precedes the linguistic mechanism of the act-translation.

The paper will propose and outline the distinction between the act-translation and the event-translation, read in relation to a wider post-Kantian discourse on the subject. The introduction will be followed by a reflection on the Maltese position vis-à-vis translation in the light of the apparent resistance to an a priori openness and conceptual-appropriation. The proposed reflection will refer to works that have been translated into Maltese. We will pay particular attention to the conceptual and historical collocation, if any, of the translated works, and proceed to examine how the translated works conform within the strict parameters of a pre-established conceptual-consensus, thus, already contradicting the notion of change as an a priori openness preceding the linguistic mechanism of translation. The proposed discourse will function in relation to the translation or lack of translation of major, Ancient – 20th Century (Continental) & contemporary philosophical works into Maltese. We will conclude by 1) acknowledging the local conceptual-gap vis-à-vis the act of translation 2) proceed to translate this absence to wider local contexts.
Filippo Mariano (Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa)

Linguistic Ordeal: A Survivor’s Tale

‘Translating is impossible, but necessary.’ This statement by Guido Cosciani and Guido Devescovi, which marks the incipit of their Guida alla traduzione dall’italiano in tedesco, is undoubtedly true especially when it comes to translating poetry – and contemporary poetry in particular.

Literary translation is not just a matter of switching words, nor does it mean just making one language bend towards the needs and possibilities of another one. Translation, as both the act – or, better, the process – of translating and the result of this process, is a constant dialogue not only between texts, but first and foremost between linguistic systems, seen as combinations of expressive means and sets of shared references. If every translation is cultural, then every translator is a herald, an usher, a mechanic and a tailor of cultures.

The aim of this paper is to provide a close insight on what one could call ‘the poetic translator’s workshop’. More specifically, it addresses the main issues connected with translating contemporary poetry, based on my experience as translator of ‘Leaf to Leaf / Foglio a Foglia’, a bilingual anthology of texts by award-winning Canadian poet Don McKay, published in Italy in 2010 (texts in English and Italian). Some of the most pressing problems a translator of contemporary poetry has to face, both at a formal and at a content level, are considered in the paper through a series of practical examples concerning vocabulary, metrics, linguistic registers and colloquial expressions and jargon. Theoretical issues, rather than being discussed at length, are used as a basso continuo, while the main focus is kept on the more pragmatic aspects of the translator’s work.

Maria Stylianidou (King’s College, London)

Palamas as Verse Translator

The topic of this study is the translations made by Palamas. Specifically, this study employs a systematic analysis approach in order to examine the norm for Palamas as verse translator and his reaction or conformity to established norms. It explores Palamas' translation strategies and skills and this permits the categorisation of his translated poems in the translation type they belong.

Moreover, Palamas' theoretical view on the activity of translation is an important concern to be examined in this study. The main purpose of this study is to explain the role of Palamas translations in the era of Greek literary production and, no less importantly, within his own original work. All the aforementioned issues imply a theoretical study of the recent verse translation scientific theories. They also imply a scientific examination of the translated poems which Palamas included in his book ‘Music Reset’ by comparing them with their prototype poems and with Palamas' original poems too. All Palamas' 98 translated poems are going to be examined in terms of their language, their form, their rhythm, their themes and their vocabulary.

Katerina Gouleti (Aristotle University, Thessaloniki)

The Return of Beverly Hills 90210 in Greece: The Changes in the Treatment of Culture-Specific Utterances in TV Subtitling

The treatment of culture specific utterances is said to be one of the most challenging tasks for any translator. In the case of subtitling, there are special idiosyncratic features that render the particular task even more demanding. The subtitler has to take a wide range of parameters into consideration ranging from the polymedial nature of the medium to the functionality of each utterance within the audiovisual product. Each parameter works as a confining or aiding framework for the subtitling act and ultimately determines the range of choices and possible alternatives for the adoptable strategies. This paper attempts to outline these additional parameters, posed by subtitling, in a diachronic perspective.
Examples of culture specific references will be drawn from two different sets of subtitles written for a very popular TV series (Beverly Hills 90210) broadcast by two Greek TV channels with a twenty-year time gap. The existence of these parallel translations provide the ground for a contrastive study which yields interesting insights as to the variation of translation strategies adopted by professionals. The different renderings of the culture-specific utterances are juxtaposed to serve the overriding objective of comparing the numerical findings with the strategies used for different cultural groupings. The question on whether and if so to what extent and towards what direction has the treatment of culture-specific utterances changed in the course of time, will be dealt with in this paper.

Panel 11 – Cultural Transmediation

Juan Tarançón de Francisco (University of Zaragoza)

John Sayles’ Matewan: Film, Politics, and Cultural Adaptation

John Sayles rose to prominence in the early 1980s after the release of The Return of the Secaucus Seven (1979), a self-financed, socially conscious film that promised to do for the film industry in the 1980s what Easy Rider had done a decade before. The film, a mournful look at a group of disenchanted college friends, embraced controversial subjects and, above all, left out Hollywood’s conventional aesthetics. However, the promise was never fulfilled and, after two more films that had a successful run in the theatres of the art-house circuit, John Sayles went on to occupy an ambivalent position in the history of U.S. cinema. Although he is often cited as the quintessential representative of the contemporary independent scene, the truth is that his subsequent films seemed to puzzle critics and alienate the indie crowd because, regardless of his political agenda, the narratives and the style could not be marketed in counterdistinction to mainstream Hollywood.

The reason for the paradoxical reception of Sayles’ output is to be found in the tendency among critics and academics to discriminate films into deterministic categories, thus giving the impression that they have achieved some kind of breakthrough or novel understanding when all they do is reduce the complexity of films to a simplistic, impractical taxonomy cut off from social life. It is often assumed that left-leaning political issues can only be articulated in opposition to Hollywood and, as a consequence, dissociation from mainstream narratives and overstated styles are mistaken for social progressivism while conventional narratives and traditional realism are mistaken for an endorsement of the conservative political perspective that Hollywood is believed to sanction.

Sayles never abandoned the social liberalism of his early films – in fact, no other filmmaker can be said to have addressed the social consequences of the crass policies adopted by Reagan in a more consistent way – but, if the social weight of his cinema is to be properly grasped, we need to break from rigid academic norms and put the emphasis, instead, on hybridity and change. In order to get away from the reductionism that dominates film criticism, it is my intention to illustrate how Matewan (1987), by all accounts the film that signalled Sayles’ departure from indie aesthetics, employs conventional Hollywood genres to translate a real event into film grammar and express a personal vision that transcends ready-made categorisations.

Andreea Serban (West University of Timişoara, Romania)

Popularising Shakespeare: Romeo & Juliet in Manga and Anime

The surge over the recent years of Shakespearean adaptations and appropriations – teenage spin-offs in particular – testifies to the Bard’s plays still being topical and inspiring to today’s generations. Designed to familiarise the younger audience with Shakespeare’s work, while at the same time catering to their tastes and interests, not only have such adaptations moved the original plots to unusual milieus and exotic cultures, but have also ‘translated’ them to new media. Two such examples are the Japanese ‘manga’ (graphic novel) and ‘anime’ (animated television series), which have nowadays become part of the global pop culture.

The paper discusses two such transmediations of Romeo and Juliet, a play widely read and appreciated by students all over the world, focusing on a comparison between a manga and an anime.
edition of the play – *Romeo and Juliet* and *Romeo x Juliet* respectively. On the one hand, I explore how these two media culturally adapt an early modern European text for the twenty-first-century, primarily Japanese, audience, making use of imagery to enhance the drama and provide a new dimension to the story. By means of reversed ekphrasis, Shakespeare’s original text is translated into pictures, all the while reinforcing the characters’ traits and states of mind. On the other hand, I approach the two transmediations in light of schema theory. Given that both the graphic novel and the animated TV series have to adapt the storyline to their particular conventions, I look at the ways in which these media contribute to the preservation, refreshing, or breaking of the schema.

Victoria Ioannou (Imperial College London)

The Character of Arthur: from Medieval Malory’s *Works* to Modern Boorman’s *Excalibur*

The topic of this presentation lies in the midst of comparative literature discussions, cultural adaptation and transmediation dialogue, and origins, originality and authenticity arguments. This paper will deal with the character of Arthur as presented in the film *Excalibur*, which claims in its opening titles that it was adapted from Malory’s *Works*. By juxtaposing some of the attributes of *Excalibur*’s Arthur with the characteristics of the Malorian figure, and Arthur’s general role in the film as opposed to his presence in Malory’s narrative, this presentation will argue that *Excalibur*’s writers should in fact have acknowledged both Tennyson’s and Weston’s influences on their script.

Viewers already acquainted with the Malorian version of the tradition meet in *Excalibur* an innovative rendition with some radical changes. Analysing firstly how Arthur’s behaviour towards his wife is depicted in Boorman and Malory, the presentation will move on to contrast Arthur’s representation as king in *Excalibur* with that of Malory. Before suggesting that Boorman, in his role as mediator, was influenced by Tennyson in constructing his King Arthur, it will briefly be examined why Boorman could not formulate his king according to Malory’s guidelines; as it would have resulted in a feeble king. Tennyson’s influence could also be located in Boorman’s depiction of Arthur as Jesus Christ. Arthur’s conflation with the Fisher King will then be analysed, along with his role in the Grail Quest. Boorman’s perception of the Grail and his decision to link Arthur’s health with the waste land will also be discussed, before suggesting that Boorman’s writers not studied Weston’s *From Ritual to Romance* before rendering their translation of the legend to the audiovisual medium (‘transmediation’), *Excalibur* would have been a much different adaptation of the Arthurian legend; with Arthur not the pivot of his world.

Panel 12 – Professional Translation

Cristina Ivanovici (University of Birmingham)

Politics and Translation: Publishing Contemporary Canadian Fiction in Romanian Translation

Since the early 1990s, the Romanian publishing market has significantly expanded, due to the newly gained freedom of national presses and as a result of reformed cultural policies, thus responding to the cultural expectations of large readerships for literatures in English. Both during and after 1990, national and private publishers contributed to the circulation and dissemination of literatures in English. However, post-1990 Romanian publishers had to overcome the cultural effects of communism and also a series of economic crisis during the mid-1990s and they constantly had to re-define conceptualisations of literary celebrity. Whereas, under communism, English-Canadian literature constituted a niche market for Romanian publishers, it has continued to appeal to both academic and non-academic readerships, due to publishing and marketing strategies which publishers employed in promoting contemporary Canadian authors as international celebrities.

Drawing upon studies of literary celebrity in Canadian literature (Cohen 2001; York 2007; Hammill 2010) and of celebrity and glamour in Eastern European contexts (Wachtel 2004, 2006; Goscilo and Strukov 2011), this paper comparatively analyses the intersections that define the production and dissemination of contemporary English-Canadian literature published in Romanian translation both
before and after the early 1990s. To this end, I examine specific marketing policies which Romanian publishers, editors, and translators have employed in promoting contemporary Canadian authors (e.g. Margaret Atwood, Michael Ondaatje, Alice Munro, etc). The second part of this paper investigates the cultural transfer of contemporary Canadian fiction since the fall of communism. Therefore, this paper examines the import of cultural capital within a (post)communist context and its challenges to the formation of large readerships for English-Canadian literature. More specifically, the paper focuses on the dissemination, circulation and response to Margaret Atwood’s dystopian fiction in Romania, namely, on the first translation projects undertaken by Romanian publishers Albatros, Minerva and Leda, and explores changes and challenges in publication and translation strategies within a (post) communist context (i.e. during 1975 and 2009).

Drawing upon qualitative interviews with cultural mediators of Margaret Atwood's fiction and archival research in Romania and Canada, I analyse how the ideologies that Romanian academics, editors, translators and publishers employ have impacted upon promoting previously-banned authors and literary genres; and examine how institutionalised censorship has shaped the formation of Romanian readerships for contemporary Canadian literature. I therefore analyse the impacts of the publishing industry market expansion upon marketing and translation strategies. By emphasising the case study of the Romanian publishing industry and drawing upon similarities between Eastern European publishing industries, I argue that post-1990 Eastern European literary markets complicate the types of responses to Margaret Atwood’s dystopian fiction in European contexts and destabilise West-centred conceptualisations of literary celebrity, authorship and readership.

Rozana Bela (University of Tirana, Albania)

**Communication through Translation. Translating: Modelling the Process**

Communication is the key factor for all developments whether in personal level or interpersonal one. It is because of good communication that international agreements in different fields are achieved. While talking about international agreements and good communication we ought to keep in mind that behind all this process stands more than a good translation.

Translation is not only a linguistic act; it is also a cultural one, an act of communication across cultures. Its importance is accepted world-wide because it is only through translation that people can understand different messages given in different languages. It is through translation that different cultures are brought together and are understood. Translation makes interaction possible and also the exchange of best features by their representatives of different cultures.

Through translation we interact, we communicate and we exchange ideas, opinions and culture as well. It is because of the science of translation’s impact that the world has become a global village. In this work I will treat the way a model of translating looks. By providing the model, we answer questions regarding the knowledge and skills a translator should possess so that he or she can translate; and we have to clearly know the translators competencies. The translator’s knowledge consists not of just the linguistic kind, but of real world knowledge as well and furthermore of practical skills of reading and writing. The translator should be familiar with SL and TL cultures and know the purpose of the communication.

In this work it is crucial to give the explanation that while translating, translators communicate because a communicative text carries its cultural features while moving from one language to another.
Panel 13 – Poetic Translations

Siriol McAvoy (Cardiff University)

Frontiers ‘Crossed and Uncrossed’ and ‘A Circle of C’: Attacks/ Ways out/ Forays in the cultural translation of Lynette Roberts

If you come my way that is…
Between now and then, I will offer you
A fist full of rock cress fresh from the bank
The valley tips of garlic red with dew
Cooler than shallots, a breath you can swank
Lynette Roberts, ‘Poem from Llanybri’

You want to know about my village.
You should want to know even if you
Don’t want to know about my village.
Lynette Roberts, ‘Plasnewydd’

The innovative poetry of Welsh writer in English Lynette Roberts is informed by what Alex Davis and Lee Jenkins term ‘an intensely local poetics, in which strange vocabulary itself becomes a metaphor for the uniqueness of place’ (2000:7). Her unique voice has, however, been significantly overlooked since the first publication of her poetry in 1944.

Roberts was highly attuned to the personal, political, and literary dynamics of translation. Following Salman Rushdie’s contention regarding diasporic writers, she might be considered a doubly ‘translated’ woman; first, as an Argentinean woman within the literary culture of London, and second, as an avant-garde, urban artist ‘translated’ into the traditional culture of West Wales upon her marriage to Keidrych Rhys. Her work conveys a positive expression of the exilic consciousness, the acuteness of her outsider’s vision allowing her to evoke the community in which she lived with urgent lucidity. She posits herself as an ‘unacknowledged legislator’, translating the rich cultural landscape of West Wales for the London literary establishment using its preferred discourses of anthropology and epic poetry. This allowed her to assert what she saw as the vital importance of Welsh culture – the embodied vitality of its language, the ancient sediments of its mythology, and the centrality of its idea of community – to national and transnational conceptions of identity.

She shows a remarkable capacity to translate the domestic wartime experiences of ordinary people, and especially women, within an epic mode usually reserved for the narratives of male heroism, placing in arresting apposition the frontline and home front experiences of war. Male-dominated warfare has traditionally been centred upon acts of appropriation and ‘translation’, both of the land and of women’s passive bodies. Roberts refuses this gendered formulation, assuming for herself the active role of traveller and translator. Her depictions of Wales, infused with the bejewelled colours and fieriness of her Argentinean background, transpose her experience of the world into a Welsh idiom, while also transferring the localised culture of Wales onto the public stage. In this way, she demonstrates the myriad passageways and connections between Wales and the outside world. Lynette Roberts champions the specific, the idiosyncratic, and the insignificant in the face of the alienating machinations of global politics and commerce. However, her poetics of translation also demonstrates the importance of cultural promiscuity, rather than cultural purity, to the negotiation and continuity of culture itself. As Virginia Woolf said, ‘as a woman, I have no country. As a woman I want no country. As a woman my country is the whole world.’

Sarah Grima (University of Malta)

Translating Objectivity in the Poetics of Ezra Pound

Pound’s poetic career, and his relation to Imagisme in particular, seem to point towards a poetics of objectivity where directness and concision are seen as poetry’s desired goal. This call for a more direct treatment of subject matter, particularly when one considers the poetic act as itself an act of translation – at the most basic level, of translating a world-view into a linguistic and artistic form—
raises the crucial question of the relationship between objectivity and translation, and therefore of whether objectivity can or need be translated. In considering Pound's multifaceted approach to this question, not only is it important to situate the Cantos within the framework of this discussion but it becomes particularly necessary to consider Pound's work in relation to Oriental studies and to Japanese Noh drama in particular. The question of translation's relationship to objectivity therefore enters a transcultural zone, one that enables an innovative use of language. Moreover, the paradoxes which come into play when objectivity and translation meet are in many ways related to Pound's approach to the paradox of the long imagist poem, which would at first appear to be a contradiction in terms if imagism is to be associated with concision. Pound seems to have found in the Noh a key by which that paradox may be – if not resolved – at least, in some sense, translated, and it is perhaps just such a key which he employs in his Cantos.

Charis Mallia (University of Malta)

Translating Poetic Self-Doubt in Theodore Roethke's 'The Far Field'

In an attempt to translate affirmation in relation to poetry and its validity as an art form in the American post-war era, Theodore Roethke proposes to address the task of poetry which may have been handed down to him by predecessors such as T. S. Eliot and Wallace Stevens. This paper will attempt to demonstrate how Roethke's translation of this sense of affirmation, made clear at the onset of the ‘North American Sequence’ through the first poem ‘The Longing’, is realised in ‘The Far Field’, the fourth poem of the sequence.

Roethke, however, does not end the sequence with the poem ‘The Far-Field’ – he goes on to writing ‘The Rose’ and this somewhat challenges the desire for affirmation expressed in ‘The Longing’. He seems to position ‘The Far Field’ as a negation of the sense of affirmation proposed in the first poem. Nevertheless, this paper shall argue that what is being proposed by the poet as the point where the translation of this sense of affirmation is completed – that is ‘The Rose’ – destroys the initial intention implied by ‘The Longing’. The poetry becomes engrained with a sense of scepticism which seems to cast doubt over the task of poetry and its purpose.

‘The Far Field’ shall be taken as that space where the mediator expresses doubt in relation to the medium and to himself as mediator. This paper will attempt to uncover the necessity of that doubt and its inherent connection to that same affirmative stance which Roethke proposes at the start in relation to his work and in relation to poetry's task. In light of Blanchot’s essay ‘Orpheus’ Gaze’, Roethke may be regarded as an Orphic figure who does not wholly comprehend his role in relation to the task of poetry which he is proposing, thus misinterpreting his role as mediator.

Panel 14 – The Human(ities) in Translation

Angus McBlane (Cardiff University)

Translating the Abyss: Posthumanism at the limit(-trophy)

In The Animal that Therefore I am (2008) Derrida briefly comments (29-31) on the notion of an abyssal rupture between the ‘human’ and the ‘animal’. He develops this as a multiplying gesture in order to redress the locking of animals into a singular ‘animal’ which forecloses questions in advance. Arguing, at least partially, that the abyss serves these limits through the process of limitrophy which are ‘what abuts onto limits but also what feeds, is fed, is cared for, raised, and trained, what is cultivated on the edges of a limit...it will concern what sprouts or grows at the limit, around the limit, by maintaining the limit, but also what feeds the limit, generates it, raises it, and complicates it’ (29). If the process of limitrophy abuts onto an abyss, or even multiple abysses, can one delve deeper into it, or should one only cautiously attempt to cross like the tightrope walker found in Nietzsche’s Thus Spoke Zarathustra? Derrida largely dismisses questions such as this as ‘plus bêtes que les bêtes’ (Derrida, 30), however Posthumanism must engage with the abyss, not because it threatens to be cast into it, rather, because it is these abysses that find themselves ripe for the posthuman. Rather than utilizing an abyss as a way of describing an arena of thought which we should not enter, which effectively serves to cut off
thought, this paper will begin to develop a way to tentatively approach the abyss from within it. As
Nietzsche posed in *Beyond Good and Evil* (Aphorism 146), ‘He who fights with monsters might take care
lest he thereby become a monster. And if you gaze long enough into an abyss, the abyss gazes back into
you.’ Through the abyss an initial philosophical move can be made, rather than engaging it as a site of
castigation, omission or one that is simply over-looked, we can begin to provisionally outline a
philosophy of the abyss(es) in which posthumanist concerns play a major role in elucidating. If
humanism, broadly conceived, constructs-describes-translates these limits and opens these abysses, or
at least re-inaugurates them, then posthumanism cannot shrug them aside. Rather it must enter into
them, work through them lest a similar over-looking occurs.

Christianne M. Briffa (University of Malta)

The Semiotic Underlanguage of Posthumanist Graphic Novels

Narratives set in the future involve language change and in fact Whorf’s interest in culture and language
was triggered by an attempt at speculative fiction. Speculative narratives bring the writer and reader in
close cultural and linguistic contact with future members of our own species. However, it might not
be *homo sapiens* as we know it to be now. It might be the more biologically and technologically
advanced being envisaged by posthumanism; a ‘theorised and fabricated hybrid of machine and
organism; in short [...]cyborgs.’

It might also bring us into contact with civilisation as it is engulfed by a
dystopian world which is devoid of any humanity. Since language is defined by the body it inhabits and
reflects the culture in which it is used, it is bound to adapt and become a reflection of the qualities of
that same world. Thus, although on the one side language is not a code and it allows beyond a one-to-
one correspondence between signified and signifier for a plurality of meaning, speculative fiction, at
times, approaches linguistic problems as a binary code or ‘one code which translates all meaning
perfectly’.

However, other narratives with a futuristic setting find that as with regards language ‘one is
too few, but two are too many’. Thus, speculative narratives are rife with communication and
translation problems between humans, part humans and non-humans.

Comics, in particular graphic novels, are composites that combine words and images to create an
impact that in a number of ways is different from that produced by other modes of narrative such as
novels or even film. Whilst on the one hand, like film, graphic narratives depend on a visual language
that encourages immediate processing, they use the images as referential icons which make use of the
same semantics of the linguistic codes. Letters and words in themselves are part of the icon presented
which far from putting the reader into a passive mode of reception allows for an efficient exchange
between the author and the readers. The images within the comic, which as Will Eisner points out is ‘a
heavily coded medium’, have the ability to directly affect the readers’ response and present the
speculative world in a way that words on their own cannot. Being restricted by the spatial organisation
of the page, the author, together with the illustrators, relies on the already established assumptions
and predispositions that the readers may hold in order to concentrate narrative effectiveness. Even
within a speculative word, these commonly accepted paradigms ‘speed the reader into the plot and
give the teller reader-acceptance for the action of his characters’.

By looking at examples of speculative narratives in graphic novels such as *V for Vendetta* and *Sin City*
and comparing them with their filmic counterparts and conventions used in novels, this paper plans to look at how these bring
their meaning across, in spite of being set in a world that is alien to ours, by trying to explore
intermediatic translation as portrayed in these fictions between the present and the future, the human
and quasi human, the actual and the imaginary.

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8 Haraway Donna, ‘A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology and Socialist-feminism in the Late
Twentieth Century’ in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New Routledge, 1991),
p.150.
9 Haraway Donna, p. 176.
10 Haraway Donna, p.177.
12 Eisner Will as above.
‘[…] when our understanding of the material components of a work changes, the artwork itself is transformed.’

It is difficult to deny that by entering the digital realm, the very idea of writing has been changed. As prize-winning hypertext poet Stephanie Strickland emphatically put it:

‘Poetry wants to get off the page, where it once always was – in the voice, in the life of the community, on the walls of the cities, as part of performance that includes music and spectacle and dance – the Greek tragedies, for instance. Now there are entirely new ways for it to do this.’

The ‘mediated info-environment’ and possibly global monoculture that is the worldwide web behind the glowing computer screen has enabled a transmediation; a digitisation and dissemination of poetry, giving it a new ‘dimension’ in every sense of the word. Computer-generated poetry such as may be accessed and experienced online through websites such as the Electronic Poetry Centre enables readers to contribute to the production of texts bestowing upon them new responsibilities and engaging them in ways that the printed page does not allow for. The random occurrences and continually shifting displays which characterise certain e-narratives, the hyperlinks which cause the reader to page-hop continually, from sequence to sequence; and the overall process of writing and erasing, redefining and recreating, drags the reader into what critics recognise as a ‘user’s no time gravitational world.’ Poems become inhabited events; ‘soft ephemeral e-spaces (e-e-spaces)’ of seemingly endless deferral, which enact fantasy through the maths of digital codification. Meaning occurs according to the machine’s speed in processing information. On a global scale, within the realm of the Net, timed experiences also become timeless when one considers the multitude of ‘de-territorialised viewers’ interacting with this media from all over the world, in real-time, at any given time.

Everything seems to point to progress. Is it, however, merely a question of innovation? It shall be the purpose of this paper to investigate the workings of electronic poetry, and thereby to pose the question of whether this transmediation does indeed translate into progress, and a ‘palpable sense of power to the written word’, or whether it is simply a harmless experimental meandering that has, arguably, already come full-circle.

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14 Interview with Stephanie Strickland, ‘Currents in Electronic Literacy: E-poets on the state of their Electronic Art.’