Resituating the Untranslatable:

Modernism from Moscow to Rio to Berlin

Byron Byrne-Taylor

Contents

Impact Statement

What is untranslatability, who can prove it and how can it be found? As argued in the following work, it is not definable through a unitary theory but rather provides us with a novel lens through which to read literary texts anew. As elaborated in more detail in a recent publication,[1] the methodology offered in the following work is applicable both inside and outside the University. Putting this methodology into practice, my project takes three untranslatable terms and uses them as literary theories to analyse six allegedly untranslatable authors. It allows the breadth of my project to include Russian, Brazilian and German modernism, while being vigilant of the dramatic historical events that characterised this period. Between revolution, war, colonialism and exile, what was it that led so many authors of this period to aspire to an untranslatable style of writing? Is this a conscious aesthetic, or is it a judgement levelled at the authors from their contemporaries? I will address the University context first, the external context second.

Institutionally then, I suggest that using *The Dictionary of Untranslatables* (2014) as a source-text for teaching literary theory, allows the educator and the student alike a more global form of dialogue, interpretation and critique. From the perspective of the educator, I suggest that it better suits the global promise with which Universities advertise themselves, in new, challenging, and counter-intuitive ways. From the perspective of the student, I suggest that pursuing untranslatability pedagogically forces students to grasp and understand language, much as a translator would, and the conditions in which it originates, while using similar teaching strategies as that employed in the teaching of literary theory. I gesture to the fact that this methodology would accommodate both the words within *The Dictionary* itself, but also the strategies employed by Translation Studies.

Outside the academy, I argue that untranslatability can counter-intuitively also be a means by which to rescue authors whose work has subsequently fallen into obscurity or has been left untranslated into English. Two of the authors in my study – the Brazilian surrealist Murilo Mendes and the German poet Mascha Kaléko – certainly fit this category. The former remains almost entirely untranslated into English, and thus I hope this project can, in some modest way, help rectify this, and encourage others to do the same. Untranslatability, interpreted in this sense, can also be a way to re-historicise and recover many of the brilliant authors who have been lost due to their language of composition or geographical site of origin. From that perspective, untranslatability offers a more globally informed way of teaching and research, while also carrying a reparative possibility for authors whose work has not received the adulation and attention they deserve.

[1] Taylor, Byron, "Untranslatability: The Rebirth of Theory?" Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics, Vol. 44, No. 4, Winter 2021, pp. 16-30.

Acknowledgements

My gratitude toward those who have supported me toward up to this point cannot possibly be expressed on a single page. It would be impossible to conduct a project on being and language and not bear these thoughts in mind. The idea for this project began as a MPhil thesis at the University of Cambridge. My gratitude goes to Sara Colvin, Rory Finnin, Rebecca Reich, Brian Epps and Martin Ruehl for the insight and inspiration they exercised on me in this formative period.

Isvtan Rev's teaching and oversight at the OSA Archives in Budapest, Hungary, has never left my mind since, so deep an impact has his thinking had on mine. At University College London, Florian Mussnung, Zoran Multinovic, Kathryn Batchelor, Jane Gilbert and Stephanie Bird have been bastions of sanity and support during these strange and troubled times. At Harvard University, I had the pleasure of meeting David Damrosch, Mariano Siskind, Lawrence Venuti and Rebecca Walkowitz, and the tremendous insights I have gleaned from their teaching and dialogue has been treasured, provocative and ongoing. My gratitude also goes out to David K. Jackson, Paul North and Marijeta Bozovic at Yale University, for the time they took to read each Section of this work, in its various and changeable manifestations.

Above all, my respect and gratitude to Stephen Hart and Anna Ponomareva. Their hard-earned rigor was what this project needed, and the scope of its ambitions could not have been weathered or navigated without their direction. Stephen's comparative literary scope matched with Anna's expertise in Translation Studies and Philosophy has granted it the optimistic fortune of appealing to both disciplines. My deepest gratitude goes to the family, friends and loved ones who have supported, engaged with and challenged this work into fruition and completion. You know who you are. I would also like to dedicate it to my Grandfather, who sadly passed away during its composition; but without whose resilience, wisdom and ability to change, I would never have made it to where I am today.

Introduction

Untranslatability speaks foremost to our desire for singularity and our need to be understood; accordingly, it can be described in the literary context as the textual site in which these impulses negotiate. It is commonly defined as the phenomenon of words, texts or ideas that cannot be translated. As such, the failure to translate gestures to the impossibility of interpreting a work of literature to a satisfactory standard whilst revealing the network of expectations through which that work is received. That is because the actual claim of untranslatability toward the literary text is often informed by, and conversant with, the conditions of its accusation.

The untranslatable author so implicated here is an author for whom singular experience, linguistic difficulty or density of allusion are assumed to be less a series of accidents than the development of deliberate aesthetic principles. These traits are not a failing of purpose but formulate the highest artistic achievement. In this view, the difficulty of a text offers a creative autonomy not available in a simple or transparent work. Following this line of thinking, within the impossibility of being interpreted lies the rare but precious possibility of being interpreted differently, esoterically, for a new form of reception, a new art, a new age or a new modernity. For the critic of untranslatable texts, initiative must sometimes take the place of understanding. Does it present the highest challenge to a translator's art, or is it the definitive proof of an author's unassailable singularity?

Consider the following work as my attempt to enlarge the literary history of Modernism using untranslatability as my running theme, criteria of literary selection and ongoing contextual focus. Each of my Chapters are written with three audiences in mind: the reader uninitiated with the contexts and authors I discuss; the reader interested in this study from the perspective of Comparative Literature and World Literature; and the reader interested from the perspective of Translation. A story now follows, in which the idea of untranslatability was first conceived; then exercised aesthetically; then, presently, academically reconceptualised.

Three eras of untranslatability

If untranslatability exists, then where did it begin? A teleological answer is needed to understand this project's title, argument and conclusions. I will hereby extend a brief history of untranslatability in the modern Western context, one revealing the common inheritance of the disciplines to which this thesis is addressed (Comparative Literature, World Literature and Translation Studies), arising as they do from the Romanticism where untranslatability was intellectually conceived.

Yet one must also consider the historical and cultural conditions of this strange and enduring concept in the hope of understanding the motivation(s) for its occurrence or claim. As will be seen, those motivations are multiple. They range from nationalism to political persecution, to the contradiction of gender roles and traditional constraints, all the way to that most modern, post-Romantic and post-Freudian of aims: *the desire for authenticity*. As will come to be seen over the course of the following work, untranslatability is a locus of competing energies and rival tendencies to withdraw, mystify and challenge, but also to build solidarity, establish authenticity and offer testimony to moments of accelerated historical rupture. A literary untranslatability, in the same gesture, acknowledges the foreign reader's reception while deliberately withdrawing itself from that reader's understanding. Why would anyone do this, for what reasons and to what end?

The only way of making these questions and issues more salient for the reader themselves, is to turn briefly to the historical epochs where untranslatability rose as a point of interest, urgency and conceptual ambition. From the modern Western perspective, it begins in German Romanticism where untranslatability was first conceptually conceived; then moves to literary Modernism in which it was practiced; ending in the contemporary era in which its possibilities remain promising but, to my mind, undelivered.

Romanticism

The epistemology of untranslatability in the modern Western context finds its first sustained articulations in the work of late German Romanticism. Largely borne from the advancements of a handful of closely-knit intellectuals in Jena (1798-1804), Heidelberg (from 1806) and Berlin (from A. W. Schlegel's arrival in 1787), some scholars have praised this movement as second only to Ancient Greece in its enduring contribution to European culture.[2]

Their obsession with aesthetic autonomy corresponded with a time when nations, communities and individuals were questioning their *own* autonomy in unprecedented ways. Facing the chaotic spectacle of the French Revolution with a mixture of inspiration and trepidation, a desire for autonomy in Romanticism's latter period was compounded by the realisation that nations were structurally conditioned fragments of a broader whole. Writing in 1789, the German playwright Friedrich Schiller decries the idea of writing 'for one nation only' as 'absolutely unbearable': no contemporary, he goes on, 'could not confine itself to such a changeable, accidental, and arbitrary form of humanity, a fragment (and what else is the greatest nation?) […].'[3]

Interest in translation rose in this period, yet Bowie claims it 'would seem to depend upon a universal schematising capacity': one that indicated a general philosophical account of *pure language* was suddenly possible.[4] Recognising these languages in their plurality ushered in a sense of relativism. The importance of language and translation in this context was not 'in the identifying of 'things,' but in the ways language, like mathematics, can establish new relations between things, relations which constitute what a thing is understood to be.'[5]

[2] 'Probably only the flowering of ancient philosophy in the Athens of Plato and Aristotle would bear comparison. Any new student of philosophy who wishes to become aware of the potential of thought might well be referred to these two exemplary epochs.' See: (ed.) Bubner, Rudiger, *German Idealist Philosophy* (London: Penguin Books, 1997), p. ix.
[3] Schiller, Friedrich, *Schillers Werke*. (ed.) Julius Petersen and Gerhard Fricke. (Weinlar: Bohlaus, 1868), p. 304.
[4] Bowie, Andrew, *From Romanticism to Critical Theory* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 60.
[5] *From Romanticism to Critical Theory*, p. 66.

No account of this era can do without mention of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), whose broad range of interests earned contemporary admiration and has led his successors to canonise his most casual remarks. Glancing to the future of literature as the literate reading public grew, Goethe said to Johann Peter Eckermann in 1837 that "National literature is now a rather unmeaning term; the epoch of world literature [*Weltliteratur*] is at hand, and everyone must strive to hasten its approach."[6] The convergence between a globalised audience and an untranslatable aesthetic arguably starts here.

Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), predominantly historicised as a theologian at the University of Berlin, came to establish a mode of hermeneutics that went beyond religious scripture. Schleiermacher's hermeneutic circle constitutes that rarest of things: a theory still unrefuted. Schleiermacher argued that 'the part' of a text 'can be understood only by means of the whole and every explanation on the part presupposes the understanding of the whole.'[7]

Later, in 1813, he delivered a lecture entitled *Über die verschiedenen Methoden des Übersetzens* ['On the Different Methods of Translation'].[8] While the author gave it little thought,[9] this lecture arguably marks 'the moment when translation enters into the horizon of hermeneutics and the science of language.'[10] Schleiermacher's digressive lecture leads him to a simple but enduring image. The translator's decisions, according to Schleiermacher, boils down to a simple choice. The translator can either draw the reader closer to the text; or draw the text closer to the reader. As will go on to be seen, scholarship on translation has maintained a consistent recourse to this work in general (its central image in particular).

---

[6] Eckermann, Johann Peter. *Conversations with Goethe in the Last Years of His Life* (United States: Hilliard, Gray, 1839), p. 204.
[7] (eds.) Bowie, Andrew & Clarke, Desmond. *Schleiermacher: Hermeneutics and Criticism* (Kiribati: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 109.
[8] Venuti, Lawrence & Mona Baker, *The Translation Studies Reader* (London: Routledge, 2000).
[9] Schleiermacher, Friedrich, A*kademievorträge. Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (Berlin & New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2002).
[10] Berman, Antoine & S. Heyvaert, *The Experience of the Foreign: Culture and Translation in Romantic Germany* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992), p. 17.

German thinkers began to refer to the Absolute [*Absolut*] – something which in the aesthetic context constitutes a supranational space reachable through aesthetic effort but stranded, paradoxically, somewhere beyond language.[11] What began as the path toward the Absolute slowly came to assume a sophistic and mystical shade. Such can be gleaned from Friedrich Schlegel's remark that a classical text 'must never be entirely comprehensible. But those who are cultivated and who cultivate themselves must always want to learn more from it.'[12]

This marks an interesting turn in the movement's development, one of consequence to untranslatability as a conceptual theme, and later, Modernism as a literary movement. This period's quest for literary autonomy is summarised by French translator Antoine Berman: 'That the theory of the translatability of the work is suddenly inverted into the theory of its untranslatability,' he observes, 'is perhaps an inevitable dialectical turning-back by which late Romanticism seeks to affirm in its way the absolute autonomy of poetry,'[13] choosing, in other words, using the idea of untranslatability to enshrine their pre-existing concepts.

Some of those pre-existing concepts included emergent European nations. Increasingly, intellectuals and poets from different national traditions began to claim that they had a special word for homesickness that was 'radically untranslatable.'[14] In a sense, then, late German Romanticism can be read as a series of fascinating provisional efforts to understand the individual in a global context; to formulate frameworks for global engagement; and finally, of thinking through the problems and opportunities that emerge when addressing a global audience. Only with literary Modernism does the concept of untranslatability move from the realm of abstraction and onto the literary page.

---

[11] Nassar, Dalia, *The Romantic Absolute: Being and Knowing in Early German Romantic Philosophy, 1795-1804* (United Kingdom: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

[12] Schlegel, Friedrich, "Critical Fragments" in: (ed.) Bernstein, J. M., *Classic and Romantic German Aesthet*ics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)

[13] *The Experience of the Foreign: Culture and Translation in Romantic Germany*, p. 119.

[14] Boym, Svetlana, *The Future of Nostalgia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 12.

Modernism

Modernism is an irresistibly schematic designation for a variety of cultural output, usually periodised in Western discourse between 1890 and 1945. Its most famous proponents remain novelists like Samuel Beckett (1906-1999), James Joyce (1882-1941), Marcel Proust (1871-1922) and Virginia Woolf (1882-1941), and poets like T. S. Eliot (1888-1965), Ezra Pound (1885-1972) and Gertrude Stein (1874-1946). Efforts to homogenize this work usually cohere on claims toward representation,[15] the city,[16] individualism,[17] consciousness[18] and cultural fragmentation.[19] Years of significance are still contested. Fredric Jameson has offered the Council of Trent (1545-1563) as the start of modernity;[20] Jean-Michel Rabaté has concentrated on 1913 as 'the inception of our modern period of globalisation'[21] whilst 1922 remains a year of undisputed importance. Joyce's novel *Ulysses* (1922) would innovate literary form irrevocably.[22] T. S. Eliot, meanwhile, would publish *The Wasteland* (1922), desolate, lyrical and outstanding.[23]

If 'Modernism' is still used to abbreviate a time of unprecedented richness and complexity, the reasons for this are both material and intellectual. The material conditions of Modernism were diverse, varied and contingent (as will be testified) but a few overarching events are plainly exigent: the destruction of both World Wars (and their attendant symbolic problems for longstanding narratives of European supremacy), and the broader industrialisation of cities worldwide form irremovable conditions to Modernism's backdrop.

---

[15] Lawtoo, Nidesh. *The Phantom of the Ego: Modernism and the Mimetic Unconscious*. MSU Press, 2013.
[16] McCracken, Scott. "Imagining the Modernist City" in: *The Oxford Handbook of Modernisms*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
[17] Meer, Zubin, ed. *Individualism: The cultural logic of modernity* (New York: Lexington Books, 2011).
[18] Sotirova, Violeta. *Consciousness in modernist fiction: A stylistic study*. (USA: Springer, 2013).
[19] Haslam, Sara. *Fragmenting Modernism: Ford Madox Ford, the novel and the great war*. Manchester University Press, 2008.
[20] Jameson, Fredric, *The Ancients and the Postmoderns: on the Historicity of Forms* (London & New York: Verso Books, 2015), p. 1.
[21] Rabaté, Jean-Michel, *1913: The Cradle of Modernism* (London: Blackwell, 2007).
[22] Joyce, James, *Ulysses* (Paris: Shakespeare & Co., 1922).
[23] Eliot, T. S., *The Wasteland* (London: Random House, 1922).

Facing this backdrop, it felt impossible to write on these new experiences in the language of one's predecessors. New realities demanded new forms of expression. A key intellectual force on Modernism took shape in the same city where Romanticism had previously ended: Berlin. In 1878, a precocious Swiss adolescent attended the University of Berlin to study ancient and modern languages. Having travelled the world linguistically (if not literally) he returned to the University of Geneva in 1892 with a linguistic relativism far ahead of his contemporaries. In his lectures on general linguistics and comparative philology at the University of Geneva (a rare combination of perhaps underexplored significance), Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) made discoveries that would substantially change the intellectual landscape beyond Geneva, upturning the long-established relations between words and things.

'If words stood for pre-existing concepts,' Saussure told his students, 'they would all have exact equivalents in meaning from one language to the next; but this is not true.'[24] It is undeniably difficult to grasp the revelation of this insight today, so intellectually embedded has it since become. This obscure Swiss linguist would open up the interpretation of language beyond recognition. From Saussure onward, claims Harris, words 'are collective products of social interaction, essential instruments through which human beings constitute and articulate their world.'[25] Judging from the range of his interpretations, one could conclude that Saussure's ideas themselves are of less significance today than is the accumulative range of their subsequent impact and the measure of their genealogical influence. These lectures brought questions of language and being to the foreground of Western thinking. Though he died a year before the First World War, his translator suggests Saussure 'seems in an uncanny way to have anticipated it,' by foreseeing what would happen when 'old assumptions about language and society' were radically questioned or abandoned.[26]

---

[24] Saussure, Ferdinand de, "Course on General Linguistics" in: Leitch, Vincent B. et al (eds.) The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001), p. 857.
[25] *Saussure and Wittgenstein* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. ix.
[26] Harris, Roy, *Saussure and His Interpreters* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), 2nd ed, p. 165.

Saussure's discovery would travel quickly, suddenly investing questions of language with fresh urgency and existential import. 'Language as a model!' Jameson marvelled in 1972: 'To rethink everything through once again in terms of linguistics! What is surprising, it would seem, is only that no one thought of doing so before;'[27] more surprising still, I interject a half-century later, is that while even Modernism's earliest critics recognised its inherent 'difficulty,' an extended account of that difficulty from the perspective of translation remains unthought.

Which altogether brings to the fore a question posed here in its initial, tentative form: How does one confront this familiar modernism with the theme of untranslatability? Few literary works can compete with the untranslatability of Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake* (1939), a bizarre landscape of multilingual compounds and obscure puns.[28] For Eliot's part, a preface to a 1919 translation of Paul Valéry's poetry sees him conclude with untimely foresight:

> The best stimulus to influence is good translation; the Elizabethan age, as we must not tire of reminding ourselves, was the age in England which produced the most numerous and the most living translations. To translate a poet like Valéry, even into tolerable prose, is extremely difficult: […] and *success* in a translation is no vague commendation – in a task which I should have considered impossible.[29]

Here, T.S. Eliot not only makes a claim for Valéry's greatness as a poet *alongside* the issue of Valéry's untranslatability. Not viewing them as mutually exclusive propositions, Eliot surprisingly suggests here that the two are potentially coextensive. In other words, Eliot acknowledges translation's importance while implying its impossibility. It reveals that an Anglocentric and monolingual Modernist scholarship is ill-equipped for considerations of untranslatability; only a plurilingual investigation will, like the one I will come to propose here.

---

[27] Jameson, Fredric, *The Prisonhouse of Language* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. vii.
[28] Joyce, James, *Finnegan's Wake* (London: Faber & Faber, 1939).
[29] (ed.) Schuchard, Richard, Eliot, T. S., "A Brief Introduction to the Method of Valéry," p. 563.

The Present Era

I now follow these genealogical currents up to the present century. One cannot go further without recognising the shadow late German Romanticism casts over the disciplines with which this project is engaged, and toward which, too, it is primarily addressed. These deserve some provisional acknowledgements, before moving on to the topic of untranslatability itself in the present context.

Literary modernism is still notoriously inhospitable to definition. Catherine Greiner's solution, following her *Multiple Modernisms: 1905-1970* exhibition in 2013,[30] is to side-step the issue of definition entirely for a more wide-ranging path of cultural pluralisation. Seeking to further distance modernism from the cultural centres of London, New York and Paris, Susan Stanford Friedman's masterful *Planetary Modernisms* (2015) gives an account of literary modernism unrivalled in global scope and archival erudition. Even here, she concludes that 'cultural circulations, networks, and enmeshments of the global and local all depend upon translation […] Multidirectional traveling of modernities and their modernisms is fundamentally a translational practice.'[31] Douglas Mao describes the 'New Modernist Studies' as one characterised by the emergent geographical scope of the texts under analysis.[32] More recently, Walkowitz and Hayot have proposed that 'modernism' and 'the global' should come to be recognised as conceptually synonymous.[33] The present project contributes knowingly to this former pluralisation; but also seeks to question this latter hypothesis, examining and scrutinising the varying cosmopolitan presuppositions on which it rests.

[30] Grenier, Catherine., ed. 2013. *Modernités plurielles 1905–1970: dans les collections du Musée national d'art moderne*. Paris: Centre Pompidou.
[31] Stanford Friedman, Susan, *Planetary Modernisms* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), p. 74.
[32] Mao, Douglas, ed. *The New Modernist Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).
[33] (eds.) Walkowitz, Rebecca & Hayot, Eric, *A New Vocabulary for Global Modernisms* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

Decolonial theorists like Walter Mignolo have insisted that the word 'modern' cannot be divorced from 'colonialism' in the Brazilian context.[34] To consider 'global' and 'modern' mutually exchangeable requires a great deal of universalisation but this not without merit and is presently qualified more carefully. From my perspective (with a concentration on the Western context), late German Romanticism, literary modernism, and the contemporary moment are all visited by - if not a sense of equality between these two notions - then certainly an underlying realisation that the foreign is conversant with the self and that foreign contexts can impact local concerns. When examining these authors, the synonymity of 'global' and 'modern' will be seen less as a governing principle and more as a circular fact: the absorption of foreign influences made the possibility of a global audience conceivable, but also made untranslatability appealing as a sophisticated and singular mode of writing.

Returning to the task at hand, much of Romanticism's efforts and activities are housed today in the academic discipline of Comparative Literature. According to David Damrosch, one of its key figureheads, today the discipline is 'experiencing a paradigm shift of the sort that occurs only once or twice in a century,' to which 'an effective response will require us to rethink the grounds of comparison from the ground up.'[35] As a discipline, it spans as many languages as one can learn and provides a range of approaches to understand literatures, languages, cultures and peoples in a comparative or global context. The parameters of its execution are therefore infinite.

Building upon Goethe's statements on the topic, Damrosch's *What is World Literature?* (2003) has subsequently become the template for an outgrowth of Comparative Literature. 'I take world literature to encompass all literary works that circulate beyond their culture of origin,' he claims, 'either in translation or in their original language.'[36] Damrosch's project is

[34] Mignolo, Walter & Pintos, Júlio Roberto de Souza, "A modernidade é de fato universal?: reemergência, desocidentalização e opção decolonial" in: *Revista Civitas*, Porto Alegre, v. 15, no. 3, p. 381-402.
[35] Damrosch, David, *Comparing the Literatures* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020), p. 18.
[36] *What is World Literature?* p. 20.

arguably less interested in the formation of global canons than in a mode of reading that situates the literary text as a commodity in a global context. It has not been well received by everyone. World Literature has been critiqued variously as a term 'elastic to the point of transparency'[37] and as an idea 'under incalculable strain' since its inception.[38] Some have complained that it is unthinkable without translation, a view posed by Lawrence Venuti in no uncertain terms: 'World Literature cannot be conceptualised apart from translation.'[39]

Meanwhile, University departments devoted to Translation have expanded rapidly this century, and it is now making long-overdue inroads in the humanities. Rediscovering Schleiermacher's 1813 lecture and adopting it as the template for a new way of theorising translation, scholars from Antoine Berman to Lawrence Venuti to Theo Hermans have sought to resituate Schleiermacher's legacy as pivotal to translation and hermeneutics (rather than the theological field in which he is more broadly recognised[40]). *The Translator's Invisibility* (1995) established Venuti in the academic field, wherein he characterises the labour of translators as invisible to the audiences who consume them; despite the unquestionable necessity of translation to the dissemination and distribution of culture, knowledge and ideas.[41] In respect to Schleiermacher's lecture, Venuti interprets this as a choice between 'foreignizing' the text (so that its existence as a translation is clear to the reader), or 'domesticating' the text (in which case, the text could pass as a work written in one's own culture).[42]

---

[37] Holmes, Christopher, "The Limits of World Literature", *Literary Compass* Vol. 13 Issue 9 (2016), pp. 572-584. p. 572.

[38] Chaudhuri, Supriya, *Which World, Whose Literature?* Thesis Eleven, Vol. 162 (1), Sage Publishing, pp. 75-93. p. 75.

[39] Venuti, Lawrence, "Translation Studies and World Literature." in: (eds.) D'haen, Theo, Damrosch, David & Kadir, Djelal, *The Routledge Companion to World Literature*. (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 180–93.

[40] As testament to this, there is not a single reference to Schleiermacher's contribution to the study of translation in: (ed.) Mariña, Jacqueline, *The Cambridge Companion to Friedrich Schleiermacher*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[41] Venuti, Lawrence, *The Translator's Invisibility* (London & New York: Routledge Books, 1995).

[42] Venuti, Lawrence, *The Translator's Invisibility*, pp. 113-118.

Other early contributions to this field are found in Walter Benjamin's *On the Task of the Translator* (1923), Roman Jakobson's intralingual expositions and George Steiner's *After Babel* (1975).[43] More recently, Brazilian scholar Mauricio Mendonça Cardozo asks whether the emerging distinction between literary and technological translation 'really allow us to speak consensually of *one* real subject, of one subject that can be taken unequivocally as the *real* one?'[44] He explains that it marks a new and persistent distinction in the field, toward which the present work decidedly contributes to the former.

Nevertheless, the disregard with which Translation Studies treats the topic of untranslatability should not pass unmentioned. It is accused variously on grounds of impoverishing 'the fact of translation,'[45] as an excess in need of conversion[46] or a compensatory gesture,[47] dismissed as 'of little relevance to success conditions'[48] of translation or as nothing more than 'an inevitable aspect of all translating.'[49] 'In a time when *Finnegan's Wake* is being translated into Chinese (Yun),' Haring adds wittily, 'who will defend untranslatability?'[50] Yet none of these facts or statements prevent untranslatability from haunting the discipline of Translation Studies from the margins of its foundational texts.

---

[43] See: Jakobson, Roman. "On linguistic aspects of translation," in: *On translation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013); Benjamin, Walter, "The Task of the Translator," in: (eds.) Venuti, Lawrence & Baker, Mona, *The Translation Studies Reader* (London: Routledge, 2000); Steiner, George, After Babel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975).

[44] Cardozo, Mauricio Mendonça. "Translation, humanities and the critique of relational reason." In: Spitzer, D. M. (ed.) *Philosophy's Treason* (Delaware: Vernon Press, 2020), pp. 111-129. p. 120.

[45] Baer, Brian James, and براين جيمس باير. "From Cultural Translation to Untranslatability - من الترجمة الثقافية إلى استحالة الترجمة: Theorizing Translation Outside Translation Studies." *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, no. 40, 2020, pp. 139–63. p. 146.

[46] Wang, Jianjun. "An Analysis of Untranslatability between English and Chinese from Intercultural Perspective." *English Language Teaching* 7.4 (2014): 119-125.

[47] Cui, Jingjing. "Untranslatability and the Method of Compensation." *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 2.4 (2012): 826.

[48] Pym, Anthony. "Text and risk in translation." *Choice and Difference in Translation. The Specifics of Transfer. Athens: University of Athens* (2004): 27-42. p. 32.

[49] Bassnett, Susan (ed.) *Translation and world literature* (London & New York: Routledge, 2018), p. 5.

[50] Lee Haring. "Against Untranslatability." *Narrative Culture*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2014, pp. 145–74. *p. 148.*

Roman Jakobson calls all poetry untranslatable in principle;[51] Walter Benjamin concedes that words 'prove to be untranslatable' at times due to 'the looseness with which meaning attaches to them';[52] George Steiner's *After Babel* discusses untranslatability 11 times.[53] J. C. Catford provided a more sustained account in 1965, arguing that it arises from the absence of cultural conditions in the receiving language.[54] This did not silence the matter entirely. Frustration can be read in Philip E. Lewis's claim from 1984, that to 'deny that language has this capacity is demonstrably foolish, and to claim that philosophy or linguistic theory should not, or need not, reckon with the incidence of untranslatability seems hopelessly defensive.'[55]

Lewis was partly correct. Two Bulgarian linguists had given the topic serious thought only a few years prior: Sergei Vlakhov (1917-2011) and Sider Florin (1912-1999). Their collaborative work *Neperevodimoe v perevode* [*The Untranslatable in Translation*] (1980) sought to sophisticate the topic, suggesting that untranslatable words have within them a subset they call *realia*.[56] Florin's later English abbreviation of the text defines *realia* as 'words and combinations of words' that 'express local and/or historical colour,' and therefore 'have no exact equivalents in other languages.'[57] The Cold War slowed the book's Western reception, deepening the topic's marginality.[58]

[51] Jakobson, Roman. "On linguistic aspects of translation," p. 235.
[52] Benjamin, Walter, "The Task of the Translator," p. 23.
[53] Steiner, George, After Babel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 29; p. 37; p. 66; p. 192; p. 252; p. 255; p. 257; p. 283; p. 312; p. 372; p. 381.
[54] Catford, John, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation (Oxford:* Oxford University Press, 1965).
[55] Lewis, Philip, "The Measure of Translation Effects," in: Venuti, Lawrence & Baker, Mona, *The Translation Studies Reader* (London & New York: Barnes & Noble, 2002), pp. 264-84. p. 272.
[56] Vlakhov, Sergei and Florin, Sider, *Непереводимое в переводе [The Untranslatable in Translation]*. Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 1980).
[57] Florin, Sider (1993) "Realia in Translation," in: Zlateva, Palma, *Translation as Social Action: Russian and Bulgarian Perspectives* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2018), pp. 122-128, p. 123.
[58] Pamla Zlateva would extend their conceptual findings in the following decade. See: Zlateva, Palma, *Translation as Social Action: Russian and Bulgarian Perspectives* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2018).

The claim (rather than fact) of untranslatability is what detains me; the means to analyse translation the only methodology equal to the task of evaluating such claims. Correspondingly, I will come to suggest that an attention paid to untranslatability *within* the literary text must necessarily focus on Schleiermacher's secondary alternative. That is, to focus on how authors use language to *distance* themselves from their reader, through whatever range of strategies. I do this to try and make clear the various motivations behind the distances sought between the literary text and its reader, and the distances these texts still respectively impose on translations into English today.

This means going beyond complaints of 'difficulty' in a work of modernist literature. What I hope to establish is the critical strategy to *interrogate* those very claims of 'difficulty' with recourse to translation. Recourse to translation itself means recourse to context. Recourse to context requires an understanding of the audience, or receptive agent, in this dynamic: as Felski observes that a 'style of writing cannot be difficult in itself, only in relation to the expectations of a given audience.'[59] Translation, like a style of writing, is always directed somewhere. This is what translators call a target-language, an imperative element to its analysis. Yet in most accounts of an author's translation and reception, this target-audience is decidedly abstract. It is represented as a shapeless agglomerate, one measured in ways that leave little room for innovative approaches or creative singularity on the part of the author. The gradual construction of a more sophisticated approach to untranslatability aims to change this.

Nevertheless, it is only in the contemporary moment that interest in the theme of untranslatability has coalesced toward something more substantial. Interest in the topic has produced a work that has and will continue to develop as a thematic and conceptual device, discourse and point of historical reference herein. The text in question constitutes arguably one of the most significant publications of this century so far.

[59] Felski, Rita, *The Limitations of Critique* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), p. 137.

The Dictionary of Untranslatables

Given such enormous stakes, the background of the book's inception should be established here. It began in the revolutionary Paris of 1968, where the French philosopher Barbara Cassin defended her thesis on ontology. In 1974, she took up a position at the Etienne Marcel hospital in Paris, France. Working with young patients with severe psychotic conditions, it was here the philosopher realised language can serve as expression while falling short of communication. The hospital is where her twin interests in philosophy and translation converged:

> This brings me back to an experience that I don't often talk about but which was very important to me […] I was a teacher of psychotic adolescents in a day hospital. They were children who had the greatest difficulty having a mother tongue, who sometimes did not speak, or made noises, even though they were very intelligent.[60]

Cassin would go on to an illustrious career in Ancient Philosophy, later turning to more contemporary Continental thinkers like Alain Badiou, Martin Heidegger and Jacques Lacan.[61] Yet it was her experiences in Etienne Marcel that stimulated the more ambitious volume *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies: dictionnaire des intraduisibles*.[62] Taking a decade to complete, with over 150 contributors, it was a book like no other. Words from various European languages were defined according to their metamorphoses from one language or discourse to another. It consciously sought to distinguish itself from the Anglo-American analytic forms of philosophy that presently dominate the discipline but, according to Cassin, offers little space for innovation or new ideas:

---

[60] Briffard, Colette, *Entretien avec Barbara Cassin, philosophe et philologue, directeure de recherche au CNRS, réalisé par Colette Briffard*. Available via: http://www.revue-texto.net/Dialogues/Cassin_interview.html.
[61] Cassin, Barbara & Michel Syrotinski, *Jacques the Sophist: Lacan, Logos, and Psychoanalysis* (United Kingdom: Fordham University Press, 2019); Badiou, Alain, et al. *Heidegger: His Life and His Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016).
[62] Cassin, Barbara et al, *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies: dictionnaire des intraduisibles* (France: Le Robert, 2004).

> analytic philosophy, done badly in France, which says, for example, that we all think the same, that there is no problem of tongues, of languages, and no problem of time […] So I didn't believe in this either, and I don't like the effects it has. So I wanted something else, and this something else is re-philosophizing words with words and not with universals.[63]

Across the Atlantic Ocean, Emily Apter studied English and French at Harvard and Princeton. Literary theory was at its height. The inclusion of largely philosophical ideas and concepts into the reading of literary texts provoked energy, polarisation and debate. Literary theory, as Apter herself acknowledges, 'is an imprecise catchall for a welter of post-war movements in the human sciences […] that has no equivalent in European languages.'[64] All this considered, it is unsurprising that it took a student of comparative languages, as Apter then was, to recognise earlier than her contemporaries the conditions of language on theory. Later, Apter recalls the discovery of Cassin's *Vocabulaire* and the daunting endurance its scale demanded: 'my copy of the *Vocabulaire* was hauled around with me up flights of subway stairs, over rocky pathways in Corsica and Bergundy, and across airports and train stations.'[65] In 2007, Apter was commissioned (with Jacques Lezra and Michael Wood) to translate Cassin's *Vocabulaire* for an Anglophone readership. Its challenges were not lost on its editor:

> how to translate the untranslatable; how to communicate the book's performative aspect, its stake in what it means "to philosophize in translation" over and beyond reviewing the history of philosophy with translation in mind.[66]

[63] Walkowitz, Rebecca L. "Translating the Untranslatable: An Interview with Barbara Cassin," in: Ed. Marcus, Sharon & Caitlin Zaloom, *Think in Public: A Public Books Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), pp. 309-318.
[64] Apter et al, p. viii.
[65] Apter, Emily. "Lexilalia: On Translating a Dictionary of Untranslatable Philosophical Terms." *Paragraph*, vol. 38, no. 2, 2015, pp. 159–173, p. 160.
[66] Apter et al, *Dictionary of Untranslatables* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2014), p. vii.

Upon its completion, readers can be grateful for the hardship Apter and her collaborators sustained. Numbering over 400 entries by eminent linguists, philosophers, translators and scholars ranging from Judith Butler to Daniel Heller-Rozen to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, covering a variety of terms, exploring their fascinating national histories and epistemologies. While there is scarcely space to justify so here, I believe *The Dictionary of Untranslatables* is one of the most significant, ambitious and accomplished publications of our time.

In her Preface to *The Dictionary of Untranslatables* (henceforth: *The Dictionary*), Cassin's Preface to the English edition defends its inception on the grounds that language is essentially multiple. She expresses her hope that 'it will make perceptible another way of doing philosophy, which does not think of the concept without thinking of the word, for there is no concept without a word.'[67] In its most oft-quoted passage, Cassin offers a definition of the Untranslatable as paradoxical as it is compelling: 'To speak of untranslatables in no way implies that the terms in question, or the expressions, the syntactical or grammatical turns, are not and cannot be translated: the untranslatable is rather what one keeps on (not) translating.'[68]

Alongside the publication of *The Dictionary* and largely informed by its ongoing inception, Apter published *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability* (2014). On one level, it acts as an accompaniment to *The Dictionary*, allowing its editor to expand upon its frameworks and eloquently gesture to (if not define) its purpose:

> With critical finesse, [*The Dictionary*] calls into question the very possibility of naming the predicates of Western thought even as it shows how such lodestones have been and continue to be actively translated. It is an exercise in the reclamation of sophistry and logology over and

[67] Apter et al, p. xx.
[68] Apter et al, p. xvii.

> against the Platonic tradition of positing truths in an absolute sense, as a kind of mathematical intelligence unbeholden to language.[69]

On another level, its targets are more contemporaneous. It is posited as a polemic against what she critiques as 'the entrepreneurial, bulimic drive to anthologize and curricularise the world's cultural resources' for which she holds World Literature principally responsible.[70] Apter's own polemical title thus challenges Damrosch's branding of World Literature by adopting the notion of untranslatability to do so. Importantly, Apter does not take issue with Damrosch's idea so much as its implementation.

In practice, she asserts, Damrosch's approach ends up producing little more than a sanitised and commodified set of syllabi and a plethora of 'global' anthologies in English: falling prey 'inevitably to the tendency to zoom over the speed bumps of untranslatability in the rush to cover ground.'[71] The Untranslatable, meanwhile, seems to offer a solution to rethink cultural mediation, comparison and inquiry. As a profitless excretion of the world's literatures, it identifies the matter with which to rethink comparison and the limits of an inflationary World Literature industry.[72] Apter argues persuasively that literary critics should learn to 'think of translation as a kind of philosophy, or as a way of doing theory.'[73] She is not alone. Xie goes so far as to call the untranslatable 'the ontological condition of translation and knowledge.'[74] Untranslatability, a recent collection claims, is a topic whose 'profile has never been higher than at present.'[75] An expanding corpus of texts testify to its enduring resonance, engaging with *The Dictionary* and its exciting implications directly.[76]

---

[69] *Against World Literature*, p. 31.
[70] *Against World Literature*, p. 3.
[71] *Against World Literature*, p.3.
[72] Baer, Brian, "It's Only the End of the World". *boundary 2* 1st May 2014; 41 (2): pp. 213–225.
[73] *Against World Literature*, p. 247.
[74] Xie, Ming, *Conditions of Comparison* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2011), p. 44.
[75] Large et al, p. 2.
[76] Shaobo, Xie, "World literature, translation, untranslatability," *Asia Pacific Translation and Intercultural Studies*, 7:2, 2020, pp. 151-163; van der Vlies, Andrew. "World Literature, the Opaque Archive, and the Untranslatable: J. M. Coetzee and Some Others." *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, Feb. 2021, pp. 1-18.

Leading historian Carlo Ginzburg reflects that 'nowadays, anybody working on the history of ideas in a global perspective' cannot do so without taking Apter and Cassin's work into account.[77] The topic has found its way into medieval lyric,[78] psychology,[79] archival studies,[80] postcolonialism,[81] historiography,[82] and is examined in relation to French psychoanalyst Guattari[83] and the Russian author Alexander Pushkin.[84] *Untranslatability Goes Global* (2017), *Untranslatability: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (2018), *Philosophy's Treason* (2020) and *The Geschlecht Complex* (2022) are highly accomplished collections that mark *The Dictionary*'s broad academic reception,[85] while special journal issues continue the trend.[86] Jahan Ramazani's introductory essay on untranslatability in the *Cambridge Companion to World Literature* (2021) may well mark the moment of its broader institutional recognition.[87] The present work is aimed to contribute to this emerging field, referencing it where it is appropriate throughout.

[77] Ginzburg, Carlo, 'Ethnophilology: Two Case Studies,' Global Intellectual History 2:1 (2017) pp. 3-17, p. 3.
[78] Butterfield, Ardis. "Medieval Lyric: A Translatable or Untranslatable Zone?" *University of Toronto Quarterly*, vol. 88 no. 2, 2019, p. 142-159.
[79] Tim Lomas, "Experiential cartography and the significance of "untranslatable" words," *Theory & Psychology* 2018, Vol. 28 (4), pp. 476-495.
[80] Andrew van der Vlies, "World Literature, the opaque archive, and the untranslatable: J. M. Coetzee and some others," *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 2021, pp. 1-18.
[81] Dirk Wiemann, Shaswati Mazumdar & Ira Raja, "Postcolonial world literature: Narration, translation, imagination," *Thesis Eleven*, 2021, Vol. 162 (1), pp. 3-17.
[82] Lianeri, Alexandra, "A Regime of Untranslatables: Temporalities of Translation and Conceptual History." *History and Theory*, vol. 53, no. 4, 2014, pp. 473–97.
[83] Goffey, Andrew. "Guattari, Transversality and the Experimental Semiotics of Untranslatability." *Paragraph*, vol. 38, no. 2, Edinburgh University Press, 2015, pp. 231–44, http://www.jstor.org/stable/44016375.
[84] Bullock, Philip Ross. "Untranslated and Untranslatable? Pushkin's Poetry in English, 1892-1931." *Translation and Literature*, vol. 20, no. 3, Edinburgh University Press, 2011, pp. 348–72, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41306123.
[85] Levine, Susanne Jill & Katie Lateef-Jan (ed.) *Untranslatability Goes Global* (United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis, 2017); Large, Duncan et al (ed.) *Untranslatability: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (United Kingdom, Taylor & Francis, 2018); Spitzer, D. M. (ed.) *Philosophy's Treason* (Delaware: Vernon Press, 2020); Jansson, Oscar & LaRocca, David (eds.) *The Geschlecht Complex: Addressing Untranslatable Aspects of Gender, Genre, and Ontology* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022).
[86] Ed: Syronitski, Michael, Special issue: Translating the Untranslatable, *Paragraph* Vol. 38, No. 2, July 2015, pp. 139-296; (eds.) Giusti, Francesco & Lewis Robinson, Benjamin, The Work of World Literature, Cultural Inqiry, 19 (Berlin: ICI Berlin Press, 2021); Ed: Shukla, Viraj, Special Issue: Untranslatability: Problem or Practice? *Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics*, Vol. 45, No. 1, Spring 2022.
[87] Ramazani, Jahan, "Poetry, (Un)Translatability, and World Literature" in: Ganguly, Debjani (ed.) *The Cambridge History of World Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), pp. 587-620.

Lawrence Venuti's critique

However, the most significant critique *against* this new interest in untranslatability comes from leading translation scholar Lawrence Venuti. No other critic has offered so impassioned, uncompromising and sustained an account against Apter's and Cassin's work. In *Contra Instrumentalism* (2019) Venuti formulates a persuasive distinction when shaping these points. He claims there are two types of translation: the hermeneutic, and the instrumentalist. The hermeneutic model encapsulates what Venuti has spent years putting into practice and theory. It requires the translator to reinvent the source-text creatively, while being mindful of the cultural and political contexts of both the source-culture and the audience to which it is being transmitted.

Instrumentalism, on the other hand, treats translation as secondary and inferior. It stands for the prevailing public misconceptions of translation's tasks, strategies and necessities. Venuti finds it in proverbs and aphorisms: 'Whenever the notion of "compromise" is used,' he declares, 'to describe translation, instrumentalism is at work: it assumes the existence of a source-text invariant that a translation can approximate but never reproduce.'[88] For Venuti, this is as false in practice as it is misleading in theory: instrumentalism marginalises the translator to the periphery of a literary text's critical reception. It renders the scene of translation one of inevitable failure, producing a text inherently inferior to its original.

> As an understanding of translation, instrumentalism is conceptually impoverished. On the one hand, it removes a translated text from the cultural situation and historical moment that invest it with significance as an interpretative act. On the other hand, it installs the translated text in a timeless, universal realm.[89]

[88] Venuti, Lawrence, *Contra Instrumentalism* (Nebraska: Nebraska University Press, 2019), p. 67.
[89] *Contra Instrumentalism*, p. 59.

Venuti thus reiterates his longstanding position that academics recognise how translation 'lies at the core' of 'humanistic study and research.'[90] Yet no one is more guilty of instrumentalism, in Venuti's eyes, than Barbara Cassin and Emily Apter. Regarding *The Dictionary*, he points out that since 'the terms are repeatedly mistranslated in Cassin's view, calling them "untranslatable" doesn't seem precise.'[91] He complains that the definitions offered in *The Dictionary* assert contemporary theory over the historicization of the words themselves, altogether producing a presentism he dismisses as simply being a 'cultural narcissism we can do without.'[92] Criticising various articles in *The Dictionary* for their lack of historical rigour, Venuti is distinctly unimpressed: 'the translation analysis raises more questions than it answers.'[93] Yet the worst culprit of all, in Venuti's account, is Apter herself.

His reasons for this deserve further scrutiny. First, Venuti bemoans Apter's attempts to elevate untranslatability 'to a methodological principle, unfortunately, and the results seem misguided.'[94] He goes on to explain that because 'Apter's notion of untranslatability is essentialist, it cannot enable an account of the contingencies of translation.'[95] In other words, Venuti is suggesting here that the problem with Apter's project is that she interprets the Untranslatable as a semantic invariant no translator can ever hope to overcome. From this discovery, he passionately argues that 'Apter is interested in theory, not in translation,'[96] a prioritisation that does *The Dictionary* the disservice of having 'the materiality of translation' be evaporated into the abstraction of theory.[97]

[90] *Contra Instrumentalism*, p. 40.
[91] *Contra Instrumentalism*, p. 68.
[92] *Contra Instrumentalism*, p. 59.
[93] *Contra Instrumentalism*, p. 56.
[94] *Contra Instrumentalism*, p. 65.
[95] *Contra Instrumentalism*, p. 67.
[96] *Contra Instrumentalism*, p. 71.
[97] *Contra Instrumentalism*, p. 73.

Readers could wonder at this point: Why does he harbour such vitriol? Venuti's recognition of translation as central to the institutional humanities is increasingly difficult to dispute, and he should be acknowledged as one of the earliest to recognise it. Yet his derision of the Untranslatable in *Contra Instrumentalism* leads to a less nuanced oversight on this account. The following passage is where Venuti comes closest to a reconciliatory position, when he claims that

> any project that generates a conversation about translation might be welcomed in Anglophone cultures […] Yet if Cassin's dictionary were to become the main source of the talking points, the marginal status of translation would persist, unaffected, and may actually worsen. [98]

While Venuti's broader claims are persuasive, it is here I take issue with his assessments. A 'conversation' has indeed been generated, and not - as the following project hopes to confirm - one that necessarily contradicts Venuti's broader aims and purpose. To his credit, Damrosch recognises Apter and Cassin's lack of essentialism in more nuanced terms: 'these metamorphoses of meaning don't mean that translation is impossible but that it is an open process.'[99] Walkowitz describes them as words that travel but 'do not register the trace of that circulation.'[100] Or, in Syrontiski's editorial formulation, all of these words 'have had a deep and long-lasting impact on thinking across the humanities.'[101]

Out of these seemingly intractable positions a challenging set of possibilities emerge. Namely, is it possible to pursue a study of untranslatability that bears Venuti's arguments in mind? More clearly still, is it possible to approach a book about untranslatability with the rigour of the hermeneutic translator as Venuti describes them? Any attempt toward this goal requires a clear elaboration of its purposes and the establishment of its methodology forthwith.

---

[98] *Contra Instrumentalism*, p.62.
[99] Damrosch, David, *How to Teach World Literature* (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2018), 2nd ed. p. 84.
[100] Walkowitz, Rebecca, *Born Translated* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), p. 35.
[101] Syronitski, Michael, "Introduction," *Paragraph*, vol. 38, no. 2, 2015, pp. 139-144. p. 139.

How should *The Dictionary* be used?

Untranslatability has a disruptive allure that can be grasped intuitively, at face value, without prior knowledge of preceding conceptual, methodological or philosophical systems. It promises singularity amidst the range of global and intellectual exchange. It can also reinvigorate institutional necessities in need of innovation. Literary theory, for example, is still a mandatory component in most literature departments worldwide. Picturing Apter's proposition in practice means imagining a University classroom in which a class on theory is not guided just by an Anthology of Literary Theory, but by *The Dictionary*.

This suggestion arises from what has been unaddressed in the book's reception till now: Can *The Dictionary* be used as a toolkit of theories for reading literature? Choosing a single word, grasping the Untranslatable through its epistemological contingencies and historical semantics, students are then at liberty to see in what ways the intervention of this Untranslatable can re-inform or recharacterize their encounters with literary texts and cultural objects. Each of these words can be recognised in their own context, as belonging to their own various traditions and discourses with their own attendant meanings, connotations and values.

All of this comes with an unnegotiable condition. Realising that without recourse to practical translation this is liable to run into precisely the same issues as literary theory in its initial form, I assert that the only way to avoid such repetition is through a diligent appreciation of hermeneutic translation as Venuti conceives it. I claim this maintains the understanding and reappropriation of a theoretical discourse as it has been taught till now; on the other, it demands the very hermeneutic strategies with which Venuti characterises translation, manifested in the student's efforts to understand the Untranslatable in question. Meaning that a hermeneutic approach to the words in *The Dictionary* could inspire more than 'a conversation': it could inspire a more global form of theory - a proposition arguably long overdue.

To those who object to the idea of using an Untranslatable as a literary theory, reality may disappoint them. From Sigmund Freud's *unheimeliche* to Jacques Lacan's *jouissance* all the way through to Fredric Jameson's more recent musings on post-modernism, literary theory is full of words that exceed their formal or vernacular definitions.[102] In sum, I consider that using *The Dictionary* a source for re-establishing the teaching of theory together with the rigour of translation, suggests the possibility of a more global distribution of theories and ideas. Surprised that this has not happened already, I hope the foregoing project's ambition will compensate for this oversight. Equally, the following piece's architecture, spanning three nations, attempts to 'run the experiment' Emily Apter advocates: 'of imagining what a Comparative Literature contoured around untranslatability might be.'[103]

The incorporation of theory out of (and back into) the plurality of languages could be precisely what theory needs for its continued legitimation or potential development. Recalling that the African, Arabic, Chinese and Russian editions of *The Dictionary* are forthcoming, the premise and promise of this methodology will only broaden over time. Neither untranslatability nor literary modernism are exclusive to the European space or the European lexicon(s).

This will mean turning the reader away from the famous metropolitan centres of London, Paris and New York (which remain centres of public and intellectual distribution), toward the less famous and less understood literary modernisms of Moscow, Rio de Janeiro and Berlin. My goal is to expand the domain of literary modernism, using the tools of Translation Studies and the theme of untranslatability to do so. It was here, in these cities, that ideas of a global literary inheritance and a global literary audience produced work of a different order. An untranslatable aesthetic came about, at different times, in different ways and for different reasons. It is now time to turn from imagination to implementation.

---

[102] See: Freud, Sigmund. " Das unheimliche [1919]," *Sigmund Freud Studienausgabe Bd* 4 (1919): pp. 241-274; Lacan, J., and X. V. I. I. Séminaire. "L'envers de la psychanalyse, publication interne à l'Association Lacanienne Internationale." (1969).

[103] *Against World Literature*, p. 47.

The Dictionary: Three forms of untranslatability

It is for this reason that I intend to advocate this methodology multiply: using three Untranslatable words from *The Dictionary* to analyse three Modernisms. Turning from that imaginary classroom to the present project, my structure requires an appropriate measure of structure and diversification to confirm its methodology. It is to this end that I have sought a three-part structure. This is because, as I see it, the words in Apter's edition of *The Dictionary* essentially fall into three fairly discrete categories:

- The Philosophical Untranslatable
- The Political Untranslatable
- The Emotional Untranslatable

Philosophical untranslatability, the most obvious category, arises from the movement of philosophical or abstract concepts in their journey from one language to another. In this vein, the conceptual richness of a word may be self-evident to those familiar with its language, but it is precisely these same properties that are *not* satisfactorily conveyed in translation. Candidates for this category in *The Dictionary* range from *Dasein* to *Logos*. Philosophical untranslatability thus involves retracing, rediscovering and re-elaborating the philosophical articulations and redefinitions that philosophers have invested in these terms. In translation, such rich conceptual genealogies remain invisible to the reader of the translated philosophical text, preventing them from understanding its intellectual traditions, intended meaning or overall argument.[104]

[104] As Venuti expands upon in respect to these issues: 'Philosophy does not escape the embarrassment that faces contemporary academic disciplines when confronted with the problem of translation. […] Translation exposes a fundamental idealism in philosophy by calling attention to the material conditions of concepts, their linguistic and discursive forms, the different meanings and functions they come to possess in different cultural situations.' See: Venuti, Lawrence, The Scandals of Translation (London & New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 106.

Political untranslatability refers to terms specific to political discourse. Examples in *The Dictionary* include *Authority*; *Polis*; *Demos*; *State*. As I understand it, The Political Untranslatable can also define a word that is so submerged in a specific political context as to be epistemically inseparable *from* that context.[105] These words are often contaminated by forms of tyranny that overextend their ostensible authority into the realm of language. Such political experience is difficult to encapsulate in a single word or phrase, so words in this category present issues when translating for target audiences that exist apart from (or long after) the word's political context.

Emotional untranslatability, finally, is premised on the idea that certain emotions resist translation while maintaining meaning or value. In Section Three, the belief that certain emotions cannot travel comfortably between cultures is brought into focus. I acknowledge from the outset that this emphasis has more often been adopted by forms of exclusionary ethnonationalism than careful philosophical thinking (legitimate grounds, then, to be bolder and more curious this time round). Examples in *The Dictionary* are *Pathos*, *Pleasure* and *Pity*. Beyond these specific words themselves, The Emotional Untranslatable more broadly throws into question the measure of language itself to articulate the subject's internal state. Having distinguished the contents of *The Dictionary* into these three camps, this at least partially narrows down the words available to me. As I see it, moving forward it will be imperative that each category be represented in the following work for their variant emphasis to be fully explored.

[105] A useful example of this can be found in Duncan Large's reflections on his translation of Friedrich Nietzsche's complete works: 'the thorniest issue to have come up so far is what to do with the term *Übermensch*. The earliest English translations used "superman," as reflected in George Bernard Shaw's play *Man and Superman* (1903), but once Clark Kent had muscled in on the semantic eld thirty years later this ceased to be an option. "Overman" was in vogue for a while, as was simply leaving the term untranslated in German. Practical translation projects need practical solutions, though, and the one we have come up with for the Stanford edition (guided by our more overarching concern for inclusive language) is "the superhuman."' See: Large, Duncan, "The Untranslatable in Philosophy," in: Duncan, Large et al (eds.) *Untranslatability: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2018), pp. 50-46. p. 58.

This knowingly borrows something of linguist Leo Spitzer's historical semantics, whereby 'the history of a word becomes both the history of a culture and the configuration of its specific vital problem.'[106] In this sense, Spitzer saw a singular word as a privileged pathway into the epistemic foundations of the culture in which it originated. Restricting oneself to a single word from each category, it is time I introduce the words themselves.

As representative of Philosophical Untranslatability, I have chosen the German word *Stimmung*, elaborated in *The Dictionary* by Pascale David.[107] *Stimmung* is often translated as 'atmosphere' in English or '*ambience*' in French. Most German speakers would say it means nothing more than 'mood.' Such apparent simplicity conceals a word conceptualised over two centuries, from the German Idealists to Friedrich Nietzsche, Walter Benjamin and Martin Heidegger. *Stimmung* designates a presence that cannot be defined as completely subjective, nor is it entirely objective. The subject that experiences the *Stimmung* of a place, in other words, can never be certain that it has originated in the environment or in themselves. It is precisely this ambiguity between the internal and external, the subjective and collective, that makes its conceptualisation and translation so challenging.

In order to represent Political Untranslatability, I have chosen the Russian word *Pravda*, described and analysed in *The Dictionary* by Constantin Sigov.[108] In the Russian language, there are two terms for truth: *Pravda* and *Istina*. While *Istina* represents a metaphysical and unshakable truth, *Pravda*'s social and collective meaning (as I interpret it in Section Two) has been irrevocably conditioned by more contingent interests. For this reason, it is intuitively incorrect to simply translate *Pravda* as 'truth' or '*verité*' when the very definition of truth itself was under (and arguably still is under) considerable political pressure in this context.

---

[106] Agamben, Giorgio. "Aby Warburg and the nameless science." In: *Potentialities: Collected essays in philosophy* (Paolo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1999): pp. 89-103. p. 92.
[107] *The Dictionary*, pp. 1061-1062.
[108] The Dictionary, pp. 813-819.

Lastly, I choose the Portuguese word *saudade* to represent Emotional Untranslatability, as explained by Fernando Santoro in *The Dictionary*.[109] To experience the emotion of *saudade* is to miss someone or something far away in space or time, a sentiment for which there are few one-word equivalents into English. Charting the ramifications of translating emotions opens Section Three to questions of nationhood, identity and exile (all inescapable participating factors in the consideration of untranslatability itself). Altogether, the following categories will be represented in the following work by the following Sections:

- Section One: *Stimmung* as a Philosophical Untranslatable
- Section Two: *Pravda* as a Political Untranslatable
- Section Three: *Saudade* as an Emotional Untranslatable

My priorities of selection must be established before moving forward. Firstly, I will be less interested in propounding the untranslatability of these words in the practical sense than in measuring their translational reception as part of the transnational dissemination of ideas. It is also necessary to make clear what the present project is *not*. It is decidedly not interested in arguing for analysts to casually and arbitrarily detach and reattach untranslatable words onto radically different contexts at random. The following project was not the result of an accident, nor does it consider such carelessness advisable.

I put forward these categories provisionally, and while there is scarcely time and space to explain how here, I acknowledge that they present less a series of rigid categories than they are arguably more reflective of a broad spectrum of untranslatability. Untranslatability can, in theory, involve more than one of these categories at one time, but the character of its impact most often falls into one of these groups.

[109] *The Dictionary*, pp. 929-931.

Furthermore, beyond the categories outlined, each of these words share a common property. Each are fascinatingly embedded into their own national, linguistic, disciplinary and discursive spaces; but not necessarily in ways that are productive, constructive or open to debate. This is because each term I have chosen, within the parameters of its own context, is elevated to a status somewhere *beyond* discussion. These are words that bypass discursivity.

Consequently, these words have come to constitute in each of their cultures an unquestionable and un-interrogatable status or have come to be seen by those who use them as national evidence of cultural singularity. This is precisely, from my own perspective, where and why intervention is most needed. Evidently, as will be seen, each of these words carries with it a much stranger and broader history than its contemporary users acknowledge. When words are invested with an unquestionable quality, they gradually become self-evident tautologies of embedded ways of thinking that are elevated above discourse, inquiry, excavation or dispute. In the spirit of literary and cultural theory at its best, it is precisely *because* these words are short-circuited toward a presupposed consensus that I wish to disrupt this status so as to intervene, experiment and open up these words to more dynamic possibilities. This, following their categorisation into the Philosophical, Political and Emotional camps, is the primary basis for their inclusion.

Which modernisms and why

As such, the following work contributes to the cultural pluralisation of Modernism through the prism of untranslatability. An account of Modernism from the perspective of untranslatability, as prior noted, remains unwritten till now.

When English and American literary critics first read English-language Modernism, words like 'difficulty' often appeared, at others 'untranslatable'. Yet this claim was never actually *tested* through intralingual analysis, leaving in the criticism a great deal of unfounded claims to this end. Scholars like Krieger expected the critic to 'pierce through to' a text's 'untranslatable, incomparable meaning,'[110] while the 'untranslatable character of great poetry was paramount' for Cleanth Brooks.[111] Clearly, in Modernism's early reception, the accusation of untranslatability did not need verification (gesturing instead to a deliberately nonspecific supranational space – one not dissimilar to what the Romantics referred to as the Absolute).

Monolingualism remains a stubborn impediment to studies of literary Modernism, even in contemporary accounts with an ostensibly global purport. Damrosch complains that Apter's work remains curiously selective in its reference to translation scholarship,[112] while Venuti disparages works by Jahan Ramazani and Rebecca Walkowitz that entertain notions of World Literature but offer no 'serious consideration to *interlingual* translation,' rather 'emptying terms like "transnationalism" and "translation" of much of their significance while rearming the global hegemony of English.'[113] On the strength of these observations, I assert that the clearest way to produce an account of untranslatability in literary modernism is to consider literary modernism, in English translation, from a variety of other languages. This is what I intend to do here.

---

[110] Kriger, Murray, *The New Apologists for Poetry* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1956), p. 136.
[111] Latham, Sean & Rogers, Gayle, 'Modernism: The Evolution of an Idea' (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), p. 48.
[112] Damrosch, David. Review of *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability*, by Emily Apter. *Comparative Literature Studies*, vol. 51 no. 3, 2014, p. 504-508. p. 506.
[113] *Contra Instrumentalism*, p. 50.

True to the Untranslatable words chosen for this project, the requisite Modernism of each national space (Russia, Brazil and Germany) now make their provisional appearances. Russian modernism was - like the revolutionary political changes of 1917 that shaped it - more a matter of aspiration than sustained accomplishment. This is not owing to any inherent deficit in the talent of its authors but rather the conditions under which they struggled to evolve. As I will illuminate in Section One, Russia was also the first destination of Saussure's influential ideas, through an exchange that may surprise some readers.

Next, moving to the 1930s and 1940s, my selection of the Portuguese language allows me to turn to Brazilian *Modernismo*. Brazil's form of modernism is inescapably shadowed by its colonial past and is often read as a gesture of cultural rupture and self-recognition. Political freedoms declined while civil rights, in some areas, improved. Whole cities were destroyed and renovated in the rush to catch up with their European counterparts. These changes accelerated, in turn, various questions of identity, legacy and tradition. As Section Two delineates, Brazil's variation of Modernism can thus be re-historicised as an important moment of cultural self-discovery.

Lastly, German culture may not immediately appear in need of reappraisal. Granting that, the occlusion of Modernism with Germany's early 20th century history has never been unproblematic in literary scholarship. Such inclusion has been accused of bordering on the perverse.[114] The dark stain of two world wars and all attendant atrocities on the German language in the post-1945 period, however, reveals a fascinating historical ground to probe the phenomena, plausibility and contingencies of Modernism, translation and untranslatability in this harrowing final context.

[114] See: Steiner, George, *Language and Silence* (London: Atheneum, 1967), p. 9: 'The cry of the murdered sounded in earshot of the universities; the sadism went on a street away from the theatres and museums. […] I cannot accept the facile comfort that this catastrophe was a purely German phenomenon or some calamitous mishap rooted in the persona of one or another totalitarian ruler.'

As to the literary modernisms onto which these terms are imposed, these were not drawn at random. It took Leo Spitzer's historical semantics as an early model. Except, where Spitzer would analyse a single term as a point of access into the specific issues and problems of the culture from which it originated, my work here attempts a more comparative framework. This depends, necessarily, on identifying terms relevant to the contexts under discussion.

With that in mind, understanding the chaotic atmospheres of revolutionary Russia through the prism of *Stimmung* offers a chance to analyse it from an ostensibly more personalised and less politicised perspective. Investigating a postcolonial modernity through a term applicable to the Soviet context justifies reading Brazilian *Modernismo* with *Pravda*'s associative history in mind. Finally, using *saudade* when reviewing post-war exile and loss was intuitively correct. In all instances, words were chosen that were untranslatable, originating from a foreign context, in which their own undecidability is not subject to inquiry or dispute - but on all counts the words chosen are nonetheless appropriate to the contexts they are designed to reinterpret.

That should go some way toward confirming the limitations of this approach, by acknowledging in this gesture that it could be done wrongly, and that it could be done badly. What of value could be gained by resituating *Aufheben* in the context of the Holocaust? Or of reinvestigating the Turkish massacre of Armenians (1915-1917) through *Darstellung*? These examples should make clear to the reader what an arbitrary approach to this method could look like, bringing with it a host of socio-ethical problems and controversies that would not survive thematic or ethical scrutiny. Which is to summarily conclude that the allocation of the Untranslatable, here as much as in the methodology it proposes, is not an arbitrary process. Instead, it demands an understanding of the term on the one hand and the literary text on the other, an understanding which is inherently comparative in nature and not restricted to a single geographical or linguistic locus.

Earlier, I explained how the Untranslatable words chosen for this project shared a common sense of discursive paralysis in their own cultural and linguistic contexts. Conversely, if there is any recognisable commonality between the disparate literary modernisms just listed, it is that all three nations experienced what I call *a belated modernity*.

This is not simply my attempt at renaming what is elsewhere referred to as Late Modernism.[115] I call these specific modernisms belated in order to clarify the concrete historical realities each nation faced, and the urgency with which Russia, Brazil and Germany pursued them. Attacking Eurocentrism may be in vogue these days, but regardless of such conditions of presentism and whether contemporary scholars like it or not, these nations manifestly *did* consider themselves belated in regard to countries like England and France in these decades. Once this context is grasped, the desire to be untranslatable in the face of a newly potential global audience may start to make more sense.

Susan Stanford Friedman's upheaval of periodisation confirms Bruce Robbins' suspicion that literary modernism is nothing more than 'a recurrent phenomenon', defined by nothing more than 'moments of accelerating change. It too has happened outside as well as inside Europe.'[116] It is also difficult to disagree with Walkowitz's account on this matter, particularly her conviction that instead of 'choosing between a literary history of originals and a literary history of translations,' literary scholars should learn to do both, in order to construct a better picture of literature's global distribution over space and time. 'We have to do this because translation seeds production and is a crucial part of the literary ecosystem.'[117] I have left undiscussed till now, however, how exactly the Untranslatable words chosen will figure in my analysis of each foreign Modernism. I will dwell briefly on how, and why, this is pursued.

---

[115] Blanton, C. D., and Blanton, Charles Daniel. *Epic Negation: The Dialectical Poetics of Late Modernism* (United Kingdom, Oxford University Press, 2015).
[116] Bruce Robbins, 'What world history does world literature need?' in: *Routledge Companion to World Literature and World History* (London & New York: Routledge, 2018), p. 196.
[117] *Born Translated*, p. 35.

Resituating the Untranslatable

I have so far asserted that *The Dictionary* provides the best way to update literary theory in a (potentially) global context (even if my own contribution is restricted to the European languages of *The Dictionary* in the present work). Yet it still remains unclear what exactly this exercise should be called, how it could be taught, or how it could be referred to in future. Which means that what I propose here requires, before all else, a name. Venuti did not coin 'foreignization' nor Damrosch 'World Literature': each were terms (re)deployed in the urgency to name already-existing phaenomena as they saw it. What then, correspondingly, should the interpretative act of using the Untranslatable as a theory to (re)interpret literatures, languages and cultures be called? Here and throughout, this is conceived of as a process of *resituating.* Let me explain what I mean by that word. It will mean taking stock of historical semantics, 'the foreign gaze' and a whole new methodology for reading foreign literature.

I thus refer back a moment to Ferdinand de Saussure and Leo Spitzer, to consolidate my approach with an emphasis on similarities. Jameson claims Ferdinand de Saussure's thoughts were revolutionary for 'being relational rather than substantialist,' thus signalling a break with Saussure's Neo-Grammarian precedents.[118] Meanwhile, for Romance linguist Spitzer, the aim of his historical semantics was to reveal a nation or culture's 'specific vital problems' - providing a window into that culture hitherto unattainable.[119] Much as Leo Spitzer passionately explored a single word in the hope of accessing and revealing previously undisclosed aspects of its cultural history, my intervention will suggest over the course of the following work that this long-neglected strategy be rendered more comparative and fundamentally relational. This is because, notwithstanding his impressive erudition, Spitzer's experiments never pierced beyond the cultural context in which that word took shape.

[118] Jameson, Fredric, *The Prisonhouse of Language*, p. 24.
[119] Agamben, Giorgio, *Potentialities*, 92.

If Spitzer's semantic investigations dug inside a word's domestic history, I propose here instead that 'resituating the Untranslatable' into a *different* context demands a more *relational* methodology. This is one whereby each word can be used to reflect issues within the *other* culture to which it is applied. This adds a dynamic quality to the interaction of the Untranslatable and the literary text. Resituating the Untranslatable is therefore not simply the exercise of finding a word and applying it to a context. Anyone can do that. It is about identifying a term in one language that can reveal something new about the context it is used to re-interpret. Its limitations are intuitive, and its relevance is open to the analyst's justification. It means that the Untranslatable, on each encounter, is extrapolated *beyond* its local context so as to expose and illuminate configurations of issues, themes or problems in the corresponding foreign context that the analyst would not find reachable otherwise.

Next to consider is the issue of 'the foreign gaze' in the context of reading foreign literature. Rejecting the idea that one has to choose 'between a self-centred construction of the world and a radically decentred one', David Damrosch concedes in *What is World Literature?* that readers 'never truly cease to be ourselves as we read'.[120] The reader's interpretation is therefore fixedly contingent. Bruce Robbins takes issue with Damrosch here, retorting that such a standpoint risks 'the burden of a provinciality or partiality or self-interestedness from which one may need and even want to be released.'[121] Robbins thus steps upon an issue largely undiscussed, toward which I do not consider 'the foreign gaze' irrelevant. Spitzer's historical semantics (but making the Saussurian move here of using words to reveal the issues or problems of *another* culture) generates what I consider a more relational framework. Lastly, Damrosch's conviction that the self remains unchanged by foreign literature has already raised the alarm of his contemporaries.[122]

---

[120] Damrosch, David, *What is World Literature?* p. 149.
[121] Robbins, Bruce, "Uses of World Literature," in: Damrosch et al. (eds.) *The Routledge Companion to World Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 383-392. p. 391.
[122] *Against World Literature*, p. 320.

For these reasons, these positions are structured in my work into what I hope is a coherent methodology engaged through untranslatability. Through this new methodology the following project attempts to reimagine World Literature's possible avenues. That is because the methodology proposed here aims to constitute *the ability to read the foreign through the foreign gaze*.

The 'foreign gaze' is a term ennobled in post-colonial discourse. In the work of critics like Edward Said and Homi Bhabha, it articulates the sense in which the Middle East and Global South were depicted from the perspective of North-Western imperialism.[123] Few critics have considered this concept from the inverse perspective: to consider the critic's ability to view and analyse cultural objects and texts *through* the foreign gaze. This is a valuable aspiration within and beyond the realm of literary studies. The *etic* standpoint, in the anthropological sciences, means to understand something from outside that system, whereas *emic* means to understanding something from inside that system.[124] Resituating the Untranslatable is one strategy toward collapsing these distinctions.

All considered, then, the first stage of this methodology demands a hermeneutic grasp of the Untranslatable in question, a task that can only be assumed successful through a rigorous recourse and research of that word within its *own* context. The second stage, whereby that same Untranslatable is resituated to a different context, is pursued with the implicit goal of resituating the act of interpretation itself. If World Literature demands comparative scholars to indeed rethink comparison 'from the ground up,' as Damrosch speculates, then this is the ground from where I have chosen to begin.[125] The need to rethink this proposition is incumbent upon the following work, as seen in its structure.

---

[123] Said, Edward. "Orientalism: Western concepts of the Orient." (New York: Pantheon, 1978). Bhabha, Homi K. *The location of culture*. (London: Routledge, 2012).
[124] Harris, Marvin. "History and significance of the emic/etic distinction." *Annual review of anthropology* 5 (1976): 329-350.
[125] Damrosch, David, *Comparing the Literatures* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020), p. 18.

Structure

Over the course of the following work each Section constitutes one of these engagements, whereby the Untranslatable is integrated with the literary modernism with which it engages. Each Section has four Chapters. In the first Chapter of each Section, the word itself is etymologised, historicised and explained within its own context, involving reference to *The Dictionary* (though sometimes deviating from its entries) to establish or broaden the reader's understanding of the term in question.

The second Chapter of each Section offers a plotted history of the belated modernism to which it is applied, while focusing on how untranslatability functioned within these contexts. The third and fourth Chapters narrow down this concentration onto the two Modernist authors from each period and culture. I have chosen a male and female example from each context, so that each context is attested to from both perspectives. Each of these authors are exceptional in their own right but have been selected here on the criteria that they are allegedly 'untranslatable' authors in varying respects and according to a variety of sources and interpretations. Each Chapter on each author has three purposes. It attempts to introduce the author to the uninitiated; consider their status as untranslatable authors; and explain how the foreign Untranslatable can guide our reading of them to new insights and conclusions. It is also crucial to note that, in each Section, the first two Chapters are in dialogue with each other, as I attempt to consolidate the reader's understanding of first the Untranslatable chosen, and then the context to which I deem it an experimental intervention.

Following this model, Section One concentrates on the German word *Stimmung* to reinterpret revolutionary Russia and the troubled modernity it created. Taking into account the fact that *Stimmung* is a Philosophical Untranslatable, I trace accounts of the word in German philosophical and aesthetic discourse. Turning to revolutionary Russia in Chapter Two (and the mistranslations that damaged its early aesthetics), I have chosen Osip Mandel'shtam's

Twilight of Freedom (1917) and Marina Tsvetaeva's *Poem of the En*d (1924) in Chapters Three and Four. Their engagement with untranslatability is foregrounded variably.

Section Two continues this triangular logic, beginning with an account of the Russian word *Pravda*. Historicising the word from its first appearance as a Book of Law, I then use it as a window into the modern Brazilian context. Here, in Section Two Chapter Two, the engagements between untranslatability and colonialism find express and subtle manifestations. Chapter Three will turn to Murilo Mendes's *Map* (1930). As I explain, Mendes is more 'untranslated' than untranslatable, bringing to the fore issues of translation inequality over Romantic notions of obscurity. Chapter Four speeds up the chronological account with Clarice Lispector's *Near to the Wild Heart* (1944). As I argue, Lispector's work demands revision of what we mean by untranslatable authorship.

Finally, Section Three uses the Portuguese word *saudade* to analyse the post-1945 German landscape. Following the word's semantic migration from the dislocations of empire and colonialism all the way to its contemporary context, Brazil and Portugal's competing accounts for this word's integrity make for a fascinating paradox. Chapter Two turns to the wreckage of post-war Berlin before turning to two exilic authors in Chapters Three and Four. Despite their distances from Germany, the poems I have picked by Mascha Kaleko and Paul Celan centre on the *Kristellnacht*. Each of these Sections then uses its requisite Untranslatable to establish and unearth issues in the context on to which it is imposed. In the process, it uses three Untranslatable words to analyse six allegedly untranslatable authors from three Modernisms, using an integrative history premised on translation to connect them.

The authors themselves are chosen with the criteria that claims of untranslatability have dogged them, at various times and from different directions. I had two reasons for this. Firstly,

it was inspired by an early response to *The Dictionary* itself. I refer here to Helen Gibson's observation that 'while Apter grapples with these significant overarching ideas, and covers a wide range of critical material, it is less clear how individual literary translations might enact the kind of untranslatability she advocates.'[126] This statement resonated with me long after reading. How can untranslatability be considered relevant to literary studies if its actual occurrence is restricted only to the critical, conceptual and philosophical?

From this perspective, if Gibson was proven correct, then the word Untranslatable means nothing more than 'concept.' As such, while the development of the Untranslatable as a literary theory takes up part of the foregoing, the other part is concerned with claims of untranslatability in the literary context. Moving from the Untranslatable to the untranslatable author is my attempt to answer this question in the affirmative register, moving between the conceptual spaciousness of the Untranslatable and the intransigent linguistic difficulties it places on the literary page.

This brought me to the second reason for making 'untranslatable authorship' a condition of inclusion here. If the first reason was to confirm that untranslatable literature exists *at all*, then the second reason is to demonstrate the precarious contingency on which that claim of 'untranslatability' is made. To observe the translation and reception of authors from this perspective, the reader can grasp the variety of phaenomena that are named 'untranslatable'. It is not a claim made from nowhere, or (as the Romantics implied) from the position of a universal Absolute. Instead, as will come to be seen, it is a claim that occurs in a specific historical configuration, conditioned by the various material realities, events, ideas and languages that shape its enunciation.

[126] Gibson, Helen. "“An English That Is Sometimes Strangely Interesting”: Ciaran Carson Mining Linguistic Resources Using Translation." *Untranslatability*. Routledge, 2018. 128-141. p. 129.

Conclusion

The following project attempts the experiment of using *The Dictionary* as a toolkit of theories to reinterpret and re-historicise literary Modernism in the Russian, Brazilian and German contexts. As I explained, various injunctions have been rendered coherent through the methodology proposed: to use *The Dictionary* as a new pathway for literary theory; to consider untranslatability in Modernism with reference to Translation Studies; and finally, to consider the untranslatability of Modernism from perspectives beyond the Anglo-Franco world. Acknowledging what could be seen as a potentially overwhelming scope, of course, corresponding limitations and foreclosures should also be acknowledged here. Put simply, this is not meant as *the* history of untranslatability, merely *a* history. Just as literary modernism enjoys a pluralised rebirth in its contemporary reception, my account here seeks to avoid large-scale claims as to the impossibility of translation. I will be more interested in discovering under what conditions such ideas and judgements surface.

For the sake of sustaining the project's historical chronology (running from 1917 Russia to 1930s Brazil to post-1945 Germany), eliminations are inevitable. What has remained has been a view of the literary modernism in question, along with the ways in which untranslatability and its various motivations played their role variously in its global formations. No literary case study holds any illusion of presenting a comprehensive evaluation of each author, their life or their work. Connecting untranslatable authors with Untranslatable words, I am interested to discover what methodology this produces and what knowledge it contributes. Another limitation should come to mind, because while the methodology deployed here aspires to contribute to a critical model of eventually global applicability, that is not necessarily the case here.

Apter herself acknowledges the executive decision to omit 'European' from *The Dictionary*'s original title in her English-language edition.[127] That decision, made partly to escape 'the imperium of English'[128], does not prevent the 2014 edition from essentially following the same restriction (with Hebrew and Russian terms also included). Thus, given that the present project uses *The Dictionary* as its point of departure in each Section, it is compelled to restrict itself to the European lexicon (a result, admittedly, of its author's own geographic origins and subsequently his *own* linguistic restrictions).

However, my attempt to extend the European lexicon in the direction of Brazil and Russia (of whom the latter's European status has often been seen as perennially undecidable) constitutes an attempt, on the author's part, to extend *The Dictionary*'s lexicon as far from European continent as it will extend. To do otherwise and attempt more far-ranging comparisons and encounters (between China and France, or Arabic and Urdu) appeared to me to be premature. That is because the African, Arabic, Chinese and Russian editions of The Dictionary are presently underway and forthcoming. The present work, then, represents a (knowingly) initial exercise for a methodology whose applicative value could one day become global. This extension is foreseeable, welcome and anticipated.

Given the transnational scope of the following work and the troubled dissonances of our time, I can already anticipate accusations of fetishization, exoticisation or romanticisation. The simplest way to formulate my response to such inquiries would be as follows: I am decidedly not interested in fetishizing languages; what I am interested in, is understanding *why* they are fetishized, *when*, *how* and *by whom*. The deeper one pursues the theme of untranslatability, the more one realises that the claim, accusation or discussion of untranslatability is always made from somewhere (and is, much like translation itself, often from *more* than one place).

---

[127] "National languages are profiled not as static, reified monuments of culture, nor as technologies of signification stripped of political consequence, but as internally transnational units, heterodox micro-worlds.' See: *The Dictionary*, p. 57.
[128] *The Dictionary*, p. 62.

Only through a diligent attention to its conditions can the claim emerging from those conditions be better understood. The conditions of this claim are key to understanding its context, motivations and implications. Sometimes it is a claim made by the author themselves. At others, more often, it is made by their translators, collaborators, critics or contemporaries.

The central inquiry underpinning this project is: Can the Untranslatable be used as a literary theory for reading literary texts from other cultures? The introduction, experimentation and advancement of this new methodology for students and scholars of Comparative Literature, World Literature and Translation Studies is my foremost intention. The ability to use language to unearth the problems in relational and corresponding cultures holds the promise of a viable methodology with multiple futures. What can be certain are the central questions that animate this project overall, each of which I attempt to answer over the course of this project before addressing them more fully in my Conclusion:

1) Can the Untranslatable, as conceptualised by Apter and Cassin, be used as literary theory when reading a foreign literary text?

2) How is the claim of these author's untranslatability verifiable?

3) What does the engagement of the Untranslatable and the foreign text produce?

As such, the first Section will move onto the Philosophical Untranslatable *Stimmung*, a German word which I intend to displace and connect with the Russian revolution of 1917 and its literary Modernist authors. It is to this first resituating, from German philosophical thought to the chaotic streets of revolutionary Moscow, that my project now turns.

Section One Chapter One: *Stimmung*

The first Untranslatable of this project - and thus the first word in need of a reciprocal exposition in the following pages of this opening Chapter - is the word *Stimmung*. Some have argued that the German language is not short of untranslatable words.[129] In any case, my reason for choosing *Stimmung* is to examine the first type of untranslatability I identify in *The Dictionary*: that is, a *philosophical* untranslatability. At the start of its most extensive study to date, the linguist Leo Spitzer announces: 'It is a fact that the German word *Stimmung* is untranslatable.'[130]

Yet neither the philosophical nor untranslatable qualities of this word are necessarily obvious to those who use it from day to day. Most German speakers (and learners) would refer to *Stimmung* as simply 'mood,' without suspecting any great weight of critical articulation or deeper national significance. It should thus be stated from the outset that the subsequent Section does not nor attempt to offer anything nearing an exhaustive history of the term (Wellbery's contribution is unsurpassed in this sense).[131] It chooses to introduce its meaning and restrict its trajectory within the Modernist, and then contemporaneous, time span. As such, my analysis first introduces the term, and its meanings, via its entry in *The Dictionary*. It then follows *Stimmung* from Romance linguist and comparatist Leo Spitzer's semantic history to Martin Heidegger, whose scattered attention to the term has only been enlarged upon in recent decades. Finally, Heidegger's conceptualisation of the word finds its most relevant articulation in the work of literary critic Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, who posits *Stimmung* as no less than a 'a new way to read literature' itself.

---

[129] Schott, Ben. *Schottenfreude: German Words for the Human Condition* (Australia: Text Publishing Company, 2013).

[130] Spitzer, Leo & Granville Hatcher, Anna. *Classical and Christian Ideas of World Harmony: Prolegomena to an Interpretation of the Word 'Stimmung'* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1963), p. 5.

[131] For this, see: Wellbery, David & Pohl, Rebecca. "Stimmung." *New Formations*, no. 93, 2018, pp. 6-45. Original: Wellbery, David. "Stimmung." *Historisches Wörterbuch äesthetischer Grundbegriffe*, Bd. 5: *Postmoderne – Synästhesie*. Ed. Karlheinz Barck et al. (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2003).

I.I.II: *The Dictionary*

The word originally referred to the tuning of musical instruments in the 16th century. *Stimmung* derives from the High German word *stimme* ('voice,' 'sound'), traced by linguist Friedrich Kluge to the Anglo Saxon *stëmna* ('noise,' 'cry') and the Gothic *stibna* ('voice').[132] By the 18th century it began to be applied to humans, stemming from the verb *stimmen*, meaning 'to express out loud,'; the word *Stimme*, meanwhile, can refer to 'voice,' 'vote' and 'to tune,' 'to be on pitch' and 'to be in tune.'[133] *Stimmung* is mostly translated into English as 'atmosphere', 'presence' or 'mood.' What sharply distinguishes *Stimmung* from my perspective is its ability to name the intuitions and tensions that circulate between the individual and their environment.

In his entry on *Stimmung* in *The Dictionary*, the French translator Pascal David insists its 'multiplicity of possible French translations' is itself 'evidence of the resistance to translation offered by the term,'[134] prescribing its closest equivalents in *stemming* (Danish), *ambiance* and *tonalité affective* (French).[135] Only with the advent of the works of Heidegger, claims David, would *Stimmung* 'become a key term in philosophical thought.'[136]

It is in the translation of these works specifically that David attempts to justify the word's untranslatability into the French context (where it was, nevertheless, highly influential). Assessing translations of Heidegger by Robinson, Martineau and Vezin,[137] there is nonetheless limitation, for present purposes, to this entry. More simply, in this instance the force of David's conclusions is subject to the French context exclusively; when in fact the word is interpreted by Leo Spitzer as referring to 'world harmony,' a notion far richer and broader in connotation.

---

[132] Kluge, Friedrich & Davis, John Francis. *An etymological dictionary of the German language*, 1st edn (London: G. Bell, 1891), 350. My gratitude to the Linguistics Department of the University of Cambridge for helping with this.

[133] Apter et al, *Dictionary of Untranslatables* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2014), pp. 4499-4452.

[134] Apter et al, p.4499.

[135] Apter et al, p.4450.

[136] Apter et al, p. 4450.

[137] Apter et al, p. 4450.

Another entry on *Stimmung* sees Danielle Cohen-Levinas elaborates the word's musical origin continued in the works of German composer Karlheinz Stockhausen, for whom it came to signify the process by which each 'chord latches on to another as though it were the very texture into which the time of the work was woven – or its form.'[138] While of interest, these entries do not go far in helping us understand the word within its *own* context. The remainder of this Section will explore Heidegger's notion of the term and its inheritance in the work of Gumbrecht, where the word's energies are directed toward literary analysis specifically. Before which, an elaboration on what makes *Stimmung* untranslatable deserves a more sustained qualification than *The Dictionary* provides.

[138] *The Dictionary*, p. 4511. As valuable as their contributions are, Wellberry's analysis of the term presents a more rigorous historicization and could retrospectively have been a more authoritative addition.

I.I.III: Leo's Spitzer's *Stimmung*

Leo Spitzer's 'historical semantic' study of the word presents arguably its most exhaustive account. At this point, I bring this account to light for its attention to the word itself, but also in lieu of the influence of Spitzer's process on my own (here and throughout). Comparatist René Wellek summarises his approach as 'a peculiar combination of lexicography and history of ideas.'

> [Spitzer] either starts with a particular word, *e. g.*, "mother tongue," and traces its meaning in different cultural and temporal settings, or he starts with a concept given in a particular civilization and shows the variety of word-material attracted by this concept […] His "historical semantics" is not just lexicography, not even etymology (though he does speculate about derivations), but it is rather, word history within a general history of thought.'[139]

My accounts of each Untranslatable does not and most likely could not aspire to match Spitzer's linguistic and etymological virtuosity. Yet I have, here and throughout, used Spitzer's idea of 'historical semantics' as an inspiration for my analysis of each Untranslatable in the following project. By 'inspiration' I must be clear that I do not mean 'model.' The more modest semantic histories offered in these pages, of *Stimmung*, then later of *Pravda* (Section Two Chapter One) and *saudade* (Section Three Chapter One) carry the more limited aim on each occasion of restricting themselves to the three broad categories of untranslatability in *The Dictionary* as I recognise them. In this case, *Stimmung* is a Philosophical Untranslatable, and the account that follows restricts itself accordingly.

[139] Wellek, René. 'Foreword', in: Spitzer, Leo & Granville Hatcher, Anna. *Classical and Christian Ideas of World Harmony: Prolegomena to an Interpretation of the Word 'Stimmung'* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1963), p. vi.

The linguist declares that the word's history reaches all the way back to Pythagoras and his contemporaries in Ancient Greece: 'In a universe thus animated by human feelings (patterned on godly ones), music seemed to express best the inner depths of human and cosmic nature.'[140] This is further evidenced in the Middle Ages of Europe, claims Spitzer, where various texts confirm how 'music is seen as symbolizing the totality of the world.'[141] Gradually, enlightenment ideas began to spread across Europe and this connotation of world harmony began to decline. 'At the end of the eighteenth century,' Spitzer continues, '*Stimmung* was crystallized, that is, it was robbed of its blossoming life,'[142] yet this would come to cause 'European mankind came to lose the feeling of a central "musicality."'[143]

Only the German word *Stimmung*, according to Spitzer, maintains these connotations in the modern context. This is, Spitzer believes, because only *Stimmung* could 'weld together the objective (factual) and the subjective (psychological) into one harmonious unity.'[144] *Stimmung*, for Spitzer, 'is fused with the landscape, which in turn is animated by the feeling of man – it is an indissoluble unit into which man and nature are integrated.'[145] *Stimmung* is interpreted by Spitzer as the last surviving signifier of this otherwise forgotten perspective. In this sense, his project is not entirely dissimilar to Heidegger's. Both sought in the languages of the past an authenticity that they struggled to define (yet continually insisted was missing from their contemporary moment).

[140] Spitzer, Leo & Granville Hatcher, Anna. p. 10.
[141] Spitzer, Leo & Granville Hatcher, Anna. p. 35.
[142] Spitzer, Leo & Granville Hatcher, Anna. p. 76.
[143] Spitzer, Leo & Granville Hatcher, Anna. p. 78.
[144] Spitzer, Leo & Granville Hatcher, Anna. pp. 411-12.
[145] Spitzer, Leo & Granville Hatcher, Anna. p. 5.

More contemporary accounts lay stress on the word's idiomatic (and initially somewhat confusing) qualities. Wellberry, for example, explains that '*Stimmungen* [plural] belong to the realm of the emotions,' but unlike emotions as commonly understood, there is no obvious cause to their existence: '*Stimmungen* are not directed towards an object. They are diffuse, they catch on to everything we think or perceive discretely without being tied to any specific object.'[146] This diffusion, in and of itself, generates layers of undirected, objectless energy that do not necessarily survive in translated form. This impasse is further obscured by the unknowability of its source, as Wellberry goes on to insist: *'Stimmungen* are not only modes of the interior psychic life, they are also atmospheres that surround us.'[147]

From these points, the problems of simply translating or interpreting *Stimmung* as 'mood' in English should start to become clearer. It is on the basis of these particular attributes, I suggest, that its lack of equivalence in English now grows tenable. From this, I conclude that even when *Stimmung* is translated as 'mood' or 'atmosphere' in English, there is a substantial amount of discursive connotation lost in that transfer. These qualities will be confirmed by Martin Heidegger, whose scattered conceptions on the word are only recently coming to light.

[146] Welberry, David & Pohl, Rebecca. p. 7.
[147] Welberry, David & Pohl, Rebecca. p. 8.

I.I.IV: Martin Heidegger's *Stimmung*

Born in Messkirch, a small town in Western Germany in 1889, Martin Heidegger would become one of the most influential European philosophers of the 20th century. Tracing his inquiries on the nature of being and existence back to the pre-Socratics, his is a philosophy preoccupied with the role of language, resuscitating outdated words and investing them with new meanings. While his philosophy is premised on the nature of existence itself, it is also delivered via a series of untranslatable idioms. Following the publication of *Sein und Zeit* (1927) to great critical acclaim, it would grow difficult for subsequent Western thinkers to consider questions of being and language without reference to this work. Its treatment of *Stimmung* is only eight pages, yet marks where his interest in *Stimmung* begins. A full elaboration of Heidegger's thinking is not needed. After a brief overview, it will be necessary only to engage with the texts that deal with *Stimmung.*

Heidegger claims in *Sein und Zeit* that our moods come neither from 'outside' nor from 'inside, but arises out of our being-in-the-world, as a way of such Being'.[148] A mood is disclosive of the world not in the sense of shining a torch over a darkened room, he cautions: 'Emotions are not self-contained; they disclose, open up or reveal the world' that we are a part of, illuminating what has significance to us.[149] In this sense, *Stimmung* is not what results from our interaction or observation of an object; *Stimmung* instead colours and saturates our perspective of whatever object we observe. The world, in its totality, is disclosed to us via these emotional states. These states are nonetheless a continuum, a perpetual flux, meaning our orientation to the world is theoretically endless, transient and changeable:

[148] Heidegger, Martin & Stambaugh, Joan. Being and Time (New York: SUNY Press, 2010), p. 176.
[149] Weberman, David. "Heidegger and the Disclosive Nature of Emotions," The Southern Journal of Philosophy, Vol. XXXIV, 1996, p. 387.

> the way we slip over from one mood to the other, or slip off into bad moods, are by no means nothing ontologically […] The fact that moods can deteriorate [*verdorben werden*] and change over means simply that in every case *Dasein* always has some mood […][150]

Looking at how *Stimmung* is characterised here, 'slipping' from one emotional state to the next implies a certain passivity. Why, indeed, would anyone wish their emotions to 'deteriorate'? This early sketch of *Stimmung* in Heidegger's work renders the Heideggerian subject essentially passive. The subject's agency is revealed in what these states disclose to the subject *as* they undergo them.[151] Secondly, *stimmung* is essential, necessary, and constant; our existence itself is conditional on being in one mood or another.

The subsequent atmosphere thereby produced is indivisible between the subject who experiences it and the environment with which they are coextensive. *Stimmung* may come from the subject or their environment. In this sense, it is a circular proposition and its source is unlocatable. As the philosopher Ballard explains, for Heidegger 'an emotion most resembles an act of judgement insofar as it constitutes an interpretation of one's situation.'[152]

> [In] Heidegger's own use of the '*Stimm*-' stem, the musical meaning is undoubtedly primary. The most important point to be gathered from this usage is that attunement is always Being tuned *to*. Attunement is only possible as a relation within a context, [whereby] the musical tuning metaphor also brings out the pre-cognitive, pre-intellectual nature of mood.[153]

---

[150] *Being and Time*, p. 173.
[151] This expands on Heidegger's broader belief that we are not agents of Being (existence), but interpreters.
[152] Ballard, Bruce W. *The Role of Mood in Heidegger's Ontology*. (Boston: University Press of America, 1991.), p.5.
[153] *The Role of Mood in Heidegger's Ontology*, pp.27-8.

Heidegger would define *Stimmung* at greater length and with greater clarity as time went on. By 1975, a year before his death, Heidegger told Eugen Fink he wanted to publish the courses on *Stimmung* before all others, belatedly recognising its importance in his work.[154] Its role developed, culminating in this highly ambitious claim: 'Philosophy in each case happens in a fundamental attunement *[Gründstimmung]*. Conceptual philosophical comprehension is grounded in our being gripped, and this is grounded in a fundamental attunement.'[155] The Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben reads in this passage a view that privileges *stimmung* above the status granted in *Sein und Zeit*, an observation that is difficult to contend.[156] Heidegger, by this point, believed all forms of philosophical thinking was necessarily constrained by the *stimmung* that informed them – stipulating that 'the affect is the beginning of knowledge,' as Ballard puts it, 'thus making it possible.'[157]

Heidegger's critical reception is broad; his notion of *Stimmung* much less so. Summarising the analysis of *stimmung* in *Sein und Zeit*, Ballard reduces it to the following conclusion: 'The short answer for Heidegger is that the affect is the beginning of knowledge, thus making it possible.'[158] Rudiger Safranski opens his biography of the philosopher with the similar assertion that Heidegger 'criticises any philosophy that professes to have its beginning in thought.' Instead 'it begins with a mood, with astonishment, fear, worry, curiosity, jubilation. To Heidegger, mood is the link between life and thought.'[159] Scholars like Sharin N. Elkholy have gone so far as to view this Untranslatable as a matter of central importance: 'Arguably, Heidegger's most important contribution to the history of philosophy […] is the primacy that he accords to mood in his analysis of human existence.'[160]

---

[154] Agamben, Giorgio. *The Open* (Paolo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2000), p.49.
[155] Heidegger, Martin & Walker, Nicholas. *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1995), p.7.
[156] *The Open*. pp. 76-80.
[157] *The Role of Mood in Heidegger's Ontology*. p.5.
[158] *The Role of Mood in Heidegger's Ontology*. p.5.
[159] Safranski, Rüdiger. *Martin Heidegger* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), p.1.
[160] Elkholy, Sharin. *Heidegger and a Metaphysics of Feeling* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2011), p.4.

I.I.V: Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht's *Stimmung*

Comparative scholar Hans Gumbrecht's *Atmosphere, Presence, Stimmung: On A Hidden Potential of Literature* (2012) was translated and published two years before Apter's edition of *The Dictionary*. He claims the German word *Stimmung* provides no less than 'a new way to read literature': one that 'reclaims the immediacy and vitality that have been missing' from literary studies, in his mind, for some time.[161]Arguing that literary 'texts affect the "inner feelings" of readers in the same way that weather and music do,' as a mood, atmosphere, or presence from without.[162] Gumbrecht himself settles for the equivalence of 'presence,' explaining that *Stimmung* - the presence produced, the sensuous, bodily effect on the reader - can happen apart (but not entirely) from what is represented in the content of the text itself.[163] That claim is supported through a series of analyses, ranging from Medieval German poets to the Brazilian novelist Machado de Assis.

Gumbrecht's account is not without reservations. Alongside his bold proposal is the early caution: 'I am engaged in an experiment where certainties and conventions about how to write are still undefined.'[164] Nonetheless, his book marks an exceptional advance to this end. As noted in the Introduction, Apter claimed that the *The Dictionary* posits 'philosophical translation' as a way of doing 'literary criticism.'[165] Gumbrecht marks an early gesture in this direction already, one unconsciously predating that broader enterprise, introducing the German term before applying it to a range of literatures. Hence his experiment will prove instructive for the present project. How Gumbrecht posits *Stimmung* in relation to literature will be a crucial reference for this Section throughout.

---

[161] Gumbrecht, Hans & Butler, Erik. *Atmosphere, mood, Stimmung: on a hidden potential of literature*. (Paolo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2012), p. 12.
[162] *Atmosphere, mood, Stimmung: on a hidden potential of literature*, p. 5.
[163] *Atmosphere, mood, Stimmung: on a hidden potential of literature*, pp.3-4.
[164] *Atmosphere, mood, Stimmung: on a hidden potential of literature*, p. 18.
[165] *The Dictionary*, p. xv.

Addressing the discipline, Gumbrecht claims the ascription of 'meaning' has become so privileged a task that it ultimately becomes a stumbling block for the critic's engagement with the literary text. 'I am sceptical about the power of "theories" to explain atmospheres and moods, and I doubt the viability of "methods" to identify them.'[166] To ascribe meaning is therefore portrayed as an activity that adds little to aesthetic reception. Somewhere along the way, Gumbrecht, continues, students of literature learnt to 'consider interpretation' and the 'ascription of meaning' to be 'of paramount importance.'[167]

This view builds, in part, on his previous publication, *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey* (2004), where he claimed that 'meaning and presence are always in tension.'[168] This can likely be understood intuitively, with or without an understanding of the German language. The search for meaning displaces our visceral responses. The ascription of meaning risks displacing and supplanting our primordial, instantaneous response to literary works. What does Gumbrecht put forward as an alternative?

> The German word *stimmung* (which is very difficult to translate) gives form to the "third position" I would like to advocate […] Only in German does the word connect with *Stimme* and *stimmen*. The first means "voice," and the second "to tune an instrument" […] As the tuning of an instrument suggests, specific moods and atmospheres are experienced on a continuum, like musical scales. They present themselves to us as nuances that challenge our powers of discernment and description, as well as the potential of language to capture them.[169]

[166] *Atmosphere, mood, Stimmung: on a hidden potential of literature*, p.17.
[167] Steven Delay, "Disclosing Worldhood or Expressing Life? Heidegger and Henry on the Origin of the Work of Art", Journal of Aesthetics and Phenomenology, 4:2, 2017), p.159.
[168] Gumbrecht, Hans Ulrich. *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey* (Paolo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2004), p. 77.
[169] *Atmosphere, mood, Stimmung: on a hidden potential of literature*, p.4.

If *Stimmung* is ultimately circular then it remains effectively unlocatable.[170] One cannot discern its source exclusively in the world around oneself, nor in the subject's internal state. One may walk through a strange, unfamiliar city, passing the faces of strangers, watching unfamiliar events and activities unfolding, and conclude that this city has a definite *Stimmung* to it. Insofar as Gumbrecht interprets *Stimmung*, however, one would not be able to conclude with any certainty whether this sensation was their own projection onto the city in question or the *stimmung* of the city affecting *themselves* instead. *Stimmung* is not (only) subjective, but supra-personal. Can a thought experiment make Gumbrecht's argument here clearer?

If so, then I ask the reader to consider by analogy a couple settling down to watch a film on a rainy evening. The film itself was produced in Paris, sometime in the late 1950s. As the credits fade in, Partner A insists on figuring out what the film *meant*: what was its moral message, and what was its political intention? Partner B claims all of that is unimportant – it was the *mood* of the film that made it brilliant. In this scene, there is a possibility that the rainy evening outside their window may play a part in their mood, their outlook and their responses. 'Being affected by sound or weather,' Gumbrecht believes, 'is, physically, a concrete encounter' with our 'physical environment'[171]: 'Therefore, texts affect the "inner-feelings" of readers in the way that weather and music do.'[172] On the surface, this seems a trivial claim. Gumbrecht's point, to my reading, rests on the *indivisibility* of our mood between the internal state and the external world. Establishing this undecidable quality in *stimmung* as a form of affect that is neither strictly internally nor externally ascribable, Gumbrecht tries to differentiate between *stimmung* and affect. He also proposes 'reading for *stimmung*' in the literary text as an improvement upon the endless search for meaning:

[170] *Atmosphere, mood, Stimmung: on a hidden potential of literature*, p.4.
[171] *Atmosphere, mood, Stimmung: on a hidden potential of literature*, p.4.
[172] *Atmosphere, mood, Stimmung: on a hidden potential of literature*, p.4.

> "Reading for *stimmung*" always means paying attention to the textual dimension of the forms that envelop us and our bodies as a physical reality – something that can catalyse "inner feelings" without matters of representation necessarily being involved.[173]

In Gumbrecht's schema, the artwork should evoke, not depict. As such, it is on the threshold of representation that Gumbrecht and Apter part ways. Apter and her collaborators see untranslatability as a chance to reinvigorate literary theory; Gumbrecht's conception of *Stimmung* marks an exhaustion with theory and the wish to supplant it. With a similar sentiment more vividly analogised, the philosopher Delay claims the contemporary age is

> epitomized by the inability to enjoy the work of art for what makes it unique – as that which exalts life. Standing in the gallery, it is not uncommon to see guided tours approach a Kandinsky (or really any painting for that matter), its members, staring befuddled at the work for a moment, turning to ask the inevitable: "What does it *mean*?" […] they often resort to treating it as an object, as if it were something comprehensible with the principles, theories, and facts that are extraneous to it.[174]

Similarly, in Gumbrecht's account, the search for meaning is not only detrimental to our understanding of literature but also conceals its historical properties and the insight it offers of a particular time and place. *Stimmung*, in this sense, stands not only for the mood or atmosphere of a literary work, but a locus of spatial and temporal transmission and reception. This is where the historical part of Gumbrecht's proposal comes to the fore, one supposedly accessible via 'the textual dimension'[175] of a work's formal features.

---

[173] *Atmosphere, mood, Stimmung: on a hidden potential of literature*, p.5.
[174] DeLay, Steven. "Disclosing Worldhood or Expressing Life? Heidegger and Henry on the Origin of the Work of Art." *Journal of aesthetics and Phenomenology* 4.2 (2017), pp. 155-171, p. 168.
[175] *Atmosphere, mood, Stimmung: on a hidden potential of literature*, p.5.

It is precisely by rendering oneself open to the *stimmung* of a literary text that one can understand that historical moment from which it originated (further, Gumbrecht assumes, than any theoretical elaboration and analysis could sustain). Further, Gumbrecht makes the interesting point that 'dramatists, actors and spectators in 17th century Paris were obsessed with the grave, pathos-laden verse form they called the "alexandrine." In a literal sense, it was a part of the city's material reality at that time.'[176] Giving attention to the prosodic features of foreign literatures opens the critic up to new historical immediacies:

> the tone of such verses is a text-immanent component of the city's past. Whenever we recite monologues or dialogues as Corneille or Racine fashioned them, we call them forth to new life. The sounds and rhythms of the words strike our bodies as they struck the spectators at that time.[177]

Accessing a different historical period through an attention to its historical immediacy, in other words, opens fresh possibilities to literary criticism. As such, Gumbrecht insists that the objective of reading for *Stimmung* 'is to follow configurations of atmosphere and mood in order to encounter otherness in intense and intimate ways.'[178]

[176] *Atmosphere, mood, Stimmung: on a hidden potential of literature*, p. 13.
[177] *Atmosphere, mood, Stimmung: on a hidden potential of literature*, p. 13.
[178] *Atmosphere, mood, Stimmung: on a hidden potential of literature*, pp. 12-13.

I.I.V: Conclusion

If *Stimmung*'s untranslatability can be established in this context, it is not one marked by an inability to translate the word's primary meaning from German into other languages. What suffers is the ability to convey its multiple *philosophical* conceptions within that same transfer. While it may be closer to 'mood' in English than any other term, it nevertheless conceals a conceptual problematic linked to affect, time and place. It is these understandings and theorisations that the foregoing Section has tried to offer, in an abbreviated form, one which goes un-transported when the word is translated into English as 'mood' or 'atmosphere.'

To fully understand its implications, one must summarise Gumbrecht's proposal on a practical basis. If I read a novel or look at a painting, my priority should be to articulate the atmosphere, or mood, of this piece of work. I should defer from trying to say what it means, insofar as the author or artist had any specific intentions in creating it. Such intention is secondary to my analysis, because the atmosphere conveyed by, and evoked in, the work of art, is what deserves one's attention. Once this atmosphere or mood is ascribed, I thereby investigate the historical context with this atmosphere in mind, at liberty to decide which aspects of this time or place may be responsible for it. My affective response anchors my analysis towards a broader historical interpretation; my historical research leads me to search, locate and justify the atmospheres of the artwork. In search of answers, I will next direct this German word onto a context beyond those in Gumbrecht's own analyses. That is, the site of revolutionary Russia, where oratorical readings and the memorisation of literary works were, at times, its only available form of circulation and survival.

Section I Chapter II: The Russian revolution

Historical accounts of the Russian revolution are numerous. Even so, mention paid to the presence of untranslatability in this period (let alone any broader claims toward its function) are largely inexistent at the time of writing.[179] This Section will begin by demonstrating that (un)translatability and Russian modernity were in fact entangled from the beginning: in this case, from 1892. As I go on to suggest, here and at the start of Section II, translation informed Russian modernism's birth as well as proving an obstacle to its evolution. Considered in far broader terms,

> Russian culture has resisted Kant's argument about the discontinuity between cognitive, moral, and [a]esthetic spheres of intellectual endeavour. In their entire approach to their task as writers, the great Russian novelists were guided by the contrary supposition: that these three realms are linked in an intimate and indissoluble way.[180]

This gap would widen with modernity. Literature of this time is marked inevitably by the tension between the individual and their environment. The Russian Modernists faced truly unprecedented times, and their innovations attest to this sense of incomparable rupture where the definition of what was "artistic" itself began to change.[181] It is somewhat ironic then that scholarly approaches to these revolutionary texts have gone unchanged for decades. New modes of interpretation may well bring these works back to life. As such, Russian Modernist literature benefits from being read less for its socio-political and socio-economic particularities and more for the *Stimmung* that Gumbrecht suggests can be exacted from these literary texts.

---

[179] An exception can be found in: Baer, Brian James. "Untranslatability and the Cold War: Theory in Context," *Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics*, Vol. 44, No. 4, Winter 2021, p. 8-15.

[180] Alexis Klimoff, 'In Defence of the Word,' in: Chukovskaya, Lydia (ed.) *The Deserted House* (Belmont: Norland, 1978), p. x.

[181] Vinogradov, V. V. & Thomas, Lawrence. "Expansion of the Bases of the Literary Language," in: Thomas, Lawrence (ed.) *The History of the Russian Literary Language from the Seventeenth Century to the Nineteenth* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), p. 237.

I.II.I: A misinterpreted modernity

This narrative begins in December 1892. Twenty seven-years old and unpublished, the poet Dimitri Merezhkovsky (1865-1941) had just returned from Paris, where he had met Henri Bergson, discovered Nietzsche and fallen under French Symbolism's spell.[182] Keen to address his contemporaries on his return, he delivered a lecture in St Petersburg on the 7th and 14th, translatable as: 'On the Causes of the Present Decline and the New Currents in Contemporary Russian Literature.'[183] 'A declaration of war against positivism,' his lecture claimed that neither science, populism nor materialism could answer to Russia's pressing needs.[184]

Merezhkovsky loudly expressed his fears that the Russian language was under threat. 'In the hands of contemporary 'literary artisans' and 'democratic journalist bohemians' he declared, the Russian language itself 'deadens and decomposes' [*umirayet i razlagayetsya*].[185] Overall, he felt Russia had produced some great poets but was yet to develop an outstanding national literature.[186] Merezhkovsky also expressed scepticism toward the new artistic forms imported from Western Europe. According to him, these 'three streaks of Modern art' – 'Mystic essence, Symbolic language and Impressionism' [*Misticheskaya sushchnost'*, *simvolicheskiy yazyk i impressionizm*],[187] were actually traceable and recognisable in the works of Leo Tolstoy and Feodor Dostoevsky. 'Opposed to materialism, indifferent to economic progress, Merezhkovsky insisted that the frenetic activity of economic man was trivial. It is the artist who destroys the old life and creates the new; a warrior for culture, his field of action is the human spirit.'[188]

---

[182] Tolstoy, Helen. *Akim Volynsky: A Hidden Russian-Jewish Prophet*. (Lieden: Brill, 2016), p. 64.
[183] Merezhkovsky, Dmitry. "O prichinakh upadka i o novykh techeniyakh sovre- mennoy russkoy literatury," *Polnoe sobrante sochineniy*, vol. XV, Petersburg- Moscow, 1912, pp. 222-236.
[184] Glatzer Rosenthal, Bernice. "Merezhokvsky's Intellectual Evolution," in: Glatzer Rosenthal, Bernice (ed.) *Nietzsche in Russia* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 72.
[185] Merezhkovsky, Dmitry. p. 224.
[186] Peterson, Ronald. *A History of Russian Symbolism* (Amsterdam: John Benjamin, 1993), p. 15.
[187] "O prichinakh upadka i o novykh techeniyakh sovre- mennoy russkoy literatury,", p. 302. Translation mine.
[188] "Merezhokvsky's Intellectual Evolution," p. 73.

To Merezhkovsky, this culminates in the conservative thesis that modernism is nothing more than the continuation of the classical Russian tradition. The public lecture in December 1892 was published and distributed the following year.[189] However, Merezhkovsky would unfortunately overlook the importance of translation in the dissemination of his ideas. This is where Russian modernism starts; and in some ways, how and why it ends.

The problem was that words like *modernizm* became muddled by the lecture's readers due to a translational oversight. Decline [*upadok*], in Merezhkovsky's definition, referred to the works of contemporary writers who refused these new values and stuck to a 'photographic representation of the visible world.'[190] The new movements Merezhkovsky criticises in his lecture are at first identified with French literary decadence. However, Elizabeth Sternbrock-Fermor closely outlines the problems with this particular designation:

> By preserving the French term in Russian as *dekadans* and later giving it a Russified form, *dekadenstvo* with its derivatives decadent, *dekadentsky*, the Russian representatives of the trend seemed to stress that they did not take the word in its literal meaning (which in Russian would be expressed by *upadok* – 'downfall') but as a literary genre. […] The new generation was expressing both its despair and this search for new roads towards new vistas in philosophy and art.[191]

Indeed, such despair would lead to yet-further terminological confusions in the new regime (as seen in Section II). It was Merezhkovsky, among others, who set this confusion in motion. By translating decadence as 'its Russian equivalent *upadok* and its derivative *upadochny*, which means something morally weak and of poor quality,' the enemies of these new ideas 'created

[189] Rosenthal, Bernice Glatzer. *Dmitri Sergeevich Merezhkovsky and the Silver Age: The Development of a revolutionary Mentality* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975), p. 22.
[190] Stenbock-Fermor, Elisabeth. "Russian Literature from 1890 to 1917." *Katkov et al., eds., Russia Enters the Twentieth Century* 1917 (1894): 263-286. p. 256.
[191] "Russian Literature from 1890 to 1917." pp. 256-266.

a confusion which became prevalent in the Soviet Union and spread abroad.'[192] This would result in varieties of cultural myopia, incommensurability and isolation. As the century wore on, Sternbock-Fermor stresses that Soviet literary criticism applied the word 'decadent' to all authors of the first half of the twentieth century who could be called individualist.[193]

In attempting to name the foreign, Merezhkovsky weakened its credibility for his national contemporaries and successors. Untranslatability was thus written into Russian modernism via the complex inheritance of Western traditions and concepts that did not travel as smoothly from Paris to Petersburg as Merezhkovksy may have hoped. A few years after the lecture, Merezhkovsky published a series of articles entitled: *Eternal Companions*: *Portraits from World Literature* [*Vechnye sputniki: Portrety iz vsemirnoi literatury*] in 1906. Bogomolov claims we find in this, as in Merezhkovsky's works, 'his desire to link inseparably the literature being created at the time with what had been done by all of world literature over the course of its many centuries of existence'[194]. Possibly Russia's first engagement with World Literature, this publication remains presently untranslated into English.

Inescapably entangled with the revolution that shaped it, Russian Modernism was thus largely precluded and inspired by the original sin of misinterpretation. It thus had a troubled birth, under conditions in which language itself was charged with political fatalism and held the risk of personal danger. This is vital to note before moving forward, as its literary texts are difficult to appreciate without this context in mind. The process toward revolution itself must next be briefly exposited.

[192] "Russian Literature from 1890 to 1917." p. 266.
[193] "Russian Literature from 1890 to 1917." pp. 256-266.
[194] Bogomolov, Nikolai. "Prose between Realism and Symbolism," in: Dobrenko, Evegeny & Balina, Marina (eds.). *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth Century Russian Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 21-40, p. 21.

I.II.II: The roots of revolution

The two authors under analysis in this Section were coming of age before the revolution occurred. A memoir by Marina Tsvetaeva recalls Osip Mandel'shtam visiting her and her children in Koktebel, a coastal town on the island of Crimea in 1915: 'we lay on the grass, digging out clay. Burrows. Digging through to each other, and whenever the hands met we laughed – actually he alone laughed, I was playing, as always, for his sake.'[195] Yet Mandel'shtam persistently asked to leave, insisting that he needed to write. This came to a head one morning. She recalls Mandel'shtam sitting sternly at the breakfast table, demanding to go home. Agreeing resignedly, Tsvetaeva takes him to the station. As the train departs, Mandel'shtam begins calling out to her from his train window:

> - Marina Ivanovna! (the engine is already moving) It's definitely a mistake! I've been so… (I walk beside the moving wheels) With you I've been so… so… (the carriage gathers speed and I do too) I've never been so… - Abandoning Mandel'shtam, I run, overtaking the train and the sentence. End of the platform. A post. I too become a post. Carriages pass: not him, not him, not him – him.[196]

This vivid testimony assumes an almost Edenic quality when considering what would follow. Before the following Chapters explore these authors in more detail, for both the untranslatability of their own work and the imposition of *Stimmung* in understanding it, firstly, the causes of this rupture deserve an abbreviated narrative. At the time in question, Russia constituted the largest landmass on Earth, numbering 22,800,000 square kilometres wide with a population of 91 million people in 1917.[197]

---

[195] Tsvetaeva, Marina & Livingstone, Angela. "History of a Dedication," in: *Art in the Light of Conscience* (London: Bloodaxe, 1992), p. 70.
[196] "History of a Dedication,", p. 74.
[197] *Studies on Russian Economic Development Vol. 9* (Russia: Interperiodica Publishers, 1998), p. 555.

Sheila Fitzpatrick points out that there was a rise in national wealth in the three decades leading up to October 1917. The problem was that only 80% of the population experienced it.[198] For the rural peasantry, moving to the industrialising city centres in the tens of thousands, many factory workers earned only enough for subsistence.[199] Their working environments were harsh: safety regulations were widely ignored, workers were subjected to humiliating treatment, and the average working day (without overtime) was between twelve and fourteen hours in the 1880s.[200]

What remains undebated among contemporary historians is that the conditions of Russia's peasants had been intolerable for long enough. Some form of political development was inevitable. The Romanov monarchy had ruled the country for three centuries, yet the reign of Nicholas II was widely viewed as one of inept and disinterested leadership in the face of untenable conditions. The monarch seemed to many of his subjects 'unconscious of the seriousness of popular unrest,' even dismissing it as 'just one more God-sent storm to be weathered.'[201] Perceived as largely remote from the Russian nation, Nicholas's family were chased off a train and shot in Yekaterinburg in June 1918.

A Provisional Government was frantically established, led by Prince Georgy Lvov (1861–1925) and then Alexander Kerensky (1881–1970). Initially, this was broadly welcomed by the Russian public because it offered at least a possibility for reform. However, whatever consensus the Provisional Government earned was wasted through one error after another. After a disinterested Tsar, a chaotic Government, an ongoing European war and unendurable working conditions, the Russian public were clearly desperate for alternatives.

[198] Fitzpatrick, Sheila. *The Russian Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 10.
[199] *The Russian Revolution,* p. 10.
[200] *The Russian Revolution*, p. 11.
[201] Stamp, Robert. *The Russian Revolution 1900-1927* (London: Macmillan, 1986), p. 227.

I.II.III: The Russian revolution

Inspired by the writings of Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895),[202] the global consequences of the Russian revolution undermine the fact that, in reality, it was a revolution without a leader or a plan. In Swiss exile, Vladimir Lenin had been lecturing,

> But he ended his lecture on a somewhat resigned note: 'We of the older generation may not see the decisive battle of the coming revolution' – exactly two months before the revolution broke out.'[203]

Rather than producing the equalities it proposed, the Bolshevik state became more and more removed from public control. Authoritarian relationships were re-established in every public sphere.[204] Notwithstanding the intensity of the Bolshevik's beliefs, their incorporation into practice was pragmatic, changeable and selective. Treadgold recounts Lenin's ambivalence: 'He himself was far from being a cultural revolutionary,' claims Treadgold: 'Of the cultural "isms" which churned around him, he said: "I do not understand them. I take no joy in them."'[205]

As an event of global resonance, the Russian revolution is often interpreted as one of the most significant events of the 20th century. Yet several historical sources indicate that the revolution itself was a manifestation of the atmospheres, within and beyond Russia, that portended it. Kochan believes 'there was a change in atmosphere at the turn of the century', of which the Revolution was a penultimate culmination.[206] It was an atmosphere inspired by 'the rapidity of international crises, in the growing acuteness of social and national conflict,' leading to a climate in which 'crisis followed crisis, continually extending the area of uncertainty.'[207]

---

[202] See: Marx, Karl & Levitsky, Serge L. *Das Kapital: A Critique of Political Economy*. (United States: Regnery Publishing, 2012.)
[203] Laqueur, Walter. *The Fate of the Revolution: Interpretations of Soviet History from 1917 to the Present* (United Kingdom: Collier Books, 1987), p. 33.
[204] Action, Edward. *Russia* (New York: Longman, 1986), p. 194.
[205] Treadgold, Donald. *Twentieth Century Russia* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), p. 180.
[206] Kochan, Lionel. *Russia in Revolution* (London: Granada, 1970), p. 151.
[207] *Russia in Revolution*, p. 151.

In the wake of the Bolshevik takeover, British Prime Minister Llyod George confessed in a memorandum of March 1919:

> The whole of Europe is filled with the spirit of revolution. There is a deep sense not only of discontent, but of anger and revolt amongst the workmen against pre-war conditions. The whole existing order in its political, social and economic aspects is questioned by the masses of the population from one end of Europe to the other.[208]

The revolution was not all. Only a few months after the Brest-Litovsk pact between Russia and Germany (signalling Russia's withdrawal from the conflict) a civil war broke out within Russia itself in 1918. This polarised Russian society through mutual and lasting resentments.[209] The civil war was ostensibly a conflict between 'Reds' (Bolshevik and Menshevik factions, who approved of the transition from monarchy to communism) and the 'Whites' (who rejected this transition). Yet Williams insists it was 'a war of fluctuating alliances and individual loyalties,' one that 'divided families as easily as classes.'[210] The sheer exhaustion of this experience is captured in Viktor Shlovksy's memoirs of the time. Reflecting on the death of his brother, he writes: 'He was killed by the Reds or the Whites. I don't remember which – I really don't remember. But his death was unjust.'[211]

By the end of 1920, the figure that Lenin and Trotsky had praised as a universally heroic abstraction – the proletariat – had shrunk demographically to only half its pre-revolutionary size.[212] A wave of imprisonment and violence would follow. Lacquer asserts that this violence was likely influenced by Lenin's own interpretations of history. 'Lenin had well before 1917

---

[208] As quoted in: Dukes, Paul. *October and the World* (Oxford: Macmillan, 1975), p. 96.
[209] Williams, Bery. *The Russian Revolution 1917-1921* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), p. 63.
[210] *The Russian Revolution*, p. 65.
[211] Shklovsky, Victor & Sheldon, Richard. *A Sentimental Journey: Memoirs 1917-1922* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), p. 156.
[212] *Studies on Russian Economic Development Vol. 9* (Russia: Interperiodica Publishers, 1998), p. 555.

envisaged the use of terror in the post-revolutionary period'[213] that accelerated beyond even the control of the leadership themselves. Figes's sober account marks the human cost of the revolution as 'something in the region of ten million people. But this excludes the emigration (about two million) and the demographic effects of a hugely reduced birth-rate […] which statisticians say would have added up to ten million lives.'[214]

How can literature hope to engage, reflect or represent such historical upheaval? The historian Westwood suggests that, for those attempting to understand Russia, its literary authors offer insights of rare authenticity. 'For the historian,' he asserts, 'their novels have great value in conveying the atmosphere of the time; they should be read, rather than read about.'[215] Reading the revolution within the present purview, it seems instructive to bring this atmosphere of revolution to the fore, as Gumbrecht suggested in the previous Chapter. If literary authorship provides access to these events, then it is worth considering first the literary figures and movements of the time, before turning to the story of *Stimmung* within this context. I will address both topics presently.

[213] *The Fate of the Revolution: Interpretations of Soviet History from 1917 to the Present*, pp. 255-256.
[214] Figes, Orlando, *A People's Tragedy* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1996), p. 773.
[215] Westwood, J. N., *Endurance and Endeavour* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 102.

I.II.IV: Authorship and revolution

A year before Merezhkovsky gave his lecture, Alexander Potebnja (1835-1891), a Ukrainian linguist and ethnographer, published *Mysl' i yazyk [Thought and Language]* (1892). It found few readers in Potebnja's lifetime but had a more significant influence over the Russian Formalists than they ever cared to admit.[216] Viktor Shklovsky (1893-1984), Yuri Tynianov (1884-1943), Vladimir Propp (1895-1970), Boris Eikhenbaum (1886-1956), Boris Tomashevsky (1890-1957) and Grigory Gukovsky (1902-1950) spent the opening decades of the century developing linguistic theories while redefining the parameters of what literary critique could accomplish.[217]

This unprecedented attention toward language would inspire the Russian Futurist Vladimir Mayakovksy to claim that the revolution had introduced 'a new linguistic element. How can one make it poetic? […] How can we reduce the spoken language into poetry, and extract poetry from the spoken language?'[218] The discovery (and subsequent 'crisis') of language meant that while the Formalists were largely keen to identify the literariness of literature, Russian authors desperately tried to evince a new language out of this chaos. Jakobson recognised as early as 1919 the impulse of 'making difficult' [*zatrudnenie*] that shaped this new poetics.[219] Clubs and circles proliferated, led by *Proletkul't* art studios that pursued these new artistic, philosophical and linguistic agendas.

---

[216] Erlich, Victor. *Russian formalism: History-doctrine*. (Amsterdam: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), p. 23.

[217] Surveying Russian Formalism in its (admittedly limited) English translations lead me to recommend: Shklovsky, Viktor. "Theory of Prose, trans." B. Sher. (Illinois: Dalkey Archive, 1990); Tynianov, Yuri. *Permanent Evolution: Selected essays on literature, theory and film*. (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2019); Propp, Vladimir Yakovlevich. *The Russian Folktale by Vladimir Yakovlevich Propp*. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2012); Any, Carol Joyce. *Boris Eikhenbaum: Voices of a Russian Formalist* (Paolo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1994); Tomashevsky, Boris. "Thematics." in: (eds.) Lemon, Lee T., and Marion J. Reis, *Russian formalist criticism: Four essays*. Vol. 405. (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), pp. 61-95; Gasparov, Boris. "Between Methodological Strictness and Moral Appeal: Questions of Language and Cultural Theory in Russia." *History of Humanities* 1.2 (2016): pp. 303-326.

[218] Mayakovksy, Vladimir & Hyde, G. M. *How Are Verses Made?* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1971), p. 18.

[219] This was written in Moscow in 1919 but was first published in Prague in 1921. It is first translated into English in: (ed.) Brown, Theodore E. *Major Soviet writers: essays in criticism*. Vol. 371 (London & New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), and is presently available (in abbreviated form) in: Jakobson, Roman, Jangfeldt, B. and Rudy, S. *My Futurist Years (New York: Marsilio*, 1997), pp. 173-208.

The movements preceding the revolution are mostly grouped by literary historians into two collectives, Symbolism and Acmeism. Symbolism deified the individualist artist, heralding Valery Bryusov and Alexander Blok as its leading proponents, and found solace in the pseudo-mysticism of Wagner and the French wordplay of decadents like Mallarmé.[220] Acmeism, initiated from conversations in the Stray Dog café of St. Petersburg, was a short-lived school of thought that praised compactness of form and clarity of expression. Mandel'shtam described the movement as a 'yearning for world culture,' and it named Mikhail Kuzmin, Anna Akhmatova, and Georgiy Ivanov among its exemplars.[221]

Both groups looked for new modes of expression; yet neither shared with the Bolshevik leadership their wish for a full annexation of the past.[222] As had Merezhkovsky back in 1892, they wished instead to create a Russian modernism worthy of the name, but vitally one that 'never rejected old masters,' Stenbock-Fermor explains.[223] This will be seen in both Tsvetaeva and Mandel'shtam's work. However, it will be helpful first to briefly introduce the intellectual backdrop from which their writings emerged.

As such, no account of this period can do without reference to the experimental futurisms of Viktor Khlebnikov (1885-1922). Obsessed with linguistics and mathematics, some contemporaries considered him a genius, others a madman.[224] Along with his collaborator Aleksei Kruchenykh, he viewed the neologism as an instrument that could be used to reveal the root of a word's meaning. This culminated in *zaum*, or ''Transrational language': the idea that letters have a meaning independent of the words they create.

---

[220] See: Pyam, April. *A History of Russian Symbolism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Paperno, Irina & Delaney Grossman, Joan. (eds.) *Creating Life: The Aesthetic Utopia of Russian Modernism* (Paolo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1994).
[221] See: Mickiewicz, Denis. *Toward a Definition of Acmeism* (United States: Michigan State University, 1975).
[222] "Russian Literature from 1890 to 1917." p. 278.
[223] "Russian Literature from 1890 to 1917." p. 278.
[224] Struve, Gleb. *Russian Literature under Lenin and Stalin 1917-1953* (Oklahoma: Oklahoma University Press, 1971), p. 14.

While this bears unmistakable comparison with thinkers like Martin Heidegger, 'the crux of Khlebnikov's version of *zaum'* claims Nicholls, is that 'the "very structure" of language encodes primaeval truths about the world, and that whole systems of relations lie hidden beneath the rationalised taxonomies of the dictionary.'[225] One will discover a potential cause for this idea in Chapter III, and its creative influence on Tsvetaeva in Chapter VI. Harsha Ram has already suggested that Khlebnikov poses new definitions and understandings of World Literature, an argument still unexplored.[226] Another figure from this period would exert a powerful influence over Mandel'shtam and many others. It is indeed possible that this figure may have introduced Mandel'shtam to the central ideas that characterised modernism globally, as will be presently brought to light.

[225] Nicholls, Peter. *Modernisms* (California: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 122-133; p. 128.

[226] He writes: 'As a regional but resolutely international response to the worldwide predicament of uneven modernity, the Russian avant-garde, like the revolution which shaped its trajectory, points to alternative narratives and paradigms for world literature as a whole, beyond the prevailing models that assume the universality of the market and the nation-state.' See: Ram, Harsha. "World Literature as World Revolution," in: (eds.) Glazer, Amelia and Lee, Steven. *Comintern Aesthetics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020), pp. 31-67. p. 67.

I.III.V: Ivanov & Saussure

Viacheslav Ivanov (1866-1949) was a leading Russian Symbolist poet, philosopher and translator. Born in rural Russia, he was trained as a classical historian and philologist at the universities of Moscow (1884–1886) and Berlin (1886–1891).[227] Subsequent travels in Athens, Italy, Palestine and Switzerland impressed a young and impressionable Symbolist movement when Ivanov returned to Petersburg in 1905. He promptly bought a towering Palace on Tavricheskaya Street, overlooking Tauride Garden in St. Petersburg. The Palace became a lively salon for artists every Wednesday evening.[228]

Ivanov's life preceding Symbolism warrants greater attention. Travel not only added to his personal mystique but also exposed him to some of the most influential ideas of his time. It is mostly forgotten, for example, that Ivanov spent some of his travels studying languages. Living near the University of Geneva, Ivanov studied Sanskrit under Ferdinand de Saussure himself. For years after, Ivanov and Saussure would remain in close contact.[229] In this sense, Saussure's ideas on the deregulation of the sign may well have reached Petersburg before it had a chance to penetrate Western thought. Mandel'shtam himself would visit Switzerland twice, first in 1909, then in 1910. As Gronas recounts:

> On the eve of his [first] Swiss trip, Mandel'shtam sent Ivanov a letter asking whether the latter was planning to be in Switzerland so that the two poets could meet there. Ivanov's answer does not survive, but it is plausible that in reply he could have told Mandel'shtam that, although he himself would not be there, Mandel'shtam – since he was interested in Romance philology – should find an interesting interlocutor in Saussure.[230]

[227] Deschartes, Olga. *Vyacheslav Ivanov* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), p. 43.
[228] Reeve, F. D. "Recent Soviet Studies in Russian Classical Literature." *Slavic Review* 22.1 (1963): pp. 126-134.
[229] Meylakh, Michel. "A Propos des anagrammes." *L'Homme* 16 (1976): 105-115.
[230] Gronas, Mikhail, pp. 195-196, footnote 33.

Building on Meylakh's hypothesis,[231] Gronas suggests the potential meeting of Ferdinand de Saussure and Osip Mandel'shtam as highly likely. Surveying Mandel'shtam's European education closely, Gronas concludes that the poet's academic subjects were 'precisely' the subjects Saussure was teaching in Geneva: hence it seems plausible that Mandel'shtam could have dropped in on one of Saussure's lectures.'[232] One would alter linguistics, the other Russian poetry. That the two may have engaged, corresponded and learned from one another remains an obscure but potentially critical chapter of Modernism's global distribution and development.

This speculation remains unproven at the time of writing and will likely remain so. Salience is found in how the departure of sign and signifier impacted Mandel'shtam and his contemporaries to an immeasurable degree themselves. In which case, especially given the historical proximity of the Russian poet and the Swiss linguist, Mandel'shtam is an ideal place for our study of literary modernism and untranslatability to begin.

[231] Meylakh, Mikhail. "Ob imenakh Akhmatovoi. I: Anna." *Russian Literature* 10 (1975): 33.
[232] Gronas, Mikhail, p. 195.

I.III.VI: Cosmopolitanism and mobility

Literary advancement for women in these years was not always easy. Anna Akhmatova (1899-1966) would become a nationally cherished poet despite her tragic personal circumstances, but Tsvetaeva's early reception was markedly less warm. 'The sorriest thing in Moscow' wrote Mandel'shtam in 1922, 'is Marina Tsvataeva's amateurish embroidery in praise of the Mother of God [*bogorodichnoe rukodelie*].'[233] Bolshevik ideologue Leon Trotsky would dismiss her in *Literature and Revolution* (1923), deriding the 'personal, often bothersome errands of Akhmatova, Tsvetaeva and others' as 'simply incomprehensible.[234]

Tsvetava's popularity beyond Russa would only grow. Leaving Moscow for public readings in Paris and Berlin in 1923, where much of her work would come to be published, Tsvetaeva bumped into contemporary poet Vladimir Mayakovsky at the train station before her departure. "Well, Mayakovsky, what message do you have for Europe?" she asked him playfully. "That truth is over here," in Russia, was his response.[235] One of Tsvetaeva's biographers, Simon Karlinsky, sees an underlying misogyny running through these incidents, concluding 'these three famous men chose to attack' her work 'not as poetry' in and of itself, 'but as something written by a woman and for that reason inferior,'[236] an assessment running counter to many considerable advancements toward equality at the time.[237] There is clearly substance to this claim, but I suggest it is more instructive still to think of this exchange not only from the perspective of relations between male and female authorship, but also as an encounter between cosmopolitanism and nationalism, World Literature and national literature.

---

[233] Mandel'shtam, Osip & Jane Gary Harris. "Literary Moscow," in: Ed: Gary Harris, Jane, *The Collected Critical Prose and Letters* (London: Harper Collins, 1991), p. 146.

[234] Peter Struve would come to echo this assessment. Struve, once a leading figure in Russian Marxism and an associate of Lenin, but now an anti-Bolshevik exile, wrote an article in *Renascence* in which he qualified her prose and poetry as pointless, unnecessary and incomprehensible. See: Karlinsky, Simon, p. 157.

[235] Karlinsky, Simon, p. 192.

[236] Karlinsky, Simon, p. 131.

[237] See: Farnsworth, Beatrice Brodsky. "Bolshevism, the woman question, and Aleksandra Kollontai." *The American Historical Review* 81.2 (1976): pp. 292-316.

If one recalls here Walkowitz and Hayot's call for the synchronicity of the 'global' and the 'modern' in the literary context,[238] then seen from this angle Tsvetaeva and Mayakovsky's exchange could be read as the differing impulses of cosmopolitanism and nationalism as manifested in their respective ambitions for a national, or global, audience. Tsvetaeva became more popular abroad, publishing in Berlin and performing in Paris.[239] Mandel'shtam is another special case: an author canonised abroad and forbidden at home.[240] These are only some of the problems and issues to contend with in the following two Chapters. Yet this still leaves undisclosed the role of *Stimmung* in this context, a topic I end this Chapter by addressing.

[238] Walkowitz, Rebecca & Hayot, Eric (eds.) *A New Vocabulary for Global Modernism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).
[239] Blasing. Molly Thomasy, "Through the Lens of Loss: Marina Tsvetaeva's Elegiac-Poetics." *Slavic Review*, vol. 73, no. 1, 2014, pp. 1–35.
[240] "Canonical Mandel'shtam," p. 158.

I.III.VII: The impact of *Stimmung*

Lastly, it is useful to point out cultural transmission at this time between the Untranslatable of this Section and the context to which it is engaged. Namely, the German term *Stimmung* – a philosophical Untranslatable insofar as it has been conceptualised within the present study - and its reception, dissemination and circulation in Russian letters circa the revolution. Can such things be measured? If it can, it is only selectively, as I have chosen to do so here and in the remaining Sections (with an eye to the figures of relevance in the Chapters to follow). A figure of seminal importance to this end is Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900). This starts an intellectual lineage running from Nietzsche to Ivanov to Mandel'shtam.

Nietzsche's works would not be translated and circulated in Russia until 1898. His books 'incorporated everything the Russian officials feared,' particularly his extended critiques of altruism and self-denial.[241] He would reach Russian modernism in any case. In 1866, a young Vyacheslav Ivanov left Moscow for Berlin. Studying classical philology and history there under Theodore Mommsen, his connection with Nietzsche's philosophical works likely dates from this encounter.

While the Russian revolution raged on, Ivanov would recall this warmly in 1917. He recalled how he finally left Berlin, back in 1891, for Paris, packed with volumes of Nietzsche 'about whom people started speaking.'[242] Over time, 'Nietzsche became increasingly and ever more powerfully the master of my thoughts,' he would later recount.[243] Such was the intensity of Ivanov's interest in Nietzsche's philosophy that arguably Nietzsche's reception in Russia cannot be understood apart from Ivanov's interpretation of him. As the next Chapter will demonstrate, Ivanov's early influence over Mandel'shtam was dynamic and profound.

---

[241] Grillaert, Nel. *What the God-seekers Found in Nietzsche: The Reception of Neitzche's Übermensch by the Philosophers of the Russian Religious Renaissance* (Netherlands: Rodopi, 2008), p. 20.
[242] As quoted in: Biebuyck, Benjamin, and Nel Grillaert. "Between God and *Ubermensch*: Viacheslav Ivanovich Ivanov and his vacillating struggle with Nietzsche." *Germano-Slavica*, vol. 14, 2003, pp. 55-73.
[243] Biebuyck, Benjamin, and Nel Grillaert, pp. 55-73.

Ivanov may have been highly influenced by Nietzsche, but his readings also spanned the very text in which *Stimmung* was reconceptualised into the realm of modern philosophy. In fact, Ivanov's critique of Martin Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* appears to rest in its totality on the very idea of *Stimmung* itself. From Ivanov's perspective, Heidegger's invests the concept of *Stimmung* not with philosophical purchase but with a pervasive sense of negation. It is a tendency he occludes with modernity itself:

> Modern philosophy is the philosophy of fear. [...] Heidegger, the most renowned of contemporary philosophers, makes fear the centre of his speculations. But for him fear is a herald of the true transcendent, which is nothing.[244]

Ivanov's pessimism bespeaks his isolation in the revolutionary era, where issues that had 'rocked generations of intellectuals suddenly lost all significance and turned to ashes.'[245] Even with his considerable and worldly erudition, Ivanov missed the hermeneutic device at his disposal in this philosophical Untranslatable. He did not grasp at the time that Heidegger's meditations on *Stimmung* could have helped his contemporaries understand the atmospheres of their *own* time and the works they produced.

Despite Ivanov's oversight, the imposition of the German word *Stimmung* onto the context of modern Russian has, in fact, been made once before. Writing from Paris in 1947, the French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961) was shocked by the spectacle of the Stalin Show Trials. Recalling at length over *Humanisme et terreur* (1947) how these horrors were happening only two decades after the Russian revolution had promised a new society, Merleau-Ponty came to imply that this specific German idiom was necessary for understanding the Soviet situation. Advocating this approach, or aspiring to, Merleau-Ponty writes:

---

[244] See: Ivanov, Viacheslav, *Sobranie sochinenii* (Brussels: Foyer chrétien oriental, 1971), pp. 481-482. For a more extensive analysis and comparison of Ivanov and Heidegger, see: Bird, Robert. "Martin Heidegger and Russian Symbolist Philosophy." *Studies in East European Thought*, vol. 51, no. 2, 1999, pp. 85–108.

[245] Slonin, Mark, Soviet Russian Literature: Writers and Problems (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 5.

> if one wants to understand the Communist problem, it is necessary to start by placing the Moscow Trials in the revolutionary *Stimmung* of violence apart from which they are inconceivable. Only then does the discussion begin.[246]

John O'Neill, in his English translation from 1969, footnotes *Stimmung* with the following litany of equivalents: '*Stimmung*, style, framework, atmosphere.'[247] O'Neill's equivocations here leaves his readers with a tantalising glimpse of an interpretation of Soviet history that Merleau-Ponty gestures to here but would ultimately leave incomplete.

The next Chapter will concentrate on Osip Mandel'shtam, in particular his poem *Twilight of Freedom* (1918) which remains as untranslatable a contemporaneous record of the revolution as is available to English-language audiences. Chapter VI turns to Marina Tsvetaeva's *Poem of the End* (1927), whose own views on translation and untranslatability are highly insightful; later, her correspondence shows *Stimmung*'s conceptual and linguistic migration from denoting global peace to a meaning closer to (but never entirely articulate of) the personal aesthetic experience.

[246] Merleau-Ponty, Maurice & John O'Neill, *Humanism and terror: an essay on the communist problem* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1969), p. xvii.
[247] Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, and John O'Neill, p. xvii.

Section One Chapter Three: *Stimmung* & Osip Mandel'shtam

This Chapter introduces the Russian Modernist poet Osip Mandel'shtam (1891-1938) in more detail, concentrating in particular on his early poem *Sumerki Svobody* [*The Twilight of Freedom*] (1918). Despite years of domestic censure and erratic translations abroad, Mandel'shtam has come to be one of the most critically acclaimed Russian poets of his time.[248] Yet this particular poem – as contemporaneous a document of the revolution as can be found across his work – fits neither the stipulations of state propaganda nor can it accurately be called a call to arms *against* the regime. If an argument toward its untranslatability is at all possible, it can only be supported by exploring its language first (in particular, the Russian words of richest ambiguity in the poem itself), then, secondly, its form. It is in respect to this latter aspect that my analysis leads back to the German word *Stimmung*, as Gumbrecht conceives it.

I suggest *The Twilight of Freedom* may be the best object of analysis to explore Gumbrecht's vision of 'reading for *Stimmung*', owing less to the poem's linguistic difficulty than the strict metre of its form. As such, this Chapter has three aims: to introduce Mandelshtam as a significant literary figure of Russian Modernism; then, to explore the poem's reception and trace the journey of its claims, misinterpretations and misunderstandings from without; and thirdly, using Gumbrecht's notion of *Stimmung* to identify the historical source I will suggest very likely shaped and inspired this poem in the first place – though this has been left undisclosed until now.

[248] For the most recent and comprehensive account on this topic, see: Kahn, Andrew. "Canonical Mandel'shtam" in: (eds.) Hodgson, Katharine, et al. *Twentieth-Century Russian Poetry: Reinventing the Canon*. 1st ed., (Open Book Publishers, 2017), pp. 157-200.

I.III.I: Background

Mandel'shtam's own autobiographical sketches 'bear all the marks of exaggeration'[249] while his biographer admits 'we know maddeningly little of his early life'.[250] These are the facts as they stand. Mandel'shtam was born in 1891 in Warsaw, to a lower-middle class Jewish family. They moved to Petersburg shortly after Mandel'shtam was born. His relationship with Marxism and religion shared many elements. In a letter, the poet claimed his 'religious experiences date from the period of my childish attraction to Marxist dogma and cannot be separated from that attraction'.[251] Brown muses that Marxism appealed to the youthful poet's long-standing desire to 'bring the confusion of history under some general rule – to channel, chastise, subdue and control the messy waywardness of life'.[252] This temperament is visible across much of his poetry, embodied by its ability to balance the shocking abstraction of its imagery with its strictly-maintained classical forms and rhythmic structures.

Amidst a life of drastic upheavals, Mandel'shtam's unwavering discipline to stick within these strict poetic formats are a testament to his miraculous endurance. His works accordingly sought to rein his reality into order. He became famous in St. Petersburg with a career that spanned first Symbolism then Acmeism, culminating in his *Utro Akmeiza* [*The Morning of Acmeism*] manifesto in 1913.[253] His wife of 19 years, Nadezhda Mandelstam, confirms in her memoirs that due to a worsening state of surveillance and restrictions, the vast majority of his work survived through oral transmission and memorisation (rather than the publication, translation and circulation that followed his untimely death in 1938).[254]

---

[249] Brown, p.13.
[250] Brown, p.5.
[251] Ed: Gary Harris, p. 475.
[252] Brown, p.26.
[253] Brown, Clarence & Mandelshtam, Osip. "Mandelshtam's Acmeist Manifesto." *The Russian Review*, vol. 24, no. 1, 1965, pp. 46–51.
[254] 'During the first few years that M. and I lived together, nothing was ever written down. He put together his Second Book from memory, dictating to me the poems he wanted to include, or jotting them down himself.' See: Mandelstam, Nadezhda & Hayward, Max. *Hope against hope: a memoir*. (New York: Atheneum, 1983), p. 269.

Throughout his work is a balance between clarity and obfuscation, order and chaos. The source of this influence on the poet can arguably be traced back to an early exchange with his mentor. One can see how these ideas began to crystallize. As mentioned in the previous Chapter, Vyacheslav Ivanov was perceived by his contemporaries as 'the most learned and versatile Russian of his times',[255] making Mandel'shtam's praise in a 1909 letter all the more compelling. Here, Mandel'shtam praises Ivanov not as his era's most learned, but as his era's most 'incomprehensible' author:

> You are the most incomprehensible [*neponyatnyy*] and, in the everyday sense of the word, the obscurest poet of our time, precisely because you are, as is no one else, faithful to your nature, having consciously entrusted yourself to it.[256]

Reinterpreting worldliness as incomprehensibility, Mandel'shtam bears witness in this exchange to a trend that would see notions of untranslatability 'heightened during the modernist period', as Damrosch observes, 'when writers were praised for writing difficult works in a style uniquely their own'.[257] Mandel'shtam emulated Ivanov at this time;[258] more importantly, he reads Ivanov's obscurity here as a positive attribute very much worth his ongoing emulation. This altogether contributes to the sense of Mandel'shtam as an author who aspired to 'incomprehensible' writing (even if this phase of his thinking is at its most intense in the period this Chapter surveys).

---

[255] Rudich, Vasily. "The Tower Builder: The Works and Days of Vyacheslav Ivanov." *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics*, vol. 5, no. 3, 1998, pp. 48–68. *p. 48.*

[256] (Ivanov, August 13th 1909; 477)

[257] Damrosch, David, *Comparing the Literatures* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2020), p. 180.

[258] Rudich appears to make a similar case for Ivanov himself: 'Of all great literary figures of twentieth-century Russia, [Ivanov] is arguably the least familiar' to the English-speaking world. 'One reason for this is the difficulty of rendering his complex and elaborate texts into readable English.' See: [258] Rudich, Vasily. "The Tower Builder: The Works and Days of Vyacheslav Ivanov." *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics*, vol. 5, no. 3, 1998, pp. 48–68. p. 48.

I intend to turn next to a particular poem that exemplifies these attributes in Mandel'shtam's reception. The work in question is as direct and contemporaneous a literary account of the revolution as the poet produced in his lifetime. I intend to introduce the poem by first examining the translational difficulty with which it is principally associated (and the ground on which claims as to its untranslatability are made). After considering the alleged difficulties of its interpretation (or claims to that effect) and its evidence in the poem itself, my further task will be to consider how the intervention of the German Untranslatable *Stimmung* can help readers access the historical tones and atmospheres embedded in this text.

If, as Westwood claimed previously, Russian writing has a great and singular value in 'conveying the atmosphere of the time',[259] then using *Stimmung* to draw attention to its prosody and the historical otherness embedded within its rhythmic economy offers new opportunities to bring new readings of the poem to light. The answer, on both counts, is inseparable from the formal metres employed therein. First, to the poem itself.

[259] Westwood, J. N., *Endurance and Endeavour* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 102.

I.III.II: *Sumerki svobody* [*The Twilight of Freedom*] *(*1918)

Прославим, братья, сумерки свободы,

Великий сумеречный год!

В кипящие ночные воды

Опущен грузный лес тенёт.

Восходишь ты в глухие годы, —

О, солнце, судия, народ.

Прославим роковое бремя,

Которое в слезах народный вождь берёт.

Прославим власти сумрачное бремя,

Её невыносимый гнёт.

В ком сердце есть — тот должен слышать, время,

Как твой корабль ко дну идёт,

Мы в легионы боевые

Связали ласточек — и вот

Не видно солнца; вся стихия

Щебечет, движется, живёт;

Сквозь сети — сумерки густые —

Не видно солнца, и земля плывёт.

Ну что ж, попробуем: огромный, неуклюжий,

Скрипучий поворот руля.

Земля плывёт. Мужайтесь, мужи.

Как плугом, океан деля,

Мы будем помнить и в летейской стуже,

Что десяти небес нам стоила земля. (original)

Let us now praise freedom's twilight [*sumerki*],

The glorious twilit year!

Into the midnight boiling waters

A massive forest of snares is lowered.

You rise above obscure [*glukhiye*] years, —

O sun, O judge, my people.

Let us praise the fateful burden

The people's leader takes up tearfully. —

Let us praise power's gloomy burden,

Its yoke unbearable.

Those with a heart must hear, time,

That your ship is sinking.

We have bound swallows

Into battle legions — and now

We cannot see the sun; all nature

Warbles, flutters, lives;

Amidst the nets of thick twilight

The sun is lost, and the earth sails.

Well, let us now try an enormous, clumsy,

And squealing turn of the wheel.

The earth sails on. Take courage, men.

Parting the ocean like a plow,

We will remember even in Lethean frost,

That to us the earth was worth ten heavens. (Meares)

In May 1918, a monthly publication by the Leftist Socialist Revolutionaries, *Znamya Truda* [*Banner of Labour*] prints a poem by Mandel'shtam entitled simply as *Gimn* [*Hymn*].[260] Renamed *Sumerki svobody* [*The Twilight of Freedom*], it is republished in 1921 in *Krasnyi militsioner* [*Red Militiaman*] opposite an article praising the brutal suppression of sailors against the Soviet government.[261] A reprint from 1928 removes the title and the first two lines of the poem altogether.[262] In other words, the first decade of the poem's genetic history tells readers something about the changing conditions of Russian modernity and the corresponding individual and socio-ethical limitations around which Russian authors of the time were forced to ongoingly rethink and renegotiate their work.

The poem itself describes, over four stanzas, a twilit ship sailing through murky waters, as swallows fly above a crew of 'brothers' rowing. This is simple enough for English readers to follow. Yet I suggest these images are themselves symbolic for the Russian nation at the time of writing, itself swept into a trajectory its population had no hope of steering or foreseeing.

Yet if one starts from this insight and attempts to go further in the hope of examining its supposed untranslatability in more detail, one cannot do so without a closer examination of the language employed to this end. As I see it, the only way for English readers to grasp the deeper meaning of these images is with recourse to what has complicated its translations. In particular, obscure words that do not travel easily, both of which appear in the poem's first stanza. I will attend to these first, before addressing the issue of the poem's prosody second.

[260] Nilsson, Nils Åke. "Mandel'štam's Sumerki Poems" *Russian Literature* 30.4 (1991): pp. 467-479. p. 476.
[261] Cavanagh, Clare. *Osip Mandelstam and the Modernist Creation of Tradition* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 168.
[262] "Mandel'štam's Sumerki Poems," p. 476.

Sumerki, borrowed from a poem by Tyutchev,[263] can be translated as either 'sunrise' or 'sunset'. The need to decide which of these meanings is correct only becomes a matter of urgency in the context of the political situation it enigmatically addresses. This is, furthermore, not a simple thing to reproduce in English. Swedish translator Nilsson notes this ambiguous Russian word appears in two published works from 1917 and a further four poems from 1918, constituting what he refers to as 'the *sumerki* cycle.'[264]

The word speaks 'symbolically to the beginnings or the end of an era' – and this is why it was deemed so dangerous.[265] In a close examination of *Twilight of Freedom* and four other poems, Nilsson makes a convincing case that Mandel'shtam's persistent use of the word reveals something of the uncertainty with which he interpreted his contemporary moment, and suggests a splitting of address between a domestic and international audience.[266] In light of its removal in the poem's 1928 reprint, it is on this specific Russian word in the poem's opening line that the poem's reception hinged, both in Russia and in translation:

Brothers, let's celebrate the dusk of liberty (Ilya Shambat)[267]

Brethren, let's praise the dusk of freedom (Philip Nikolayev)[268]

Let us praise, brothers, freedom's twilight, (Jenny Wade)[269]

---

[263] Morrison, p. 28.
[264] "Mandel'štam's Sumerki Poems," p. 476.
[265] Morrison, p. 33.
[266] Nilsson, Nils Åke. *Osip Mandel'štam: five poems*. (Gothenburg: Almqvist & Wiksell international, 1974).
[267] Mandel'shtam, Osip & Shambat, Ilya, Tristia, *The Dusk of Liberty*, available via: http://lib.ru/POEZIQ/MANDELSHTAM/tristia_engl.txt
[268] Mandel'shtam, Osip & Nikolayev, Philip, *Liberty's Twilight*, available via: https://ruverses.com/osip-mandelshtam/the-twilight-of-freedom/3874/
[269] Mandel'shtam, Osip & Wade, Jenny, *The Twilight of Freedom*, available via: https://sensitiveskinmagazine.com/twilight-of-freedom-osip-mandelstam/

Secondly, the word *glukhiye* can stand for 'muteness' or 'obscurity'. A relevant anecdote may make the poet's choice on this clearer. After reciting at the Prival Komediantov club in 1917, Mandel'shtam told Yelena Mikhaylovna Tager '"I'm afraid none of us is going to appear in print for a long time. A time of silence is coming."'[270] Readers could well be forgiven for not grasping these ambiguities, their motivation or indeed their context upon reading it in English:

In these dead years you rise above me
O sun, to judge us all and rule. (Ilya Shambat)[271]

From under a deaf age's yoke
You rise, O sun! O judge! O folk! (Philip Nikolayev)[272]

You are ascending in desolate years,
Oh sun, judge, people. (Jenny Wade)[273]

In the context of its initial composition, these ambiguous words lead critics to suspect that Mandel'shtam sought to avoid subscription to either side of the polarities emergent in the post-revolutionary civil war.[274] In this light, *The Twilight of Freedom* can be read as not just an attempt to represent the transition from one political epoch to another, but more urgently the search for a symbolic order after World War One, the revolution and the civil war. Nonetheless such a reading, while valid, stops short of explaining the prosody of the work.

[270] Brown, p. 70.
[271] Mandel'shtam, Osip & Shambat, Ilya, Tristia, *The Dusk of Liberty*, available via: http://lib.ru/POEZIQ/MANDELSHTAM/tristia_engl.txt
[272] Mandel'shtam, Osip & Nikolayev, Philip, *Liberty's Twilight*, available via: https://ruverses.com/osip-mandelshtam/the-twilight-of-freedom/3874/
[273] Mandel'shtam, Osip & Wade, Jenny, *The Twilight of Freedom*, available via: https://sensitiveskinmagazine.com/twilight-of-freedom-osip-mandelstam/
[274] Erlich, Victor. *Modernism and revolution: Russian literature in transition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), pp. 65-67.

In Mandel'shtam's rhythm I suggest there can be located an ambivalent, quietly desperate anthem for stability. In whatever form, however achieved, and as soon as possible. That Mandel'shtam treasured the rigour of formal convention in the face of such turmoil should not come as a surprise. Harmony for Mandel'shtam is, above all, a question of order. The ship – be it symbolic of the poet and his immediate companions or the nation as a whole – is anchored by the solemn, repetitive prosody of its funereal metre. Yet however much this form may have mattered to the poet himself, he was not at liberty to impose the same constraints on his initial translations into English, as will be seen imminently. Part of what drew me to the incoming debate was my curiosity to understand how a poem could be so misunderstood, by so many and for so long. Gregory Freidin's otherwise pioneering account of Mandel'shtam gives this poem barely a page, considering the poem 'an offer of moral support to the new regime.'[275] In the much later overview *Modernism and Revolution*, Victor Erlich admits: 'I must confess that I find these lines baffling.'[276]

This poem first appears in English in 1973, in a collection compiled by Clarence Brown and W. S. Mervin.[277] Both scholars were genuinely passionate to bring the Russian poet to the attention of their Western contemporaries, but this first publication was not uncontroversial. Brown and Mervin decided to produce free verse translations of the poems, dismantling their rhythmic economies and structures (so vital a part of Mandel'shtam's poetics) into plain English free verse. Turning to the disagreements this inspired will mean jumping forward a moment chronologically (as the analysis of translation invariably necessitates), to the debate of this poet's untranslatability that his English translations immediately inspired. Reexploring this debate will lead my present analysis back to the Untranslatable *Stimmung*.

[275] Freidin, Gregory. *A Coat of Many Colors: Osip Mandelstam and His Mythologies of Self-Presentation*. United Kingdom: University of California Press, 2010), p. 178.
[276] Erlich, Victor. *Modernism and revolution: Russian literature in transition* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1994), p. 66.
[277] Mandel'shtam, Osip, Brown, Clarence & Merwin, W.S. *Selected poems* (United States: Atheneum, 1974).

I.III.III: Brodsky, Bonnefoy, and untranslatable prosody

A few years after Brown and Merwin's edition, Bernard Meares retranslates fifty Mandel'shtam poems, this time in the attempt to maintain or reconstruct its formal features. The contemporary Soviet poet and essayist Joseph Brodsky (1940-1996) contributes an Introduction to its publication in 1977.[278]

However, the Introduction makes precious mention of Meares's translations themselves: Brodsky instead uses it as a platform from which to condemn Brown and Merwin's free verse treatments as 'an absolutely impersonal product' by comparison.[279] Removing a poem from its original form and offering a free verse alternative, Brodsky goes on to assert, gives Anglophone readers a skeletal, unsatisfactory reproduction of the original poem. Neither Russian poetry nor Mandel'shtam in particular, he writes, deserve being treated 'as a poor relation'.[280] In no uncertain terms, Brodsky continues that

> The cavalier treatment of [Brown or Merwin] is at best a sacrilege, at worst a mutilation or a murder. In any case, it is a crime of the mind, for which its perpetrator—especially if he is not caught—pays with the pace of his intellectual degradation. As for the readers, they buy a lie.[281]

Brodsky's irritation stems from the fact that these free verse translations detach the original composition from its intended formal aspects, effectively severing the poet from the tradition(s) their text aspires to contribute and engage with (and without which, potentially, they cannot be fully comprehended). As Brodsky sees it, Russian poetry has maintained its 'moral purity and firmness' exactly because it has preserved these 'so-called classical forms' which have mirrored, in his account, Russia's continued cultural coherence.[282]

---

[278] Mandel'shtam, Osip & Meares, Bernard. *50 Poems* (United States: Persea Books, 1977).
[279] Brodsky, Joseph, "A Child of Civilization," p. 270.
[280] Brodsky, Joseph, "A Child of Civilization," in: *Less Than One: Selected Essays* (United Kingdom, Penguin, 2011), pp. 235-275. pp. 271-272.
[281] Brodsky, Joseph, "A Child of Civilization," p. 269; p. 271.
[282] Brodsky, Joseph, "A Child of Civilization," p. 272.

These claims preoccupied the French author, critic and translator Yves Bonnefoy (1923-2016). In 1979 he published a reply. Bonnefoy's sophisticated response draws on (and is likely, at least in part, a defence of) his own free verse translations. Initially, Bonnefoy sympathises with Brodsky's view that poetic form determines social cohesion. Bonnefoy agrees that prosody was once 'a *metaphor* of the social law'[283] but this leads him to a more polemical claim:

> Against Brodsky I therefore affirm that, even when we have to translate some of those poems of the past, whose regularity was so important an aspect, almost the soul, we can no longer sincerely and seriously use regular, "classical" meters. Indeed, the more regularity was intense or significant in the original poetry, the more our faked or dispirited regularity of now must be, at the very first, dismissed.[284]

This exchange leads me to suggest that the claim toward Mandel'shtam's untranslatability is made from the moment he is translated into English. Yet here as throughout this project, untranslatability is not a simple or straightforward claim; rather, as earlier established, it is more often informed by, and conversant with, the conditions of its accusation.

In this case, the accusation is less based on practical matters of intralingual difficulty than the deeper historicity of the forms it employs (without which, its characteristic tension between form and content is missing in English). From Brodsky's perspective, free verse translation marks a failure of cultural preservation. Bonnefoy, meanwhile, thinks that reconstructing past or esoteric forms of prosody is disingenuous for the target audience of one's contemporaries. However, it remains unseen to what extent or to what degree the German Untranslatable *Stimmung* can figure within this debate or in respect to the poem itself.

[283] Bonnefoy, Yves, p. 375.
[284] Bonnefoy, Yves, p. 375.

I.III.IV: Loss of Prosody

Bringing *Stimmung* back into the equation here opens two new paths of interpretation. In this sub-section, firstly, I will consider how *Stimmung* (as Gumbrecht conceives it) figures in Brodsky and Bonnefoy's debate. In the following sub-section, I take a more hermeneutic approach to the word, parting ways with Gumbrecht so as to analyse the poem more intertextually to include what I consider a key source of influence on the original poem itself.

Now, returning a moment to the controversy that met Mandel'shtam's first English translations, it would appear at first glance to be a matter of irreconcilable disagreement. Yet if there is any tenable common ground between these positions, it is in the claim that prosodic forms give readers access to a particular historical or cultural epistemology or way of life. To Brodsky's mind, 'if only for purely ethnographic reasons, that quality ought to be preserved in translation and not forced into some common mold [sic].'[285] In support of this notion, Bonnefoy settles for the example of 'the classical alexandrine', a poetic form 'which expresses so well the little world of Versailles, itself so tightly closed and ceremonious.'[286]

This latter claim chimes unmistakably with Gumbrecht's conceptualisation of *Stimmung*, most notably his observation that the alexandrine was 'in a literal sense' a part of 17th century Paris's 'material reality at the time.'[287] This leads one to reflect further back upon Hans Gumbrecht's claims regarding poetic form and prosody. When poems are read aloud, he insisted, 'we call them forth to new life. The sounds and rhythms of the words strike our bodies as they struck the spectators at that time.'[288] Gumbrecht makes a convincing appeal for the German Untranslatable *Stimmung* to nominate the ability of prosody to transcend historical, geographical and linguistic difference.

[285] Brodsky, Joseph. *Less Than One*, p.272.
[286] Bonnefoy, Yves, p. 375.
[287] *Atmosphere, mood, Stimmung: on a hidden potential of literature,* p. 13.
[288] *Atmosphere, mood, Stimmung: on a hidden potential of literature*, p. 13.

In other words, Bonnefoy anticipates Gumbrecht's notion of *Stimmung* indirectly, yet stops short of adhering to the ability of prosody to affect contemporary audiences as a matter of historical or linguistic otherness conveyed through rhythm, prosody and poetic form. Bonnefoy finds this disingenuous, and there is more than a hint of Cold War paranoia in his rebukes: 'Once more, the old idea of holy Russia, whose historical misadventures could even be signs of qualities and aspirations inaccessible to our lower ones!'[289]

Perhaps Bonnefoy's point here is that poetry should never be deemed 'inaccessible'. Yet without the prosody with which it was written, Brodsky asserts otherwise, it always will be. The charge of untranslatability made by Brodsky in this instance is therefore one motivated by the instinct for cultural preservation, one eloquently resistant to reductive forms of institutionalised global consumption. Within the limits of those circumstantial axes, the deeper source of Brodsky's claim rests on the idea that the translation of words alone cannot manifest a literary translation. What exactly does Brodsky think is lost in this process?

Altogether, I suggest it is permissible to assume from this debate that what Hans Gumbrecht conceptualises as *Stimmung* denominates *precisely* the quality that Joseph Brodsky considers absent and untranslated in Mandel'shtam's English translations – constituting the source of Mandel'shtam's untranslatability. What is lost in translation for Brodsky is the *Stimmung* of Mandel'shtam's strict formal poetics. The process of identifying and elaborating upon the claim of this author's untranslatability, in other words, leads my inquiry back to the Philosophical Untranslatable with which I intended to analyse the literary text. Next, I am forced to depart from Gumbrecht's notion of the word in search of new approaches, in the hope of also demonstrating the conceptual flexibility of the Untranslatable when used in such ways.

[289] Bonnefoy, Yves, p. 374.

I.III.V: *Stimmung* as global harmony

If the present task is to reinterpret the German Untranslatable *Stimmung* for different purposes, this necessitates a hermeneutic approach to the word in question. Considering *Stimmung* hermeneutically (as Venuti asserts it) leads one back to the musicality with which it was originally associated. Dwelling on that original meaning leads me to a discovery that elucidates the poem's form while revealing an unfashionably persistent cosmopolitanism in the poet's outlook. To my knowledge, this source has been unexposed till now.

Two months before the poem's composition, Mandel'shtam works at Anatoly Lunacharski's *Norkompros* (People's Commissariat of Education), where Nadezhda Mandel'shtam laughingly recalls that the 'only thing he did was organise something called the Institute of Rhythmics and rescue a choir'.[290] Upon closer excavation, the choir in question belongs to the composer Aleksandr Kastal'skii (1856-1926) who had completed *Rekviyem po Pavshim Brat'yam* [*Requiem for Fallen Brothers*] in 1916.[291]

As the First World War rages, the choir is threatened with being disbanded. Mandel'shtam convinces the authorities that it should be preserved.[292] Following the cessation of the conflict, the composer Kastal'skii grew determined to compose an anthem of not just national but *global* import, writing to a colleague that 'if the idea of a fraternal union in the struggle with the Germans had not been firmly in my mind, I'd have discarded it, without batting an eyelid'.[293] Originally modelled on *panikhida* (Russian funeral service) movements, the piece carries a funereal rhythm not dissimilar to that of Mandel'shtam's poem. In its final incarnation, the Requiem called for harmony among the world's nations, as figured in its cast. The Requiem was delivered as

[290] Brown, p. 72.
[291] Zvereva, Svetlana. 2017. "Alexander Kastal'sky: A Russian Requiem", *The Choral Journal*, 42: 27-35.
[292] Brown, p. 72.
[293] "Alexander Kastal'sky: A Russian Requiem", p. 30.

> "a kind of oratorio" whose heroes were a cardinal, youths in white attire, English, Rumanian and Italian nurses, a Greek clergyman, groups of Russian peasant women, Montenegrins and Serbs, some Americans, Hindu soldiers and priests, a Japanese religious procession, and also a choir […][294]

Owing to its medium, the Requiem is not reducible to World Literature in Damrosch's definition, having more in common with Franco Moretti's definition of the Modern Epic as privileging 'the supranational dimension of the represented space'.[295] Following *Stimmung*'s etymology leads to a work whose parallels with Mandel'shtam's poem are striking. Images of singing; allusions to 'brothers'; a funereal rhythmic form. Underneath it all, the *Stimmung* of an inescapable uncertainty. This, I would insist, does not mean the poem is a hermetic refusal of the revolution's reality nor is it principally or overtly an anti-revolutionary work. Using the early connotations of *Stimmung* to trace notions of musical harmony historically buried within it and experimenting with a hermeneutic approach to the Untranslatable itself, I have located previously unexplored connections centred around the desire for order that the poem, via reading for *Stimmung*, manages to convey.

Yet the words that proved so difficult for Mandel'shtam's translators, *sumerki* and *glukhiye*, underline that Gumbrecht's claim that a poetic recitation can 'strike our bodies as they struck the spectators at that time'[296] must also negotiate with the complexities and issues of translation in order to consolidate and confirm that latter idea. If the *Stimmung* of a literary work is determined by its rhythms and form, then the loss of that element in translation leaves the poem's *Stimmung* untranslated.

---

[294] Alexander Kastal'sky: A Russian Requiem", p.34.
[295] Moretti, Franco, *The Modern Epic* (Verso Books, 1996), p. 2.
[296] *Atmosphere, mood, Stimmung: on a hidden potential of literature*,p. 13.

I.III.VI: Conclusion

Finally, it is worth recapitulating where the imposition of *Stimmung* onto this poem has led. Gumbrecht's invocation of 'Reading for *Stimmung*' is a convincing intervention in literary studies. This is because it privileges literary form as a point of affective access and means of transmission for the historical conceivability and essential otherness of foreign literatures. It led to an analysis in which the poem's form was assessed for insights it could convey to readers distant from the text itself.

This was followed by the suggestion that the untranslatable aspect of *Stimmung* be brought to the foreground. This is an aspect that Gumbrecht's account of *Stimmung* overlooks. Yet, as I cautioned earlier, this promotion of the word's inherent untranslatability must be carried out through a hermeneutic mode of analysis if it hopes to improve upon the limitations of literary theory. A hermeneutic approach, in my interpretation, required an investigation of etymology, which led to a musical influence on this poem previously undiscovered. Continuing in this vein is not an outright rejection of Gumbrecht's proposal. Yet the engagement of his notion of *Stimmung* with translation, as earlier pointed out, is not without problems. It appears that while Gumbrecht sees prosody as the element of a text that transcends linguistic difference, it was the very loss of this element in Mandel'shtam's early translations that earned him the accusation of untranslatability.

In the following Chapter, I carry this hermeneutically informed interpretation (with reference to its etymology and its altering meaning in the 20th meaning) of the word's musicality when looking at the second Russian Modernist poet, Marina Tsvetaeva. Read through the prism of this Philosophical Untranslatable reveals her privileging of sound over meaning, while her correspondence demonstrates the shifting meanings of the word itself.

Section One Chapter Four: *Stimmung* & Marina Tsvetaeva

Brilliant, fiercely unconventional and uncompromising in her lifetime, the Russian poet Marina Tsvetaeva (1892-1941) has earned comparison with Western Modernists like T.S. Eliot, James Joyce and Ezra Pound.[297] Yet it is principally because her poetry has proven so 'extraordinarily difficult to translate,'[298] as Charles Simic claims, that her verse when read in English can seem 'painfully awkward and dull' to new readers when 'she is nothing of the sort.'[299] As will be seen, Tsvetaeva's untranslatability (as perceived by her translators, and as discussed conceptually by the poet herself) reminds readers that the translation and circulation of texts are vital to their reception. Her reception outside of Russia was at its peak in her lifetime. Its response in English translation has failed to match it. This presents a fascinating and complex question to consider over the following Chapter: What happens when an author's translation *prevents* their circulation?

As this Chapter will demonstrate, the principal difficulty translators experience with Tsvetaeva's work rests on the privilege she accords to the sound of words over their meaning. When looking more closely at the German Romanticism in which she was raised and whose influence endured across her prolific oeuvre, I will reassert that a hermeneutic approach to the Untranslatable must necessarily heed the historical contingencies on which its various (and sometimes contradictory) meanings depend. She occupies, in this respect, the passage of time in which *Stimmung*'s original meaning (that of global harmony) was gradually altered by historical events (most notably the First World War). Approaching the German word from this perspective, I will show how Tsvetaeva's correspondences actually coincide with the eclipse of one meaning of the word and the emergence of another.

---

[297] While her comparisons with Eliot and Pound will be revisited at the end of this Chapter, James Gambrell claims that Tsvetaeva 'confronts readers with a Joycean profusion of idioms and styles […].' See: Tsvetaeva, Marina & Jamey Gambrell, *Earthly Signs: Moscow Diaries, 1917-1922* (New York: New York Review of Books, 2017), p. xxix.

[298] Simic, Charles, *The Life of Images* (New York: Harper Collins, 2015), pp.215-228. p. 215.

[299] Simic, Charles, p. 220.

I.IV.I: Background

Marina Tsvetaeva (1892-1941) is born in Moscow to a Russian Professor (her father) and a pianist of German and Polish heritage (her mother). From the age of six, she is precociously talented and prolific in poetry, but this meets a muted reception: attempts to read her poems to members of her family are 'met with her mother's ridicule and with incomprehension from the rest.'[300] When she cannot find a Russian word to complete a rhyme, she uses a French or German word instead - regardless of its meaning.[301]

The reluctance of her mother to support her literary efforts is reflected in her personal writings continuously,[302] yet despite her initial lack of support, Tsvetaeva's mother leaves the poet with a cultural heritage she later comes to appreciate: 'Her poets were Heine, Goethe, Schiller and Shakespeare', Tsvetaeva later recalls: 'More foreign books than Russian ones.'[303] Indeed, her biographer, Karlinsky, claims that the 'entire spirit' in which Marina Tsvetaeva 'was brought up and educated' was, in fact, 'German.'[304] 'From my Mother I inherited Music, Romanticism and Germany,' she would later recall.[305] Tsvataeva's passion for poetry leads her to publish her first collection at only 17. She meets Sergei Maximilian Voloshin in Koktebel in the winter of 1910. The two immediately became friends and correspond often. It is at Voloshin's house that Tsvetaeva meets her future husband, Sergie Efron, a shy young army cadet, in May 1911.[306]

---

[300] Karlinsky, Simon, *Marina Tsvetaeva: The Woman, Her World, and Her Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 16-17.
[301] McDuff, David, and Tsvetaeva, Marina. *Selected Poems* (United Kingdom: Bloodaxe Books, 1987), p. iii.
[302] See: Tsvetaeva, Marina & Gambrell, Jamey. *Earthly Signs: Moscow Diaries, 1917-1922* (New York: New York Review of Books, 2017). Greenleaf attempts to situate these memoirs in the grander structure of post-war modernist memory. See: Greenleaf, Monika. "Laughter, Music, and Memory at the Moment of Danger: Tsvetaeva's 'Mother and Music' in Light of Modernist Memory Practices." *Slavic Review*, vol. 68, no. 4, 2009, pp. 825–847.
[303] *Marina Tsvetaeva: The Woman, Her World, and Her Poetry*, p. 12.
[304] *Marina Tsvetaeva: The Woman, Her World, and Her Poetry*, p. 12.
[305] *Marina Tsvetaeva: The Woman, Her World, and Her Poetry*, p. 151.
[306] *Earthly Signs: Moscow Diaries, 1917-1922*, p. 236.

Their marriage is deemed unconventional to many. They have two children, while Efron allows Tsvetaeva to have various affairs. An oft-quoted passage from one of Efron's letters describes how to 'plunge headlong into a self-created hurricane has become a necessity for' Tsvetaeva, even 'the air of her life.'[307] Tsvetaeva's relationship with the activist and author Sophia Parnok (1885-1933) ends suddenly, from which some sources believe Tsvetaeva never recovered.[308] This reflects a widespread liberalism of the pre-revolutionary era too often overlooked. Karlinsky believes the post-1905 'cultural atmosphere was unbelievably free. The revolution of 1905 had made possible the kind of advocacy in political, religious and sexual areas that had been unthinkable earlier.'[309]

Tsvetaeva is thus one of those Russian modernists for whom the pre-1917 Russian situation is alluded to as a lost paradise – or, at least, a certainly preferable state of affairs.[310] In conversations with Henryk Sachs in Moscow, she could not conceal her hatred of the Soviet system nor her hope for its defeat.[311] Throughout the 1920s, she spends time in Paris (where the vast majority of Russian émigrés resided) and Prague (where the universities offered generous grants to Russian emigrants[312]). Her unconventional lifestyle and poetics were too radical for either community: 'Many considered her difficult poetry deliberately obscurantist and her emotional intensity hysterical.'[313]

---

[307] 'Marina is a creature of passions. To a much greater degree than previously – prior to my departure. To plunge headlong into a self-created hurricane has become a necessity for her, the air of her life. Who the instigator of this hurricane is today doesn't matter. […] A person is invented and the hurricane is on. If the insignificance and the limitations of the instigator are soon revealed, Marina is plunged into an equally hurricane-like despair.' See: *Marina Tsvetaeva: The Woman, Her World, and Her Poetry*, p. 72.
[308] Tsvetaeva, Marina & Elena Feinstein. *Collected Poems* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. ix.
[309] *Marina Tsvetaeva: The Woman, Her World, and Her Poetry*, p. 44.
[310] For more on this topic in English translation, running the spectrum from émigré authorship to domestic disillusionment, see: Bunin, Ivan Alekseevich. *Cursed Days: Diary of a Revolution* (United States: Ivan R. Dee Publisher, 1998); Alexei Ramizov's *Russia in a Whirlwind* (1927, rare); Livak, Leonid. *Russian Émigrés in the Intellectual and Literary Life of Interwar France: A Bibliographical Essay* (Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010).
[311] *Marina Tsvetaeva: The Woman, Her World, and Her Poetry*, p 77.
[312] See: Riha, T. "Russian Émigré Scholars in Prague after World War I." *The Slavic and East European Journal*, vol. 2, no. 1, 1958, pp. 22–26.
[313] *Earthly Signs: Moscow Diaries, 1917-1922*, p. xiii.

Having lived through such turbulent times (two revolutions, a world war, a civil war, emigration, creeping political surveillance and censorship), many of her interpretations consider the 'increasing diversity' and 'growing difficulty of her poetry' as 'a response to the Revolutions and the Civil War.'[314] Looking to such grand historical narratives has guided perhaps too many readings of this poet, potentially to her detriment. Translation, along with its corresponding spectre of untranslatability, offer her readers fresh paths of interpretation.

Khtomisky has provided the only extant study on Tsvetaeva as a translator and translation theorist, collating a diverse range of the poet's statements on translation from correspondence, notes and essays.[315] Khotimsky claims that, for Tsvetaeva, 'the idea of poetry as reaching toward the absolute is the premise of any interpretive act. Translation is possible, because poetry is possible.'[316] This statement must be grasped within the schema of its Romantic inheritance to be properly understood.

As I go on to explore, it reveals how Tsvetaeva's attitude to translation was, in many ways, an extension of the German Romanticism she never aesthetically outgrew. Khotimsky has rigorously resituated Tsvetaeva into the sphere of Translation Studies, a field to which her writings could richly contribute. Despite the strength of this gesture, a study that places greater emphasis on the *un*translatable element of Tsvetaeva's work is presently unavailable. To offer a satisfiable account of Tsvetaeva's relationship with untranslatability, one must first assess this topic from the perspective of her translators, and then, from within the poet's own thoughts and writing.

[314] Makin, Michael, *Marina Tsvetaeva : Poetics of Appropriation* (United Kingdom, Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 34.
[315] Khotimsky, Maria, "Marina Cvetaeva in Translation and as a Translator of Poetry," in: Forrester, Sibelan E. S., A Companion to Marina Cvetaeva: Approaches to a Major Russian Poet (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2016), pp. 164-190.
[316] "Marina Cvetaeva in Translation and as a Translator of Poetry," p. 177.

I.IV.II: Untranslatability: Translational reception

It appears that no translator can offer their commentary on Tsvetaeva without reference to her unwavering difficulty. In respect to her poetry, her 'intensity,' finds Nina Kossman, 'which in Russian perfectly agrees with her pattern of rhyme and reason, is bound to be lost whenever rhyme and reason become a translator's primary concern.'[317] With a mixture of admiration and weariness, Kossman claims Tsvetaeva's writing 'abounds in peculiarities, some virtually untranslatable.'[318]

In respect to her prose, Jamey Gambrell claims that reading 'Tsvetaeva sometimes feels like witnessing language in a primordial, undiluted form.'[319] Translating her Moscow diaries from 1917-1922, she premises her translation with a reluctant admission that 'Tsvetaeva is not easy reading, even for educated native speakers of Russian.'[320] 'Tsvetaeva's prose lives by the same principles as her poetry, if somewhat less intensely. This creates challenges – not to say moments of utter despair – for the translator.'[321]

Literary critics draw similar conclusions. Emily Lygo clarifies the difficulties of translating Tsvetaeva's work with erudition: 'Her language draws on archaic and rare vocabulary, and also uses root words to form neologisms, demanding a depth of understanding of Russian lexis, as well as breadth.'[322] Angela Livingstone agrees with Gambrell that her prose is no easier: 'It is almost as difficult to translate Tsvetaeva's prose as it is to translate poetry. Everywhere there are rhythms, half-rhymes, echoings of vowels or consonant or word-structure, which just don't happen in the English words required to carry the meanings,'

[317] Kossman, Nina. "Translator's Introduction," In: *In the Inmost Hour of the Soul* (Germany: Humana Press, 1997), p. xi-xii.
[318] Kossman, Nina, p. x.
[319] *Earthly Signs: Moscow Diaries, 1917-1922*,, p. xxix.
[320] *Earthly Signs: Moscow Diaries, 1917-1922*,, p. xxix.
[321] *Earthly Signs: Moscow Diaries, 1917-1922*,, p. xxxi.
[322] Lygo, Emily. "Review: Marina Tsvetaeva: *'Phaedra' with 'New Year's Letter' and Other Long Poems*. Translated by Angela Livingstone," *Translation and Literature*, vol. 24, no. 3, 2015, pp. 376-382.

claiming 'examples can be gathered from every page of every essay'.[323] Gambrell is more expansive still on this point, alluding to 'the multiple associations arising phonetically and semantically from a complex interaction of strong root meanings,' while enumerating 'the absence of definite and indefinite articles, and an extremely flexible system of noun, verb, and adjective formation that makes use of prepositional prefixes, suffixes, and participle adjectives,'[324] all of which readily contribute to the translator's 'despair.'[325]

Venuti's contention with such statements is foreseeable and not without foundation. Put simply, that something is difficult does not render it impossible. In the literary context, to acknowledge an author's difficulty does not presuppose their translation's impossibility. Yet even a partial survey of Tsvetaeva's translators reveal a weary consensus enumerated at length on many occasions. Such complexity betrays a deliberate aesthetic on the part of the author, as Tsvetaeva's own thoughts on untranslatability next serve to confirm.

[323] Tsvetaeva, Marina & Angela Livingstone, p. 17.
[324] *Earthly Signs: Moscow Diaries, 1917-1922*, p. xxix.
[325] *Earthly Signs: Moscow Diaries, 1917-1922*, p. xxxi.

I.IV.III: Tsvetaeva on untranslatability

An assessment of Tsvetaeva's relationship with untranslatability must foremost take into account the breadth of her writings and the contradictions attendant therein. Just as certain statements resist the idea of untranslatability altogether,[326] it nonetheless emerges in her writings as a mechanism by which to understand (rather than devalue) translation itself. This supports Khotimsky's conclusion that translation and poetry were indivisible in Tsvetaeva's outlook. Such sentiments are echoed, more ambiguously, in the following exchange:

> Goethe says somewhere that one can never achieve anything of significance in a foreign language - and that has always rung false to me […] Writing poetry is in itself translating, from the mother tongue into another. Whether French or German should make no difference. No language is the mother tongue. Writing poetry is rewriting it [*Dichten ist nachdichten*].

Her reference to Goethe reflects the importance of German thought throughout her career: *Dichten ist nachdichten* captures precisely the paradoxical view of translation she would sustain. After writing the letter above to Rilke, on July 6th 1926 she would write not long after:

> (How much better the Germans put it – *nachdichten*! Following in the poet's path, paving anew the entire road which he paved. For let *nach* be – (to follow after), but – *dichten*!, is that which is always anew.) *Nachdichten* – to pave anew the road along instantaneously vanishing

[326] For instance, a letter to the French poet Paul Valéry in 1937, reads: 'One says that Pushkin cannot be translated. Why? Every poem is a translation from the spiritual into the material, from feelings and thoughts into words. If one has been able to do it once by translating the interior world into external signs (which comes close to a miracle), why should one not be able to express one system of signs via another? As quoted in: Etkind, Alexandr, *Eros of the Impossible: The History of Psychoanalysis in Russia* (Oxford and Boulder: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 237.

> traces. But translation has another meaning. To translate not only into (the Russian language, for example), but also across (a river).[327]

The very act of translation becomes, for Tsvetaeva, a term best captured by a foreign loanword. *Nachdichten* is a German infinitive that can also be translated in English as the verbs 'render,' 'recreate' or 're-poeticise.' None of these translations speak to a hierarchy between author and translator, reaffirming the ontology Tsvetaeva subscribes to. As Khotimsky observes, Tsvetaeva 'connects her understanding of translation with a vision of the poetic absolute.'[328] It is the same *Absolut* to which the German Romantic poets like Novalis and Hölderlin had once addressed their work: an aesthetic sublime only glimpsed through language. She goes on: 'Yet every language has something that belongs to it alone, that *is* it. […] German is deeper than French, fuller, more drawn out, *darker*.'[329]

The foundation for Tsvetaeva's assertion here is based purely on the 'sound' of each language. This reinforces the observation that she had no interest in promoting untranslatability as a *negation* of translatability or a concept insistent on translation's futility. However, the issue with bringing together such disparate statements is the suspicion that they may not add up to a coherent picture. Accordingly, it is essential to turn to a text in which the poet deals with untranslatability directly.

In a short essay from 1932, Tsvetaeva uses Goethe again, but this time with a different point of emphasis.[330] *Dva lesnykh tsarya* [*Two Forest Kings*] may be brief, but its relevance to present purposes prevents it going unexplored. In this essay, Tsvetaeva begins by offering a transliteral auto-translation of Goethe's *Erlkönig* (1782), a popular fantasy ballad about a boy captured by a fairy king. She offers a preliminary caution.

---

[327] Tsvetaeva, Marina, "*Neskolko pisem Rainera Mariya Rilke*" [Several Letters from Rainer Maria Rilke], Volya Rossii (Paris), no. 2 (1929), pp. 26-27. p. 31. Translation mine.
[328] Khtomisky, Maria, p. 178.
[329] Cvetaeva, Marina Ivanovna, et al, pp. 169-170.
[330] Tsvetaeva, Marina & Livingstone, Angela. "Two Forest Kings" in: Tsvetaeva, Marina & Livingstone, Angela. Art in the Light of Conscience (London: Bloodaxe Books, 1992).

'I know it is an ungrateful task to give a forced and literal translation in prose when we possess a free poetic translation of genius,' she warns, before declaring to her readers: 'Let us first look at concepts that are *untranslatable* and therefore unconveyable. There's a number of them.'[331] Enumerating the German words in Goethe's original she deems untranslatable (*Schwanz*; *fein*; *reizt*; *Gestalt*; *scheinen*; *Leids*[332]), she explains how their primary, secondary and root meanings differ, and thus cannot be mediated into Russian entirely. The final untranslatable, *Leids*, for instance, 'all at once, all in one, signifies pain and harm and damage.'[333] Once these words are enumerated, she then turns to the Russian translation of the ballad, by Vasiliy Zhukóvsky.[334]

Her tone initially suggests the beginnings of a critique: 'Now that we've listed everything Zhukovsky could not convey, or could convey only with great and perhaps unjustified labour, let's turn to what he substituted wilfully […].'[335] She then shows how Zhukóvsky characterises the mysterious creature of the ballad, while in Goethe's original, 'we see an undefined – indefinable! – being, of uncertain age, without any age.'[336] Tsvetaeva goes on to commentate on where the translations differ: 'From the very first stanza we find things that we don't find in Goethe.'[337] Yet the essay continues in a comparative vein, using the untranslatable words identified in Goethe's original to trace the way that Zhukóvsky demystifies the creature in his translation of the ballad.

---

[331] "Two Forest Kings" p. 130. Emphasis mine.
[332] "Two Forest Kings", p. 130-131.
[333] "Two Forest Kings" p. 131.
[334] Zhukóvsky is an apt and telling case study for Tsvetaeva to draw on here, and he makes sense as an aesthetic model consistent with her own claims. One of the foremost translators of early 19th century literature and a regular visitor at the Romanov Court, Zhukóvsky is widely accepted as the figure that introduced Romanticism to Russia. His translations spanned Homer, Goethe, Friedrich Schiller and Lord Byron, and were hailed in Russia, long after his death, as works superior to their foreign originals. For more on Zhukóvsky's translation work, see: Baer, James Brian & Natalia Olshanskaya, *Russian Writers on Translation* (Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 2013). As they state in their introduction, 'The reader of this anthology will certainly be struck by the precocity and sophistication of Russian theoretical reflections on translation long before the advent of Translation Studies.' p. iv.
[335] "Two Forest Kings", p. 131.
[336] "Two Forest Kings", p. 131.
[337] "Two Forest Kings", p. 131.

In her conclusions, Tsvetaeva states: 'The two works are equally great.'[338] Far from disparaging Zhukovsky's inventive alterations, she insists that, 'Having been with us for a century, it is no longer a translation, it's an original.'[339] Tsvetaeva therefore appeals to the varying differences in the original and translation, finally giving neither of them priority. 'In place of clearly demarcated stages of a logical argument crowned with unambiguous results,' she offers a 'fluidity of meaning that celebrates complexity and enlarges understanding,'[340] culminating in what Brodsky described as less a matter of linear argument than 'a crystalline (synthesizing) growth of thought.'[341] This may have been a matter of broad consensus in 19th century Russia; but as many translators have complained, it remains a peculiarly difficult consensus to revive in our own time.

This piece, while brief, confirms first and foremost how advanced Tsvetaeva was among her contemporaries. Her analysis describes a literal translation as 'ungrateful' [*neblagodarnyy*] in the face of a translated work, thus elevating its status provisionally. The essay reveals her attention to the subtle powers of translation, to the artistry it involves, and, most relevantly of all, the untranslatability it must sometimes confront. As Khotimsky observes, Tsvetaeva describes the challenges of translation in order to insist that translation demands artistic freedom, allowing them 'to overcome gaps in meaning' in the process of creating 'an equally powerful work.'[342] Her definition, of course, must be qualified more closely.

Tsvetaeva does not see untranslatability as a claim for the impossibility of translation. Instead, she reveals her awareness of untranslatability as a phenomenon and conceives it as a useful methodology by which to *compare* translations. Rather, she uses a literal translation to uncover the untranslatable moments in a text, that is, the moments *where the translator's*

[338] "Two Forest Kings", p. 134.
[339] "Two Forest Kings", p. 134.
[340] Hasty, Olga Peters, *How Women Must Write: Inventing the Russian Woman Poet* (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2019), p. 137.
[341] Brodsky, Joseph, p. 109.
[342] Khotimsky, Marina, p. 179.

decisions become visible. Where words offer various forking pathways in different directions, or none at all. Her understanding of the term stops short of any claims to linguistic essentialism and steers clear from notions of exoticism. Most importantly of all, untranslatability for Tsvetaeva does not actually belie the ability for translation to exist, to occur, and moreover to be read, evaluated and understood on its own terms. In this brief work, a Translation Studies premised on such cooperative and coextensive approaches to untranslatability is briefly glimpsed.

To situate Tsvetaeva's thoughts on untranslatability within the same tradition as German Romanticism is to evidence the hermeneutic inheritance this also involves. It is one best captured in her differentiation between being *neponyatnyy* (or 'incomprehensible,' echoing Mandel'shtam's curious praise of Ivanov in the previous Chapter), and the misunderstanding that, for her, became a self-evident reality of her reception: "Incomprehensible is one thing, "I have not understood" is another. […] what is reading if not deciphering, interpreting, drawing out something secret, something behind the lines, […] Reading is – above all – co-creating.'[343]

It is a poem's acoustic properties, elsewhere, which detains her as the poet's priority. This is exemplified in an essay entitled *Poet i Vremya* [*The Poet & Time*] (1932), especially in its stunning admission: 'In poems there is something more important than their meaning: their sound.'[344] Elsewhere, she declares 'some thoughts cannot be thought in some languages,'[345] reiterating her attention to the conditions of language on thought and expression. This serves as a useful point of departure between the presence of untranslatability in Tsvetaeva's writing, and the function of sound as its principal instrument.

[343] "The Poet and the Critic," in: *Art in the Light of Conscience*. p. 59.
[344] "The Poet and the Critic," in: *Art in the Light of Conscience*. p. 92.
[345] As quoted in: Wierzbicka, Anna. *Semantics, Culture, and Cognition: Universal human concepts in culture-specific configurations*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 22.

The American-Serbian poet Simic identifies this feature of Tsvetaeva's writing on which her untranslatability hinges: 'To be a poet of the ear and make sound more important than sight,' as he assumes Tsvetaeva does, 'is to make oneself virtually untranslatable.'[346] This is, indeed, the most difficult element of Tsvetaeva's work when translating into other languages. The poet elsewhere draws a sharper distinction between meaning and sound, in the words that she herself has produced:

> I don't stand beside a single one of my earthly signs, that is: the words "earthly signs" I yield the "earthly" (materiality), but not the sign (meaning). I don't stand behind any one of my earthly signs individually, just as I do not stand beside any individual poem or hour – what's important is the totality.[347]

This statement marks a distinction not only between the sound and sense of a word, but it also distinguishes between an 'earthly' human language and the transcendent realm to which they allude, as manifested (for Tsvetaeva) by sound. Having provided critics of literature and translation with the means to analyse translation via the untranslatable, the logical next step is assessing Tsvetaeva's own poetry in line with these standards. For this purpose, *Poema Kontsa* [*Poem of the End*], written in 1924, marks a convergence between untranslatability and the aural pathways to translational error. It is to this poem that attention should turn.

[346] "Tsvetaeva: The Tragic Life" in: Simic, Charles. *The Life of Images* (London: HarperCollins, 2015) pp. 215-228; p. 220.
[347] *Earthly Signs: Moscow Diaries, 1917-1922*, p. 139.

I.IV.IV: *Poema Kontsa / The Poem of the End* (1926)

This extended narrative *poema*[348] recounts Tsvetaeva's short-lived relationship with Konstantin Rodzevich. They meet in Prague sometime in late 1923. Having left the army, Rodzevich is her husband's friend, studying for a law degree while involving himself in various political circles. Devastated when Rodzevich abruptly ends the relationship in December that year, Tsvetaeva spends February until June 1924 writing a powerful work to mark its passing, interpreted by some as her 'creative peak.'[349] Mary Jane-White's translation captures most immediately the suspense with which their meeting begins, and with it, the impressionistic brevity with which it is delivered:

Sky of ugly portents:

Rust and tin.

He's waited at our usual place.

It's six.

Our kiss is soundless:

Stuporous lips.

As one might kiss the hand

Of a queen or corpse…

[348] 'The Russian term *poema*, with the inexact equivalent in English, "long/er poem," suggests a deeper relationship to the epic tradition. The term applies more broadly, however, encompassing classical epic verse, Romantic narrative poetry (sometimes called "lyrical *poema*" by Russian scholars), and the modernist *poema*. […] The *poema* often contains lyrical elements, but neither its practitioners nor its scholars, as a rule, perceive it to be synonymous with a lyric circle. The *poema*'s wholeness, usually achieved by some type of a reconstructable fabula (as loose as it may be in the modernist period) is opposed to a lyric cycle's fragmentariness. As Dolgopolov observes, from hr second half of the nineteenth century, poets refer to lyric cycles (or even collections of lyric poetry) as *poemy* to suggest a certain unity of mood, not one of "plot, events, or characters."' See: Shleyfer Lavine, Ludmila. ""*Poema*" of Lieutenant Schmidt's End: Pasternak's Dialogue with Tsvetaeva through the Prism of Genre," *The Russian Review*, Vol. 70. No. 3 (July 2011), pp. 485-503. p. 491.

[349] Kirilcuk, Alexandra. "Moving Mountains: The Spiritual Topography of Prague in Marina Tsvetaeva's 'Poema Kontsa.'" *The Russian Review*, vol. 65, no. 2, 2006, pp. 194–207. p. 195.

Some hurrying idiot

Shoves an elbow – into my side.

Boring. Exaggerated.[350]

Once her lover arrives, the poem recounts them walking through Prague that night. Each place they pass produces memories of what has preceded, of the relationship between them, which the reader never sees. This produces a complex chronotropic structure in which various physical sites displace the poet's sense of time and the present moment (of their romantic disintegration) displaces the past on which these sites have acquired significance. The poetic voice recounts the associations that both have attached to these streets, these squares and cafes, while meditating on the meaninglessness of such associations now as semiotic structures of time and space break down.[351]

The heartbreak of this episode receives an abrupt, fragmented treatment. It reads as if carved down to its most essential content. It is an almost telegraphic style, in Russian as in its various English translations, where stanzas are sharpened to follow not the logic of narrative but the less coherent but more urgent rhythm of memory. Momentary recollections are left unfinished. Sentiments are expressed, then vanish. The interiority of the poetic voice and the cityscape around which her and her lover pass slowly become, over the course of the poem, an economy of indistinguishable timeframes. Tsvetaeva thus constructs a 'cubistic verbal texture that is highly original'; one that, according to Karlinsky, 'has defied, so far, the best efforts of translators to render this poem into other languages.'[352]

[350] Tsvetaeva, Marina and White, Mary Jane. "Poem of the End." *The Hudson Review*, vol. 61, no. 4, 2009, pp. 695–715. p. 695.

[351] Lemlin, Christopher W. "The Poet Is a between: Time-Space Structures in Tsvetaeva's "*Poema Gory*" and "*Poema Kontsa*", *The Slavic and Eastern European Journal*, Vol. 51. No. 3. (Winter, 2007), pp. 474-490. pp. 481-482.

[352] *Marina Tsvetaeva: The Woman, Her World, and Her Poetry*, p. 141.

Karlinsky's accusation is no longer true. Even so, the length of time this poem took to be translated into English should not go unconsidered. Elaine Feinstein produced the first English translation, along with a biography, in 1974.[353] David McDuff's selection in 1987 purported to be more 'faithful to the original Russian text.'[354] Mary Jane White, an American translator, followed with another version in 2009.[355] The same year, the acclaimed poet Nina Kossman produced another edition of this narrative poem. Her translations are published in 2009, 2012 and 2020 to high acclaim.[356] In their attempts to bring this melancholy piece to life, their strategies differ. Mary Jane White attempts to resuscitate her jagged syntax through reproducing her dashes, while McDuff struggles to maintain her structure.[357]

If the poem's theme borders on the universal, then this indicates the source of its professed untranslatability deserves a more sophisticated inquiry. One answerable firstly to the poem's style, and then answerable to the poem's sound. In respect to style, its linguistic density is attained via a system of recurrent refrains and sequences of stanzas, each of them sets of variations on a repetitive syntactic or semantic theme. The difficulties of recreating this in another language, English or otherwise, are considerable. Individual words in the poem are often broken up by dashes, building stresses where they do not occur in normal Russian prosody or vernacular speech. In other words, I do not mean to claim that the minimalist stanzas and complex wordplay Tsvetaeva deploys here is pursued with the desire to be untranslatable *per se*. I interpret it as a style informed by the Khlebnikovian impulse covered in the previous Chapter, to render reality through new forms of expression.

---

[353] Tsvetaeva, Marina & Feinstein, Elaine. *Selected Poems* (London: Penguin, 1974).
[354] Tsvetaeva, Marina & McDuff, David. *Selected Poems* (United Kingdom: Bloodaxe Books, 1987).
[355] Tsvetaeva, Marina & Jane White, Mary. "Poem of the End." *The Hudson Review*, vol. 61, no. 4, 2009, pp. 695–715.
[356] Tsvetaeva, Marina & Kossman, Nina. *Poem of the End: Selected Narrative and Lyrical Poems* (United States, Harry N. Abrams, 2009); Tsvetayeva, Marina & Kossman, Nina. *In the Inmost Hour of the Soul* (Germany, Humana Press, 2012); Kossman, Nina. *Other Shepherds: Poems with Translations from Marina Tsvetaeva* (New York: Poets and Traitors Incorporated, 2020).
[357] David McDuff declares this element is crucial: 'it is necessary for any translator of Tsvetaeva's poetry to make at least some attempt to reproduce the formal and structural attributes of her poems […] Without their forms, their harmonies and discords, Tsvetaeva's poems are simply – not there.' See: *Selected Poems,* p. ix.

In the second instance, that of sound, I suggest its originality risks effacement in translation when its sound is neglected at the expense of its meaning. One stanza, in particular, can prove this point for me. In its tenth part, as the couple walk solemnly by the Charles River, words come unloosened from their local enunciation. Verbal facts do not map easily onto their context. Lemlin reads in this passage what he refers to as a 'brilliant, untranslatable fusion of poetry and linguistics,' wherein 'Tsvetaeva underscores the inability of the poet to match signifier and signified'[358]:

Сверхбессмысленнейшее слово:
Рас-стаёмся. — Одна из ста?
Просто слово в четыре слога.
За которыми пустота. (Marina Tsvetaeva)

It's the most inhumanly senseless
of words: *sep* *arating* (Am I one of a hundred?)
It is simply a word of four syllables and
behind their sound lies: emptiness.[359] (Elaine Feinstein)

Word that is supersenseless.
'Sep-arating.' Of hundreds I'm separate?
Just a word with four syllables,
Behind which there's an empty spot. (David McDuff)

[358] "The Poet Is a between: Time-Space Structures in Tsvetaeva's "Poema Gory" and "Poema Kontdsa",. pp. 481-482.
[359] *Selected Poems*, p. 84.

A supremely senseless word:

—Sep— arating. —Am I just one of a hundred?

Just some word of four syllables,

Beyond which emptiness lies.[360] (Mary Jane White)

What is not immediately obvious here to English readers is that what is translated as 'separation' (in varying degrees of hyphenation) is, in Tsvetaeva's original, a Czech variant on the Russian word *stav'*. This goes unnoticed in textual translation but is of immense import to the oral delivery of the original poem. No English translator so far can answer to this problem. It cannot be smoothly equivocated with English terms. Instead, each translator offers a form of 'separation' that performs its own verbal function severally.

The word 'separation' is itself separated, dismembered and estranged. This foreign insertion moreover centres the poem decisively outside the cultural centre of Moscow for the peripheral (but fiercely independent) Prague. This Czech variant, *stav'*, acts as a geographical marker that eludes the listener, one too subtle to deserve a footnote in any of its English translations so far. This serves as an example of what Apter describes as the 'tendency to zoom over the speed bumps of untranslatability in the rush to cover ground.'[361] Figured more specifically in Tsvetaeva's poem, this foreign loanword marks the location of its composition while escaping the ear of its listeners. I suggest it is not so much an attempt to be 'difficult' (falling back a little too easily, with that word, into longstanding tropes of Modernist criticism), but to attempt to create a greater reward of intimacy for readers or listeners attentive to this subtlety. Untranslatability, in this case, is more about expanding the scope of the reader's intellectual and physical participation, bringing them closer to the text.

[360] Tsvetaeva, Marina & Mary Jane White. "Poem of the End." *The Hudson Review*, vol. 61, no. 4, 2009, pp. 695–715. p. 710.
[361] *Against World Literature*, p. 3.

This 'intimate untranslatability' is confirmed by the poem's immediate reception. The poet and novelist Boris Pasternak (1890-1960) came across a printed copy of *Poema Kontsa* in Moscow in 1926. Pasternak was utterly stunned by what he read: 'Nothing at all comparable existed anywhere else.'[362] Importantly, Pasternak's appreciation of *Poema Kontsa* is inseparable and contiguous with his attention to its sound. Pasternak recounts reading it aloud, after which, 'there is silence, surrender' from his audience; Pasternak goes on to confess that, while he reads the poem, 'I sit reading as if you were watching me'.[363]

Privileging sound over meaning (as I have asserted Tsvetaeva does with deliberation and artfulness) also corresponds with Gumbrecht's elaboration of the German word *Stimmung*, specifically if one recalls its ability to transcend linguistic difference in oral performance. Reciting Corneille or Racine, Gumbrecht asserts, 'we call them forth to new life. The sounds and rhythms of the words strike our bodies as they struck the spectators at that time.'[364] This betrays a common epistemology between Gumbrecht, Pasternak and Tsvetaeva, one rooted in German Romanticism[365] and which can only be explored by considering *Stimmung* hermeneutically – and, thus, differently.

[362] Pasternak, Boris & David Magarshack. *I Remember: A Sketch for an Autobiography* (Milan and New York: Pantheon, 1959), p. 106.
[363] Pasternak, Yevgeny, et al. *Letters, Summer 1926*. (United Kingdom: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985), p. 44.
[364] *Atmosphere, mood, Stimmung: on a hidden potential of literature*,p. 13.
[365] See: Wanner, Adrian. "Translingual poetry and the boundary of the diaspora: the self-translations of Marina Tsvetaeva, Vladimir Nabokov and Joseph Brodsky," in: Rubins, Maria. (ed.) *Redefining Russian Literary Diaspora. 1920-2020*. (London: UCL Press, 2021), pp. 111-136. 'Poetry plays a particularly important role in ideologies of linguistic identity and national belonging. Some of this thinking goes back to German romantic ideas of the national soul rooted in the native idiom, of which poetic masterpieces provide the most exemplary illustrations.'

I.IV.V: *Stimmung*: A trajectory of meanings

The movement of *Stimmung*'s meaning from global harmony to subjective aestheticism is traceable in Tsvetaeva's correspondence and essays from the mid-1920s onward. Pasternak begins a series of correspondences with her and the Austrian poet Rainer Maria Rilke, whom both admire. Pasternak is regularly in trouble with the Russian authorities; Tsvetaeva is living in Prague with her children; Rilke is approaching death in Switzerland. What follows is a fascinating series of exchanges between three great poetic minds, all of whom had grown up with the German language (Tsvetaeva had lived there in 1904 and 1905, while Pasternak had spent a year in Berlin in 1906, before studying for a semester at Marburg University in 1912).

As she made clear throughout her life, Russia's earlier conflict with Germany did little to change Tsvetaeva's love for Germany or its language. Her view on the war is eloquently put: 'it's isn't Alexander Blok and Rainer Maria Rilke fighting, but a machine gun with a machine gun.'[366] Like many of her Modernist contemporaries at home and abroad, Tsvetaeva looked to culture to transcend geopolitical animosities and held culture at an elevation from the crises and banalities of political and civil life.

This is a common attitude across Modernist authors, one borne out by necessity as often as it is by reflection. In Tsvetaeva's case specifically, she took the view that the development of culture was more determined by individual genius than wars or global conflicts.[367] Looking at this brief summer of letters, what emerges is the very process by which the sentiment for a global harmony is gradually replaced with a more individuated sense of *Stimmung*: one atomised from society and largely restricted to the aesthetic and cultural realm.

[366] *Earthly Signs: Moscow Diaries, 1917-1922*, p. 158.
[367] Smith, Alexandra. "Constructing the modernist vision of time: Tsvetaeva's rendering of Bely's dynamic worldview in 'A Captive Spirit.'" *Australian Slavonic & East European Studies*. (2017) Vol. 31, No. 1-2. pp. 7-47.

In a letter to Tsvetaeva from June 14, 1926, Pasternak marvels at the 'demonic revolt of the rhythm (against itself), the mad crescendo of monotony' in her poem, and praises Tsvetaeva's ability of condensing images 'to the point of absurdity':

> the physical aspect of speech assumes supremacy over the word, reducing it (the word) to second place, taking over and moving within it as the body moves within clothing. […] In addition it is rhythmic in the highest degree, with an almost corporeal rhythm.[368]

Pasternak reiterates how sound is promoted above meaning in Tsvetaeva's poetics. This passage arguably personifies the experience that Gumbrecht advances for scholarship via the German word *Stimmung*. It is, in sum, the hermeneutic movement from exposure to experience yet without the potential detours of meaning-ascription or predetermined vocabularies. Another unmistakable overlap is what Pasternak refers to as an 'almost corporeal rhythm'. This phrase evidently coheres with Gumbrecht's proposition of 'presence effects'[369] in literary analysis. Rilke's contribution to this discussion deserves inclusion too. On 10th of May 1926, he writes Tsvetaeva a letter in which he reflects on

> *What* to say: all my words (as though they had been in your letter, as if facing a staged scene), all my words want to go out to you at the same time; none of them lets another pass. When people crowd one another as they leave the theatre, isn't it because, after having so much presence [*Stimmung*] offered to them, they cannot bear the curtain?[370]

Like Rilke and Gumbrecht, Tsvetaeva sees the stage as the privileged site of aesthetic experience. The circular energy of audience and performer becomes here the quintessential site in which *Stimmung* is redeveloped. Rilke's letter recalls Gumbrecht's belief that literature read

[368] *Art in the Light of Conscience*, p. 150.
[369] Gumbrecht, Hans Ulrich. *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey* (Paolo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2004), p. 77.
[370] Pasternak, Yevgeny, et al. *Letters, Summer 1926*. (United Kingdom: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985), p. 87.

aloud, can form a 'text-immanent component'[371] of its site of initial enunciation. Rilke identifies here a similar definition of *Stimmung*: one that constitutes the primary receptive experience, which cannot be distilled by attempts to observe and describe this experience. Written from Moscow, one of Tsvetaeva's notes bears an unmistakable resemblance with *Stimmung* as conceived by her poetic contemporaries:

> I am one of those viewers who tears Judas to pieces when the mystery play is over. The whole secret is to have been able to see things a hundred years ago as they are today, and today to see them as they were a hundred years ago.[372]

The temporal paradox of art, performance, authorship and translation is proposed here as a matter of intensity. The very intensity of aesthetic experience, for Tsvetaeva, is what transcends the divergence between its composition and its reception. Judas, however long ago he lived, feels as real to her on leaving a play as any contemporary. As I have sought to demonstrate, Tsvetaeva was not only exposed to the word and concept of *Stimmung*, but as her correspondence testifies, her and her contemporaries play a proactive part in its rethinking as the dusts of the Great War settle and Modernist authors aspire to new forms of aesthetic experience. I have assembled these fragments of discussion to illuminate that trajectory.

[371] *Atmosphere, mood, Stimmung: on a hidden potential of literature*, p. 13.
[372] *Earthly Signs: Moscow Diaries, 1917-1922,* p. 125.

I.IV.VI: Conclusion

In sum, from my perspective the residual orality of Tsvetaeva's work is not an attempt to manufacture obscurity. Her singularity is recognisable as determined by her priority of sound over meaning. In her thoughts on untranslatability, she interprets the concept as a means to use singularity (in this context, the content of a literary work that requires some measure of agency or decision-making on the part of the translator) to invoke comparison (between translations). Separating the written page from its acoustic delivery led her to innovate her own language dramatically, to experiment with its limits in poetic form, while indirectly evoking the personal and political chaos of her times.

It has also, in the years to follow, led to a great deal of complaint from her subsequent translators. Their attempt to fragment the very word 'separation' in *Poema Kontsa* is, in itself, a reminder that untranslatability's champions and detractors must reckon with the aural and acoustic dimension of literature in order to finalise its veracity as a concept or methodology with which to read, interpret and translate literary texts. In Tsvetaeva one finds an untranslatability of form, not language; of sound, not meaning.

At the beginning of this Chapter, Simic complained that Tsvetaeva is 'too often made to appear painfully awkward and dull,'[373] despite his belief that she is every bit the equal of Eliot and Pound: 'She is as good as they are and may have more tricks up her sleeve as a poet.'[374] He later suggests (with what appears to dovetail with Venuti's idea of hermeneutic translation) that 'taking freedoms now and then is the only way to proceed with translations of her poems and, with luck, pull off the impossible.'[375]

[373] "Tsvetaeva: The Tragic Life," p. 220.
[374] "Tsvetaeva: The Tragic Life," p. 215.
[375] "Tsvetaeva: The Tragic Life," p. 222.

Yet, in return for such freedoms, a translator's ability to grant authors their rightful audiences are indispensable to this end. This serves as a key example of the issues for which Apter criticises Damrosch's project of World Literature. While the translation, circulation and reception of literary texts are Damrosch's self-evident criteria for a work to be considered World Literature, this explanatory model still struggles to frame or respond to authors whose translation is precisely what has *prevented* their circulation. This is an issue in need of further enquiry, one that Venuti's polemic against Apter is content to overlook.

Stimmung is a term with rich potential not only for literary critics but also translators. For translators, it could present a novel criterium by which a translation can be measured, analysed and historically situated. How can the *historical conceivability* of a text be consciously conveyed by its translation into another language? What strategies can help the *Stimmung* of a work resonate from its original context to its target audience?

This could well mark a deviation from Gumbrecht's conception. Whereas he is more concerned with how foreign prosodies affect listening audiences regardless of linguistic difference, a translational *Stimmung* would seek to understand how translators recreate the more obscure elements of a literary work's *historical* conditions. Pursued successfully, this could become a stable way to extend Venuti's notion of foreignization into the temporal, as opposed to geographical, axes, broadening the historical scope of translations and encouraging scholars of translation to look further (but more closely) back in time.

Section Two Chapter One: *Pravda*

The Russian word *Pravda* is untranslatable only with recourse to its political context. Encapsulating that political history here is no easy task. Thus, this Chapter uses Kostyantin Sigov's entry on *Pravda* in *The Dictionary* as its point of departure (to be followed by a subsequent refutation). After identifying where I think Sigov's entry has fallen short of this word's conceptual promise and possibilities, I then propose my own history of the word, leading to my own understanding of why this term was called untranslatable to begin with.

In Section I, the discursive history of *Stimmung* revealed a thread of philosophical discourse through which the word was shaped. Here, in Section II, *Pravda* is arguably more problematic for present purposes because it remains an epistemic issue still radically unthought in its own context. Through a mixture of military conflict, civil unrest and political censorship, such conditions prevented its dramatic psychological implications from being openly discussed.

To translate *Pravda* as simply 'truth,' in light of these contexts, becomes intuitively problematic. Its socio-political context has contaminated its definition. Therefore, as a Political Untranslatable, *Pravda* shows that while etymology may grant insight into a word's past, it is often its political currency which determines its future. This Section therefore offers a politically inflected history of the word through which issues of colonialism and linguistic inheritance can be glimpsed in the corresponding context of a modernising Brazil.

II.I.I: *The Dictionary*

Responding to Apter's edition of *The Dictionary*, the eminent Russian translator Natalia Avtonomova complains that the entries on Russian terms are often slighter than those of Latin, Greek or German, limiting its capacity to shape a philosophical Russian language.[376] Consequently, she claims, this deficit pushes the Russian language into 'the ghetto of the specific rather than universally valid.'[377] For me, Sigov's entry on *Pravda* confirms her reading, insofar as it leaves undiscussed or insufficiently explored the elements of this word that could render it a powerful conceptual tool in comparative studies. To my mind, it is precisely the 'specific' conditions of *Pravda*'s enunciation in the Soviet context that deserve greater account.

Kostyantin Sigov, this entry's author, is a leading Ukrainian professor with a broad range of publications in anthropology, culture, philosophy, and the history of art. Sigov notes early *Pravda*'s dual meanings of 'truth' and 'justice'. It is a strange combination, yet I principally take issue with the conclusion this draws Sigov to, principally his claim that *Pravda* offers 'another approach to classical theologico-political problems.'[378] It is likely due to this (to my reading, at least) somewhat forced emphasis that the entry hops erratically from one century to another, referencing Arendt, Bakhtin, Berdaeyev and Soloviev along the way. Sigov attempts to enlighten the reader through the following extracts:

> We cannot speak of a superior *Pravda*, express it as such with our concepts, because it speaks about itself, expresses and reveals itself silently; and we have neither the right nor the ability to express this self-

[376] Avtonomova, Natalia & Gukasyan, Tatevik. "Philosophy, translation, "untranslatability": cultural and conceptual aspects," in: (ed.) Spitzer, D. M. *Philosophy's Treason* (Delaware: Vernon Press, 2020), pp. 87-110. p. 100.
[377] "Philosophy, translation, "untranslatability": cultural and conceptual aspects," p. 100.
[378] Sigov, Constantin. "PRAVDA," in: *The Dictionary*, pp. 813-819. p. 813.

> revelation adequately by means of our thought; we must remain silent before the grandeur of *Pravda* itself. (Frank, Unknowable, 313)[379]

This summarises the fetishization of untranslatability that, as I noted in my Introduction, it is a central priority to overcome. Viktor Frank's quotation, hovering over the word rather than defining it directly, serves as a useful illustration of this tendency. If this is Sigov's attempt to emphasise the word's untranslatability, it is too vaguely conceived to be intelligible and does little to help the present project in its aim to instantiate these words as literary theories in their own right. Another quotation reads:

> The meaning of these words has been deformed almost before our very eyes, because now they have become synonyms of "lie" and "truth" … But originally *istina* referred solely to intellectual notions, while *Pravda* referred to moral qualities. (Dal', *Tolkovyi Solvar*, 2: 529)[380]

Sigov's interpretation of this passage is very different from my own. He finds in these words 'the rationalisation of *Pravda*,' and 'the breaking of its ties with the juridical and moral spheres.'[381] His analysis continues to view *Pravda* in relation to the juridical, moral and political spheres. While there is undeniable erudition to Sigov's entry, I suggest it is better for present purposes to reread the first sentence rather than the second: 'The meaning of these words has been deformed almost before our very eyes, because now they have become synonyms of "lie" and "truth".'[382] The rupture of symbolic meaning Dal refers to here is lost in Sigov's analysis. His summary, while extensive, cannot seem to decide between a teleological or a thematic ordering of information. As a result, it overlooks this key insight on which, I will suggest, both the translational and theoretical dimension of *Pravda* hinges.

---

[379] *The Dictionary*, p. 813.
[380] *The Dictionary*, p. 817.
[381] *The Dictionary*, p. 817.
[382] *The Dictionary*, p. 817.

Sigov is adamant that *Pravda* should be understood in the context of politics and legality. In his own words: 'Law and ethics designate practical philosophy as the domain for the positive application of the notion of *Pravda*: the negative definition,' he goes on, 'of the limits of this notion's use is provided by the theory of knowledge and the natural sciences: the latter operate with *istina* and not *Pravda*.'[383]

By drawing a distinction between *Pravda* and the *Istina* of the natural sciences, a non-Russian reader may infer from this that *Pravda* marks a more subjectively orientated version of 'truth.' However, such intuitions on the part of the reader are not confirmed nor substantiated. In fact, I suggest it is precisely what Sigov conflates the sciences with, 'the theory of knowledge' – epistemology - that we can locate the source of this oversight. Epistemology's central premise is knowledge: what we know, what we believe, and how best to adjudicate a distinction between the two. This strikes me as a more pertinent area for *Pravda*'s application than Sigov's entry on the word acknowledges.

The remaining Chapter subsequently provides my own alternative account, establishing it for the sake of the Brazilian authors it will later be applied to. I will begin with my own historical definition of the word. I then consider the variability of truth it engendered in Soviet culture from external perspectives; before approaching the various Soviet phenomena that confirms this reading and makes clear the troubled conditions of *Pravda*'s conceptualisation.

[383] *The Dictionary*, p. 814.

II.I.II: *Pravda*

I will now set out an alternative history of *Pravda*, one that purposefully deviates from its entry in *The Dictionary* to reconceptualise it over the course of Section II. It will be incumbent on this intervention to mark precisely where I part ways with Sigov.

The word first derived from the *Russkaya Pravda*, a document that first emerged from Kievan Rus' in 1017 and 1054.[384] At this time, Kyiv was the capital of what would become Russia. Over the centuries (unlike the legal system of the Byzantium Empire to which it was regularly connected), its laws were changed and revised repeatedly until the 13th century.[385] These changes were notably more marked by powerful interest than legal precedent. *Russkaya Pravda* therefore furnishes the ideal of justice while simultaneously ensuring its impossibility. It offered its subjects the semblance of order, but these rules were always exposed to revision by the powerful.

The Soviet reinterpretation of *Pravda* has its own plotted narrative. Entitled as a newspaper, *Pravda* was established by V.A. Kozhevnikov after the Russian Revolution of 1905.[386] In its early context it had no fixed political orientation. This changed at the sixth conference of the RSDLP in Prague in January 1912 when Vladimir Lenin decided to make *Pravda* the Party's official mouthpiece. Its first issue under Lenin's leadership was published on May 5th, 1912.[387] The production of the newspaper shifted from Vienna (where it had largely been under the oversight of Leo Trotsky[388]) to St. Petersburg. Needless to say, it did not take long for the newspaper's title to feel contradictory in the eyes of its readership.

---

[384] Inshakov, Oleg V., and Redkina, Olga Yu. "Interdisciplinary Approach in Modern Historical, Sociocultural, and Economic Studies: On the Scientific Conference "The 1000th Anniversary of Russkaya Pravda–Finding New Meanings" Volgograd, April 21-22, 2016." *Vestnik Volgogradskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta. Seriia 4, Istoriia, Regionovedenie, Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniia* 21.3 (2016).

[385] Feldbrugge, F. J. M. "The Russkaia Pravda." *Law in Medieval Russia*. Brill Nijhoff, 2009. pp. 33-58.

[386] White, James D. "The first Pravda and the Russian Marxist tradition." *Soviet Studies* 26.2 (1974): pp.181-204.

[387] Bassow, Whitman. "The Pre-Revolutionary Pravda and Tsarist Censorship." *American Slavic and East European Review* 13.1 (1954): pp. 47-65.

[388] Corney, Frederick. "Trotskii and the Vienna Pravda, 1908-1912." *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 27.3 (1985), pp. 248-268.

Following the semantic history of *Pravda* from that point to the present day leads to a fascinating discovery. In the Russian language, there are two words for truth: *Pravda* and *Istina* (both appear in *The Dictionary*[389]). *Pravda* denotes the negotiable facts of surface-level appearances. *Pravda* is truth in a subjective domain. The Russian word *Istina* is described by contrast as otherworldly, metaphysical and absolute. *Istina* has a metaphysical property, potentially 'unknowable to the human mind.'[390] According to linguists, *Pravda* is the goal of the politician, journalist or the historian; *Istina* is the ideal of the philosopher, the mystic, the scientist or the theologian.[391]

In its own context, though, connotations of 'truth' and 'justice' were often found to be inconvenient for the Soviet project. This is alluded to by Sigov when he refers to *Pravda*'s absence from the philosophical encyclopaedia of the USSR. 'The figure of the unsaid is an expressive one, the sign revealing the situation of the hostage concept in the post-Stalinist vocabulary.'[392] This is the most fascinating insight of Sigov's entry, and its intellectual ramifications demand some further development. What can be gathered from this? Two propositions deserve further treatment in this account.

Essentially, while *Pravda* is often translated into English as simply 'truth,' the subtle distinction of truth as either *Pravda* or *Istina* reveals there to be a radically different ontology in the Russian language. Truth, in this context, is liable to change. The second proposition that my account of *Pravda* deems relevant (and one partly responsible for the word's inclusion in this project) is that discussion and debate around this word was strictly forbidden. In sum,

---

[389] See: Sigov, Constantin. "PRAVDA," in: *The Dictionary*, pp. 813-819; Vasylchenko, Andriy, "ISTINA," in: The Dictionary, pp. 513-515. 'In Russian philosophy there is a fundamental opposition between *istina* as true existence and *istina* as true judgment. Considered separately from its epistemological meaning, the term *istina* can then be understood in two contrasting ways. In the philosophy of Vladimir Solovyov, it has an objective and impersonal character: *istina* is the objective self-identity of reality; but for the existentialists, *istina* takes on a dynamic meaning: "what is" is nothing other than the identity of the act and the event.' p. 513.

[390] Mondry, Henrietta & Taylor, John R. "On lying in Russian." *Language & Communication* 12 (1992), p. 135.

[391] "On lying in Russian," p. 135.

[392] *The Dictionary*, p. 819.

Pravda is at one end constrained by a definition it could never deliver (truth itself). At the other, *Pravda* is a 'hostage concept' in the sense that it is in a state of conceptual paralysis. I will presently turn to a historical episode in the hope of making these qualities more tangible.

On January 20th, 1936 a scandal hit Moscow. Despite having run for over a year to great acclaim, composer Dmitri Shostakovich's 'Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District' [*Ledi Makbet Mtsenskogo uezda*] was harshly criticised by an anonymous article in the national newspaper: *Pravda*.[393] The scandal sent shockwaves through the cultural institutions of the time. The Moscow and Leningrad Composer's Union, two months later, was devoted to further discussion on the topic. Despite its protestations, the official memorandum reads: 'The overwhelming majority of speakers recognised without qualification the correctness and timeliness of *Pravda*'s criticism.'[394] Yet reluctant disagreement is found in other testimonies.

The poet Sergey Gorodetsky responded: 'Although they did write that Shostakovich had created nonsense, I will tell you one and all that *Lady Macbeth* is the best work of Soviet music; it's ridiculous to write *as law* what someone's left foot wants.'[395] For a published review to be elevated to the status of law may sound like exaggeration, but translator Mikhail Zenkevich's response to the piece only deepens this impression. Complaining that the *Pravda* articles about Shostakovich were 'false through and through,' he concludes passively that if 'this had been published somewhere else other than *Pravda*, you could make some objection, but now you can't.'[396] This last admission offers summarily the power that *Pravda* exerted in the Soviet context.

[393] Mikkonen, Simo. ""Muddle instead of music" in 1936: cataclysm of musical administration." In: Fairclough, Pauline (ed.), *Shostakovich Studies 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
[394] Clark, Katerina & Dobrenko, Evgeniĭ Aleksandrovich. *Soviet Culture and Power: a history in documents, 1917-1953*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 237.
[395] *Soviet Culture and Power: a history in documents, 1917-1953*, p. 232; emphasis mine.
[396] *Soviet Culture and Power: a history in documents, 1917-1953*, p. 232.

II.I.III: Steiner, Kołakowski & the variability of truth

Pravda functioned to simultaneously enforce uncredited narratives while silencing contesting viewpoints. It became a referent not to the banners and billboards proclaiming a happy and fulfilled life, nor to the citizens suffering deprivation below those banners. Rather, in my understanding, *Pravda* came to symbolically mark the porous, inaccessible chasm between the two. The following two sub-sections underline the conditions of *Pravda* in the Soviet context. The Soviet leadership maintained that humanity could be fundamentally altered. In the process, language itself underwent a series of mutations and assaults, as the Soviet leadership grew ever more distant from the reality over which they reigned. No mid-century critics, to my mind, have analysed this strange inversion of truth better than the literary and cultural critic George Steiner and the Polish dissident philosopher Leszek Kołakowski.

George Steiner (1929-2020) was an esteemed literary critic who spent his years between the United States and Western Europe. His accounts should be read as more analytical than anecdotal. In *Language and Silence* (1967), he states that 'Marxism can effect a dissociation from personal identity' akin to that of tragic drama: 'Having entrusted his imagination, his centre of reality, to the historical process,' the Soviet subject learns to 'accept a diminished range and validity of private regard.'[397] In a passage that recognises the 'variable truth' that such a society demanded, Steiner writes: 'Both Stalin and Trotsky have moved into the penumbra of "variable truth."' Of all the challenges to post-Cartesian Western thought, he continues, 'this denial or reformulation of the historical event is perhaps the most serious.'[398]

Leszek Kołakowski's (1927-2009) views on Communism were shaped by his own experiences in post-war Poland. Initially an impassioned supporter of Marxism, the philosopher slowly came to see Stalinism as less a mutation of the Socialist ideal than its logical

[397] "The Writer and Communism," in: Steiner, George. *Language and Silence* (London: Atheneum, 1967), p. 320.
[398] "The Writer and Communism," pp. 327-28.

(and terrible) conclusion. He was exiled from his post at Warsaw University in 1968, eventually becoming a Fellow at Oxford University in 1970.[399] Kołakowski experienced first-hand how notions of truth struggled to survive in a society that sought to reinvent language:

> In a socialist country a lie is not a lie from the point of view of the supreme goal, because it serves the truth. In a socialist country murder is not murder, aggression is not aggression, and slavery is not slavery if it serves the cause of freedom; concentration camps are not concentration camps, torture is not torture, chauvinism is not chauvinism. The supreme goal sacrifices everything in its name.[400]

Justice in this schema is retrospective. Value is acquired through positive historical consequence more than immediate need. However, if *Pravda* carries connotations of 'justice' as well as 'truth' then this is only half the story.

Not only would truth itself undergo deliberate verbal confusion, but the law and justice to which *Pravda* also refers would become equally unrecognisable. What 'was justice in doctrinal terms', Kołakowski writes, 'was psychologically and in practice, the pragmatism of envy.'[401] Based on all this, it is difficult to ascertain how a term can sustain its definition when its real-world application speaks so variously and multiply to its absence. Yet so thorough were these top-down alterations to society that the 'variability' of *Pravda* came to resonate in all areas of Soviet life, tangibly and effectively revolutionising the very definition of the word itself. This is worth exploring next.

---

[399] Kołakowski, Leslek. *Is God Happy? Selected Essays* (London & New York: Penguin Books, 2012), pp. 26-7.
[400] Kołakowski, Leslek. pp. 13-4. Kołakowski's account also brings to mind that of Polish poet Aleksander Wat, the Polish poet arrested by police in 1939: 'The natural function of language is to ascertain the truth, or truths. […] But here all the means of disclosure have been permanently confiscated by the police. The customary or even just the logical, natural connections between words and things, facts, had been taken from the individual, expropriated everywhere, and nationalized for good, so that now any word could mean whatever suited the whims of the usurper of all words, meanings, things, and souls.' See: Wat, Aleksander & Lourie, Richard, *My Century: The Odyssey of a Polish Intellectual* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 173-174.
[401] *Is God Happy? Selected Essays*, p. 54.

II.I.IV: The variability of truth in Soviet society

Judging from Kołakowski's analysis, the overarching possibility of a new society made various transgressions in the Soviet context permissible in the pursuit of this deferred utopia. This extended beyond a single domain. It meant the factual and the fictional blurred further as time went on, as seen in Soviet sciences, cinema and literature.

In the realm of the sciences the Soviet leadership praised or punished scientists at will. In 1935, Trofim Lysenko delivered a speech to the Kremlin that rejected scientific literature on genetics and agriculture. The agronomist did not realise how disastrous this would be for Soviet agriculture. Over 3000 biologists would be dismissed, imprisoned or executed to suppress opposition to this proposal.[402] As a scientist, 'you were safe as long as you could demonstrate your powerlessness,' writes Simon Ings. If Stalin promoted you, 'it was inevitable that, sooner or later, he would cut you down.'[403]

In the visual and plastic arts, scholarly interventions muddied the waters further. The influential art historian Osip Beskin (1892-1969) gave a lecture called *Formalizm v zhivopisi* [*Formalism in Painting*] in 1933 to the Moscow Artists Union, later published in the State-sponsored journal *Iskusstvo*.[404] Much like Merezhkovksy's lecture a few decades earlier, it led Russia's contemporary artists to plunge into a terminological confusion whereby 'Formalism' and 'Naturalism' grew confused (and where the consequences for conflating them grew severe).[405] As Silina concludes, 'the widespread questioning, arrest, and imprisonment of artists led contemporaries to infer that it was an affiliation with avant-garde modernism, the style of the Western bourgeoisie, that incited censure.'[406]

---

[402] Ings, Simon. *Stalin & The Scientists* (London & New York: Faber & Faber, 2016), p. 52.
[403] *Stalin & The Scientists*. p. 121.
[404] Beskin, Osip, *Formalizm v zhivopisi* (Moscow, 1933).
[405] See: Silina, Maria. "The Struggle Against Naturalism: Soviet Art from the 1920s to the 1950s." *RACAR: Revue d'art Canadienne / Canadian Art Review*, vol. 41, no. 2, 2016, pp. 91–104.
[406] "The Struggle Against Naturalism: Soviet Art from the 1920s to the 1950s." p. 97.

This determination to recreate society also characterised the Soviet relationship with the moving image. Film directors were commissioned to use cinema as an instrument of morale at home and propaganda abroad. Sergei Eisenstein's *Oktyabr': Desyat' dney kotorye potryasli mir* (1928) depicted a fantastical retelling of the 1917 Revolution wherein its chaos was replaced with a heart-warming representation of Russian masses overcoming their monarchy without instruction.[407] *Kino Pravda*, launched in 1922, was a series of newsreels directed by Dziga Vertov, Mikhail Kaufman and Elizaveta Svilova.[408] Vertov obsessed over the idea of *Kino Pravda* as a methodology for documentary film. Handfuls of footage spliced together would reveal, or so Vertov claimed, a reality invisible to the naked eye.[409] Innovation in these domains was therefore possible so long as it submitted to the authorities.

I have enlisted these various phenomena to underline to what extent this term became a marker for so capacious a domain of activity as to render it almost meaningless. The 'verbal universe' of Socialism became 'the cognitive filter through which reality was to be perceived and evaluated.'[410] This meant 'using the language of Marxism as the lexicon whereby reality was defined,' though it nonetheless (as was consistent with its inception) remained a reality only grasped indirectly or from above.[411] Tolczyk's harrowing account throws light on the realm of reform. Enthusiastic songs and poems were sung on the stages of prison camps stages. Prisoners at the Moscow-Volga Canal construction in 1934 'presented their slave labour in a cheerful convention with light music.'[412] One could be forgiven for wondering whether such political experiences can, could or *should* be captured in a translator's footnotes.

---

[407] Eisenstein, Sergei. *October: 10 Days That Shook the World: A Film* (Chatsworth California: Image Entertainment, 1998).
[408] Vertov, Dziga, Mikhail A. Kaufman & E I. Vertova-Svilova. *Dziga Vertov: The Man with a Movie Camera, Enthusiasm, 3 Songs About Lenin, Kino Eye, Kino Pravda*. (2015).
[409] MacKay, John. "Vertov and the Line: Art, Socialization, Collaboration." *Film, Art, New Media*. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 81-96.
[410] Tolczyk, Dariusz, *See No Evil* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 29.
[411] *See No Evil*, p. 29.
[412] *See No Evil*, p. 6.

II.I.V: Conclusion

Over the course of this Chapter I have attempted an alternative account of *Pravda* from that given in *The Dictionary*. This is premised on two aspects of this Political Untranslatable in particular. First, the fact that the word contradicted the very 'truth' it was engendered to sustain; and second, the fact that this word existed in a state of conceptual and discursive paralysis. The figures and events I evoked served to illustrate this. As such, the 20th century narrative of *Pravda* can be read as one confirming the impossibility of imposing and assigning universal values to dogmatic (and sometimes unpredictable) epistemologies.

If any argument can be made about *Pravda*'s untranslatability, I suggest it is one dependent on recognising the cultural deformity of its formal definition within the Soviet context. That is because there is a crucial difference between change and deformation. The latter is often caused by historical or political rupture. To deform a word is to abuse it. That abuse may take the shape of horrific actions carried out in that word's name. Alternatively, it may invest a word with negative associations it subsequently struggles to escape. For the translator facing the Russian word *Pravda*, it is arguably both.

Having outlined where I think Sigov's entry has fallen short, I have asserted that the epistemological potential of the word be privileged in its conceptual development over the following Section. Formulated at its simplest, how do we translate a word that in its own context is synonymous with its opposite? Faced with this, should one follow Apter's conceit, conflating *Pravda* with pre-existent conceptual schemas? Could *Pravda* provide us, for example, with ways of analysing modes of censorship in literature, translation and beyond? Or should its capaciousness accommodate Shlovsky's estrangement, Stanislavski's method or Chekhov's realism?[413]

[413] See: Tihanov, Galin. "The politics of estrangement: The case of the early Shklovsky." *Poetics Today* 26.4 (2005), pp. 665-696; Tait, Peta. *Performing Emotions: gender, bodies, spaces, in Chekhov's drama and Stanislavski's theatre* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2017).

There is nothing stopping critics from pursuing any of these options, or a combination of them. Yet these options so far leave unanswered why any of these critical strategies would require the terminological inclusion of the Russian word *Pravda* specifically, let alone the context to which it belongs. I now suggest instead that *Pravda* is more useful for addressing the impasse between Soviet and post-colonial studies, as summarised eloquently by the Russian historian Alexander Etkind:

> In a rare response to the post-Soviet transformation, David Chioni Moore describes a situation that he calls "the double silence." Postcolonial experts stay silent about the former Soviet sphere and Sovietologists stay silent about postcolonial ideas. Moore gives two separate explanations to this double effect. For many postcolonial scholars, some of them Marxist-leaning, the socialist world seems a better alternative to global capitalism; they do not wish to extend their critical vision from the latter to the former. Many post-socialist scholars have cultivated their new European identities; they do not wish to compare their experience with Asian or African colleagues […] Both sides suffer from the disjunction between the postcolonial and the post-socialist. This disconnect is largely responsible for the much-deplored depoliticization of postcolonial studies and for the methodological parochialism that many Russianists have lamented.[414]

[414] Etkind, Alexander. *Internal Colonization* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011), p. 26. Moore, David Chioni. "Is the post-in postcolonial the post-in post-Soviet? Toward a global postcolonial critique." *PMLA/Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 116.1 (2001), p. 111-128.

I find this extended passage more relevant to World Literature than it may first appear. Sigov interprets *Pravda* in *The Dictionary* as a tool for legal and ethical questions. For my part, I believe there is no better purpose for *Pravda* than to address this critical impasse between the Soviet/post-Soviet and the post-colonial studies and spaces. I make this suggestion on the basis that even when radical political ideologies differ in doctrine their subjective experiences often converge. Consequently, comparison between the literary accounts of those experiences may converge fruitfully in ways not yet explored. What both disciplines (Slavic and Soviet Studies, Post-Colonial Studies) often share, among many other things, is precisely the 'internal dialectic' imposed on their citizens (and, by extension, much of their literary and cultural output) to comparable degrees. I conclude that it is on this internal split, within the post-Soviet or post-colonial subject, that *Pravda* finds a potentially richer ascription.

Tihanov has asserted that our understanding of theory is impoverished without recourse to its historical conditions.[415] I agree with this in principle, yet words like *Pravda* – due to the very conditions in which it was shaped (or more accurately, was stunted) – prove a more significant challenge to this end. Exception can be found in a 2009 conference in Bochum, Germany on the topic. Yet despite a range of contributions on discourses of justice in the works of Andrei Bely (1880-1934), Nikolai Bulgakov (1891-1940) and Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910), the word itself and its conceptual richness remains largely unexplored and its complexity unnoticed.[416] If this word was prevented from a conceptual development in its own intellectually rich but politically troubled context, what happens when it is instead resituated into a post-colonial context? The answer lies in a rapidly modernising Brazil, where this Section goes next.

[415] Tihanov, Galin. *The Birth and Death of Literary Theory* (Paolo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2019), p. 5.
[416] Kuße, Holger, and Nikolaj Plotnikov, eds. *Pravda. Diskurse der Gerechtigkeit in der russischen Ideengeschichte: Beiträge der Tagung der Forschungsgruppe" Russische Philosophie" und des Verbundprojekts" Kulturen der Gerechtigkeit". Bochum 29.-30. Oktober 2009*. Peter Lang GmbH, Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften, 2011.

Section Two Chapter Two: Brazilian *Modernismo*

> Brazilians have constructed a dreamt-up image of a different Brazil […] Once this internal dialectic has been recognised, the next step is to understand that it is not in fact exclusively internal. The country has always been defined by those looking on from outside.[417]

True to Schwarz and Starling's analysis, there are no written accounts of Brazil preceding the arrival of the Portuguese in 1500 and their subsequent colonisation of the country. I begin here to imply that the 'internal dialectic' referred to at the end of the previous Chapter is a key to understanding this nation, and that the corresponding merit of *Pravda* is to illuminate this cultural issue.

Maybe the Brazilian and Russian literary experience are not as far apart as their geographical distance implies. In a famous essay entitled *Las ideas fuera de lugar* [*Misplaced Ideas*] (2000), the Brazilian critic Roberto Schwarz attempted to cultivate a sophisticated model for understanding Brazil's peripheral belated modernity. Reaching for comparison, he writes that in 'Russia, too, modernity dissolved in the immensity of the territory and social inertia,' and goes on to state that Brazilian and Russian modernism were conceived 'without losing [their] capacity' to measure 'the breakdown of the progressivism and individualism that the West imposed and imposes on the world.'[418]

---

[417] *Brazil: A Biography*, p. xxiii.

[418] Schwarz, Roberto. *Ao vencedor as batatas: forma literária e processo social nos inícios do romance brasileiro* (São Paulo: Editora 34, 2000), p. 27. Translation mine.

Returning to Schwarz and Starling's description of 'a dreamt-up image of a different Brazil', one 'defined by those looking on from outside',[419] one sees in this gesture how Brazil is resituated alongside countries like Russia in their historically changeable and erratic reluctance to copy Western models. According to Lubekmann's reading, Schwarz stipulates here that 'Brazil's and Russia's similarly delayed importation of Western ideas brought into dialogic contact ideas that in the West developed dialectically.'[420] In this sense, readers should remember that a belated modernity depends upon the imaginary of somewhere better, faster and superior with which one's own nation must compete.

Yet without forcing too fine a point on the matter, it will be impossible to approach *Pravda* in conjunction with Brazilian *Modernismo* without first reclaiming what this latter modernity was in reaction *to*, and moreover the 'dreamt-up image' it consumed, absorbed and triumphantly rejected. I therefore begin with the moment of colonial contact, before outlining the enforced Romanticism that Brazil subsequently endured. Finally, I show how Brazilian modernists sought to both reclaim and surpass this inheritance to better construct their own. As confirmed by historians and sociologists alike, the impact of these events on the Brazilian nation was one of 'internal splitting' – a tangible phaenomena in much post-Soviet and post-colonial literature alike. Taking account of the movement's formation throughout the 1920s, it provides an ideal backdrop to the authors analysed in the following Section.

[419] *Brazil: A Biography*, p. xxiii.
[420] Allen, Sharon Lubkemann. *eccentriCities: Writing in the margins of Modernism: St. Petersburg to Rio de janeiro* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), p. 62.

II.II.I: Europe's Captive

A letter, sent in May 1500 by Pedro Vaz de Caminha, describes the very first encounter between the Brazilians and the Portuguese. In the following recollection, the Portuguese have landed in what will one day become Rio de Janeiro.

> The admiral named the mountain Easter Mountain and the country the Land of the True Cross […] From there we caught sight of men walking on the beaches […] They were dark brown and naked, and had no covering for their private parts, and they carried bows and arrows in their hands. They all came determinedly towards the boat. Nicolau Coelho made a sign to them to put down their bows, and they put them down. But he could not speak to them or make himself understood in any other way because of the waves that were breaking on the shore.[421]

So begins a linguistic incursion that lasts over five centuries. Reading this today, one wonders why Caminha assumes his language is understandable to begin with. Attempting to ingratiate themselves with these 'discovered' people, Caminha goes on to describe both groups exchanging a series of gifts. Rosemary beads from Portugal get one inhabitant's attention. This time the untranslatability between them is more overt.

> He made a sign to be given them and was very pleased with them […] Then he took them off and put them round his arm, pointing to the land, and again at the beads and at the captain's collar, as if he meant they would give gold for them. *We took it in this sense, because we preferred to*.[422]

[421] "The Discovery of Brazil", in: Ley, Charles David. (ed.) *Port Voyages 1498-1663* (London & New York: Everyman's Library, 1947), p. 42.
[422] "The Discovery of Brazil," p. 45. Emphasis mine.

Untranslatability, in the form of assumption or accusation, thus characterised the Portuguese encounter with Brazil from its inception. 'They seem to be such innocent people' Caminha marvels later: 'if we could understand their speech and they ours, they would immediately become Christians.'[423] This enormous country's discovery was disseminated through various travel writings as an exotic utopia still untouched by the aches and inconveniences of mercantilism. Hans Staden, a German soldier from Hesse, was captured and imprisoned by a Brazilian tribe, publishing his recollections in 1557.[424] Jean de Léry's travel writings would be published in French in 1578.[425] Both books were enormously popular (the former running to four editions in a single year), establishing Brazil in the European consciousness as 'the other side of the world.'[426] French author Michel de Montaigne's essay *Des Cannibales* (1580) provides the most prescient example of this: 'The discovery of so vast a country seems to me worth reflecting on,' he writes. 'I am afraid that our eyes are bigger than our stomachs, and that we have more curiosity than understanding.'[427] European ideas of progress sanctified spatial expansion, while 'any alternative to this idea was perceived as a local eccentricity.'[428]

> This is a nation […] in which there is no commerce, no knowledge of letters, no science of numbers, no title of magistrate or political superior, no habit of service, riches or poverty, no contracts, no inheritance, no division of property, only leisurely occupations […].[429]

In this gap between romanticism and reality, a chasm opened that the *Modernismo* movement would later try intensely to fill - reacting, as it did, to the Romanticism that preceded it.

[423] "The Discovery of Brazil," p. 56.
[424] Staden, Hans. "Hans Staden [1557]" (*Rio de Janeiro: Dantes,* 1998).
[425] De Léry, Jean. *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil*. (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2018).
[426] *Brazil: A Biography*, p. 22.
[427] Montaigne, Michel de, "The Cannibals," in: (ed.) Robinson, Douglas, Western Translation Theory from Herodotus to Nietzsche (London: Routledge, 2014), pp. 116-118. p. 117.
[428] Boym, Svetlana, *The Future of Nostalgia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 10.
[429] "The Cannibals,", pp. 117-18.

II.II.II: An Involuntary Romanticism

Between the Portuguese arrival of 1500 and the 20th century modernity that sought to reckon with it, Brazil would undergo an enforced Romanticism decided from above. In 1807, Dom Pedro I of Portugal (1798-1834) chaotically relocated the seat of the Portuguese Empire to Rio de Janeiro. It was an unprecedented event. It left his domestic population indignant and his European allies bewildered.[430] However, if *Modernismo* can be considered reducible to a single event or as a reaction to any one single text from this time, it is arguably those summarised in Ferdinand Denis' *Résumé de l'histoire littéraire du Brésil* (1826).[431]

More a tradesman than a man of letters, the Frenchman Ferdinand Denis (1798-1890) made a brief, unplanned stopover at the port of Rio de Janeiro in 1816. Unable to find a ship to continue his journey to India, Denis instead decided to live in Rio for three years, mastering the Portuguese language and collecting literary material. Returning to Paris in 1819, Denis took up a post as librarian at the *Bibliothèque Saint-Geneviève*, becoming, effectively, Europe's first Brazilianist.[432] His subsequent *Résumé* would emerge from these 'findings'. It would be published together with a history of Portuguese literature, entitled *Résumé de l'Histoire Littéraire Du Portugal: Suivi Du Résumé de l'Histoire Littéraire Du Brésil*. While its author 'dedicated 500 pages to Portugal, the Brazilian section was five times shorter.'[433] Though the *Résumé* would be published after Brazil's political independence, Lotufo insists its significance for literary history lies in the fact that it 'presents Brazilian literature as an appendix to a longer Portuguese literary history and tradition.'[434]

---

[430] See: Barman, Roderick J. *Citizen Emperor: Pedro II and the Making of Brazil, 1825-91* (Paolo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1999).
[431] Denis, Ferdinand-Jean. *Résumé de l'histoire littéraire du Portugal: suivi du Résumé de l'histoire littéraire du Brésil*. Lecointe et Durey, 1832.
[432] Lotufo, Marcelo. "How Brazilians became Frenchmen; or, Ferdinand Denis and 'Coloniality of Power'." *Latin American Literary Review*, vol. 43, no. 86, 2016, pp. 117–135. p. 120.
[433] "How Brazilians became Frenchmen; or, Ferdinand Denis and 'Coloniality of Power,'" p. 122.
[434] "How Brazilians became Frenchmen; or, Ferdinand Denis and 'Coloniality of Power,'" p. 120.

In keeping with the Romantic nationalism sweeping the European continent, Denis believed that Brazilian compositions should look to what made their country singular. Nature, landscapes, and primitive tribes were all offered as positive examples.[435] Denis's *Résumé* thus interprets Brazilian literature through a Franco-Germanic Romantic framework. Instead of a comprehensive review of Brazilian literature as its title may suggest, Denis compensates for what remained unread (or more simply untranslated) to proffer instructions on what Brazilian literature *should be.*

Brazil's literary participants and their role in the state-generated canon were clearly marked along racial lines. Europeans and their American descendants are tasked with directing this process; indigenous peoples are recast as a source of inspiration or object of study.[436] By positing Brazilian tribespeople as the object (rather than subject) of future works, Denis quietly ensured their lack of input in his augmentation of the Brazilian landscape as a blank canvas for European culture, exploration and curiosity. Effectively, Denis's literary advice amounts to little more than a Brazilian marketing campaign for European consumption. Nonetheless, his cultural and intellectual impact on Brazil cannot be underestimated. Brazilian literary critic and sociologist Antônio Cândido (1918-2017) suggested that Denis's book was published at a crucial moment in Brazilian culture. He implies that it was in this confused state that Brazil entered the 'World Republic of Letters' with the dawn of modernity.[437]

---

[435] This produced a Romanticism that became selective in its subjects as well as nostalgic in its model, as Holanda explains: 'Recognition of the civil liberties of Indians […] tended to distance them from the social stigma associated with slavery […] This must be why, in trying to translate themes of the Middle Ages pertaining to European romanticism into Brazilian terms, writers of the last century, such as Gonçalves Dias and Alencar, would reserve the conventional virtues of ancient nobles and knights for the Indian.' See: Holanda, Sergio Buarques de, trans: Summ, Harvey, Roots of Brazil (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012), p. 27.

[436] "How Brazilians became Frenchmen; or, Ferdinand Denis and 'Coloniality of Power,'" p . 127.

[437] See: Pederosa, Celia & David Treece, p. 221. As Pedrosa explains, at length: 'In the nineteenth century [Romanticism] exercised an important role in the consolidation of the self-consciousness and autonomist commitment which had been shaped since the previous century. At the same time, it stimulated the invigoration of literary discourse by the use of local forms and themes. […] On an aesthetic level because it legitimated the subjection of literature to the more obvious forms of a characteristically Brazilian reality, privileging the physical description of landscapes and customs and the schematic construction of characters and situations.' (p. 221.)

Romanticism 'tended to exalt precisely that which was unique to each nation,' Schwarz and Starling point out, 'rather than the traits they shared.'[438] Yet the movement of concepts from one continent to another is not always smooth. Indigenous peoples who had been systematically killed in the forests now reappeared in semi-official novels and paintings. 'Whereas in European countries, national romanticism was often a means for one country to assert itself against another, in Brazil romanticism was sumptuous and financed by the monarchy, which led to its conservative nature.'[439]

This 'conservative nature' was overseen by various institutions. By 1822 there were six typography workshops in Rio, arguably marking a turning-point whereby the book market was consolidated by Brazilian literature as well as imports.[440] Denis's *Résumé* was translated into Portuguese in 1835 and would be established as a primary textbook at the Colegio D. Pedro II, where Rio's elite would be educated for decades to come.[441] In 1838, the *Instituto Histórico e Geográfica Brasileiro* (IHGB) was created in the hope of solidifying Brazil's independent national identity. Januário Barbosa's *Parnaso Brasileiro* (1829), Varnhagen's *Florilégio da Poesía Brasileira* (1846), Norberto da Silva Sousas' *Historia da literatura Brasileira* (1859) and Ferdinand Wolf's *Le Brésil Littéraire* (1863) all contributed to this end.[442] However much their accounts of Brazilian literature may have differed, all were 'faithful to their European models.'[443] Inadvertently, reflections on the Enlightenment in these academies 'encouraged not only literary activity but also the struggle for political autonomy.'[444]

---

[438] "How Brazilians became Frenchmen; or, Ferdinand Denis and 'Coloniality of Power,'" p. 315.
[439] "How Brazilians became Frenchmen; or, Ferdinand Denis and 'Coloniality of Power,'" p. 131.
[440] das Neves, Lucia Maria Bastos Pereira, and Tania Maria Tavares Bessone da Cruz. "Booksellers in Rio de Janeiro: The Book Trade and Circulation of Ideas from 1808 to 1831." in: Silva, Ana Claudia Suriani Da. *Books and Periodicals in Brazil 1768-1930*. Routledge, 2017.
Books and Periodicals in Brazil 1768–1930. (London: Routledge, 2017). pp. 35-51. p. 39.
[441] "How Brazilians became Frenchmen; or, Ferdinand Denis and 'Coloniality of Power,'" p. 131.
[442] "How Brazilians became Frenchmen; or, Ferdinand Denis and 'Coloniality of Power,'" p. 119. See: de Castro Rocha, João Cezar. *Brazil 2001: A Revisionary History of Brazilian Literature and Culture* (United States, Tagus Press, 2000), p. 543.
[443] "How Brazilians became Frenchmen; or, Ferdinand Denis and 'Coloniality of Power,'" p. 119.
[444] Pederosa, Celia & Treece, David. "Antonio Candido: Keeping Criticism Alive." Portuguese Studies, vol. 10, 1994, pp. 215–239. p. 221.

Lotufo further emphasises the epistemic violence of Denis's enforced Romanticism, claiming that Portuguese settlers used 'a discourse of modernity and liberalism' to conceal 'the continuation of a colonial logic.'[445] Despite these attempts to establish Romanticism in Brazil, 'this poetic revolution was never fully felt', claims Cândido: 'our bards renounced their fatherland, becoming mere imitators of unrelated thoughts and ideas.'[446] This led to a continuation of colonial thinking for Brazil's intelligentsia.[447] Yet it is precisely the epistemic damage of colonial works like the *Résumé* that establishes the narrative of Brazilian literature's complex and paradoxical relationship with its own historiography.

> Denis and others […] had to face the fact that the reality of Brazil was different from the ones in the cultural powerhouses that produced their analytic model […] In the *Résumé* such discrepancy is evident, as well as Denis' desire to direct the country's reality and culture to fit his pre-defined positions.[448]

Acknowledging the cultural contexts that led to Brazil's *Modernismo*, one can better understand what it sought to break against. That a sense of internal division would arise from these post-colonial conditions is unsurprising in this light. Following Mário Vieira de Mello, Cândido claims that – at least up until 1930 - Romanticism had predominated with a sense of 'still unrealised greatness.'[449] Part of modernity in the Brazilian context, therefore, was to point out 'the present poverty; the atrophy; what was lacking, not what was abundant.'[450] Through this imported and imposed Romanticism, Brazil's belated modernity slowly took root.

---

[445] "How Brazilians became Frenchmen; or, Ferdinand Denis and 'Coloniality of Power,'" p. 129.
[446] Antonio Candido, *Formação da Literatura Brasileira* (Sao Paulo: Ouro Sobre Azul, 2014), 4th ed, pp. 296-97.
[447] "How Brazilians became Frenchmen; or, Ferdinand Denis and 'Coloniality of Power,'" p. 118.
[448] "How Brazilians became Frenchmen; or, Ferdinand Denis and 'Coloniality of Power,'" p. 127.
[449] "Literature and Underdevelopment," in: Cândido, Antônio & Becker, Howard S. *On Literature and Society* (New Jersey: Princeton Univerity Press, 1990), pp. 119-141. p. 119.
[450] "Literature and Underdevelopment," p. 119.

II.II.III: The internal dialectic

The narrow understanding of Brazil set forth in the *Résumé* contributed formidably to opening up 'the internal dialectic' in Brazilians that, according to Schwarz and Starling, persists to the present day. While Brazilian sociologist and historian Sérgio Buarque de Holanda (1902-1982) insisted Romanticism left no 'more than a superficial mark on Brazilian life', nevertheless, he claimed of Brazil, 'our thinking in that period basically revealed the same fragility, the same *inner inconsistency*, and the same indifference to the social situation.'[451]

In this sense, Romanticism proved unwanted but eventually instructive. Almost a century after the *Résumé* was published, Holanda would go on to characterise the temperament it had left Brazilians with in 1936: 'At rock bottom, might this confidence in the miraculous power of ideas reveal that [Brazilians] are secretly horrified by our reality?'[452] Holanda later typifies this aspect of Brazilian identity 'Bovarism,' which he defined as 'an invincible disenchantment with our own reality.'[453] Bovarism, or *bovarismo*, according to Schwarz and Starling, denotes 'an altered sense of reality' borne from 'the continuous disparity between illusions and reality.'[454]

> 'Bovarism' is also implicit in a very Brazilian form of collective evasion, which allows Brazilians to reject the country as it really is and imagine a quite different one […] In the void between what Brazilians are and how they perceive themselves, nearly all possible identities have

[451] *Roots of Brazil*, p. 131-132. Emphasis mine.
[452] *Roots of Brazil*, p. 128.
[453] *Holanda*, Sérgio Buarque de. *Visão do Paraíso*: Os motivos edênicos no descobrimento e na colonização do Brasil (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2010), p. 99. In *Roots of Brazil*, Holanda nears this concept through a series of justifications on the Brazilian temperament: 'Our aversion to ritual, in what the first European observers deemed a "remiss and somewhat melancholy land," is partly explained by the very idea that ritual is ultimately unnecessary for us. Normally, we do not react defensively to our immediate, familiar surroundings. The inner life of the Brazilian is neither cohesive nor disciplined enough to envelop and dominate the whole personality and integrate it, as a conscious element, into society. Brazilians are free then, to give in to and to assimilate any broad repertory of ideas, gestures, and forms that they may encounter.' See: p. 122.
[454] *Brazil: A Biography*, p. xxi.

> been explored: white, black, mulatto, savage, North American, European, and now, BRICS […] At times French, at others more American; at times more backward, at others more advanced: but always different.[455]

This ongoing idealisation and reconstruction of identity, Schwarz and Starling continue, is socially generated. 'Hearing them constantly, Brazilians end up believing in a country where hearsay is more important than reality.'[456] Brazil's inability to escape these multiple forms of external input has always foundered upon the linguistic reality of its national language. That neither Schwarz nor Starling draw attention to the fact that Holanda's concept of 'Bovarism' comes, itself, from a European literary text, is an oversight that unwittingly confirms the continual impossibility for Brazilians to express themselves without the complex burdens of their colonial past.

[455] *Brazil: A Biography*, p. xxii.
[456] *Brazil: A Biography*, p. xxiii.

II.II.IV: *Modernismo*

A dynamic transformation occurred in Brazil between the 1880s and the 1930s. Cities redeveloped rapidly. The government's aggressive policy to attract foreign immigrants had led to population growth and economic promise, with the price for Brazilian coffee exports doubling between 1920 and 1925.[457] On February 10th, 1922, the poet Mario de Andrade (1893-1945) and the painter Emiliano Di Cavalcanti organised the Modern Art Week at the Municipal Theatre of São Paulo.[458] Purposefully coinciding with a century of independence from Portugal, we can see in its works 'efforts to lay the cornerstone for a genuine modern Brazilian aesthetic.'[459] Brazil conducted an international exposition and World Fair in 1922-23, a moment of pride and new-found possibility. [460]

In the broader context of Latin America, Brazilian modernity should be understood as symptomatic of the nation-building across the continent. Argentine expansion and industrialization of the 1880s; the Peruvian Aristocratic Republic of the 1880s; the Cuban independence of 1899; and the Mexican failure to build a liberal nation that led to its 1910 revolution all form a useful map of comparable historical precedents.[461] With the Brazilian case specifically, *Modernismo* can be interpreted as a postcolonial but also a cosmopolitan project, and not in an unconnected sense: it was an attempt to reclaim the cultural authenticity thought lost amidst the colonial schemas and vocabularies by which Brazilians were long taught to identify.

---

[457] Abreu, Marcelo Paiva, and Afonso S. Bevilaqua. "Brazil as an export economy, 1880–1930." In: (eds.) Cardenas et al, *An economic history of twentieth-century Latin America* (Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2000), pp. 32-54.

[458] Skidmore, Thomas E. "Culture War in Brazil with the Opening of the Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo and the Official Arrival of Abstraction." *Simposio 3: Arte y Política en América Latina durante y después de la Guerra Fría*. Vol. 24. No. 26. 2019.

[459] Korfmann, Michael, and Marcelo Noguiera. "Avant-Garde in Brazil." *Dialectical Anthropology*, vol. 28, no. 2, 2004, pp. 125–145. p. 127.

[460] Rezende, Livia. "Nature and the Brazilian State at the independence Centennial international exhibition in Rio de Janeiro, 1922." *Cultures of International Exhibitions 1840-1940: Great Exhibitions in the Margins* (2015): 163.

[461] Madrid, Alejandro L. "Renovation, rupture and restoration," in: (eds.) Ross, Stephen & Lindgreen, Allana, *The Modernist World* (London & New York: Routledge Books, 2015), pp. 409-416. p. 410.

The strongest evidence for this can be found in the way Brazilian Modernists were busy compiling and anthologising Brazilian *Modernismo* simultaneously as it was written. The work this stimulated over the next decade requires chronological mention here, with concentration paid to Oswald de Andrade, Raul Bopp and Patricia Galvão. Two years after the Exhibition, Oswald de Andrade published his *Manifesto of Pau-Brasil Poetry* in 1924. Written in sharp, epigrammatic stanzas, it gives us an insight into this movement in these formative stages:

> Down with officialdom, the cultivated exercise of life. Engineers instead of legal advisors, lost like the Chinese in the genealogy of ideas.
>
> Language without archaisms, without erudition. Natural and neologic.
>
> The millionaire-contribution of all the errors. The way we speak. The way we are.[462]

Oswald's vision is utopian, his delivery aggressive. He playfully conflates poetry with Brazil's other exports, as if in the hope of emphasising its organic creation and local quality. Reading his satirical representations of 'millionaire-contributions of all errors' and his demands for a language 'without erudition,' it is easy to understand why a growing body of scholarship has sought to resituate Oswald's text in the postcolonial tradition.[463] Oswald rejected Denis and his contemporaries, replacing Eurocentric paternalism with a global narrative of political rupture and creative expression. He clearly envisions *Modernismo* as a continuation of these disruptions, absorbing their legitimacy for its own ends. Part of *Modernismo*'s appeal was no doubt the collaboration between art forms, and the ability to invest political viewpoints in unexpected places. Tarsila do Amaral's 1928 exhibition *Abaporu* is a case in point. Written by Raul Bopp, the programme for the exhibition reads:

---

[462] Rego, Stella. "Pau-Brasil Poetry." *Latin American Literary Review*, vol. XIV, no. 27, Jan – June 1986, pp. 184-87. p. 185.

[463] White, Erdmute Wenzel. "Cultural Memory and Decolonization: Brazil 1924–1928." *Colonizer and Colonized* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), pp. 235-249.

> We will descend into our obscure and dark Prehistory […] race roots, with a psychoanalytic mind […] Solidarity with the origins. To construct a Brazil in our likeness […] To make a new "Social Contract." The youth are disenchanted with youthful snobberies. It dried the soul in the Cartesian. Why Rome? We have mystery at home.[464]

One must note how this excerpt betrays a fascinating ambivalence toward European influence. It attempts to reject this influence while still speaking through its inherited points of reference. How exactly could this movement initiate a sense of cultural authenticity while referring to Freud, Rousseau and Descartes? These sources would come to be seen by scholars as a prelude, however, to Oswald's *Cannibalist Manifesto* of 1928.

Here, Oswald identifies his propositions through a series of protestations and negations.[465] It is not difficult to recognise the anti-European sentiment running through these refutations, but it would nonetheless be reductive to dismiss Oswald's *Manifesto* out of hand as a product of unnegotiable nationalism. As Kimberley Lopez puts it, *Modernismo* had two aims: 'a cosmopolitan interest in the development of Brazilian literature' and 'a concern with affirmation of national identity.'[466] As such, the *Anthropofagy Manifesto* 'promoted the cultural autonomy of the nation,' but not to the extent of 'rejecting all foreign influence.'[467] The image Oswald excavated and reinvented for this purpose was that of the Cannibal: the earliest image by which Brazil was known beyond its borders. Looking to history in search of national identity, all Oswald could find was a series of unverified impositions from without.

---

[464] "Avant-Garde in Brazil," p. 132.
[465] Andrade, Oswald de & Bary, Leslie. ``Cannibalist Manifesto." *Latin American Literary Review*, Vol. 19, No. 38 (Jul – Dec 1991), pp. 38-47. p. 38.
[466] López, Kimberly S. "*Modernismo* and the Ambivalence of the Postcolonial Experience: Cannibalism, Primitivism, and Exoticism in Mário De Andrade's '*Macunaíma*.'" *Luso-Brazilian Review*, vol. 35, no. 1, 1998, pp. 25–38. p. 25.
[467] "*Modernismo* and the Ambivalence of the Postcolonial Experience: Cannibalism, Primitivism, and Exoticism in Mário De Andrade's '*Macunaíma*,'" p. 34.

If confirmation is needed to see Brazilian *Modernismo* as a quest for national self-identity, this is a case furthered by José Bento Monteiro Lobato (1882-1948), who deserves acknowledgement for stimulating a stagnant publication industry back into life after acquiring the *Revista do Brasil* journal in 1918. Highly popular with the Rio intellectuals of its day, its contributions reflected Lobato's desire to combat European imitations.[468] This urgency to rearticulate and re-historicise Brazilian culture is also glimpsed in its prolific anthologies.[469] The prominent poet Manuel Bandeira (1886-1968) was commissioned to this end, but later recalled it unfavourably in his biography. His account sounds far from enthusiastic:

> Since then I began to feel how difficult it is to organize any kind of anthology. I have already organized six: all of them left me unsatisfied; for all I have received criticism not always fair. And, what is worse, I involuntarily hurt many friends.[470]

Bandeira later admitted he was approached for this purpose by Gustavo Capanema (1900-1985), Brazil's first Minister of Education. Gouveia's impeccable account insists on the significance of its concurrent anthologizing: 'First, the fact that a modernist poet became the main authority in the history of poetry,' he claims, shows 'literary criticism was not separated from literature itself. That is, the process of rationalization and separation of the spheres of knowledge was still in its early stage.'[471] Second, that the Brazilian government wanted to anthologise its poets demonstrates a desire for canonisation, Goueviea continues, 'but also in the restructuring of the canon through the modernist's perspective, through their expertise.'[472]

---

[468] Bignotti, Cilza & Ribeiro Martins, Milena. "The Brazilian Publishing Industry at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century: The Path of Monteiro Lobato" in: Cláudia Suriana da Silva, Ana & Guardini, Vasconcelos (eds.) *Books and Periodicals in Brazil 1968-1930* (London: Legenda, 2014), pp. 215-229.
[469] Gouveia, Saulo. *The Triumph of Brazilian Modernism: The Metanarrative of Emancipation & Counter-Narratives* (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), pp. 68-69.
[470] Bandeira, Manuel. *Itinerário de pasárgada*. (Global Editora e Distribuidora Ltda, 2019), p. 105; translation mine.
[471] *The Triumph of Brazilian Modernism: The Metanarrative of Emancipation & Counter-Narratives,* pp. 70-71.
[472] *The Triumph of Brazilian Modernism: The Metanarrative of Emancipation & Counter-Narratives*, pp. 70-71.

This appetite to collect, revise and organise contemporary culture on the part of the Brazilian state can arguably be seen as an urgency to augment and surpass what the nation broadly considered as its own peripheral and belated modernity.

Brazilian *Modernismo* is mostly characterised by this tension: the modernity of industrialised urban centres and the indigenous cultures of the interior. A tension ascribed by McNee as a 'nostalgia for a lost or imaginary "worldview" of the periphery' alongside 'an epistemological and material debt to, if not absolute faith in, the "civilizing" or modernising impulses emanating from the centre(s).'[473] It marks another element of Brazilian's unique experience of modernity. Drawing heavily on historical anthropological sources written by Europeans *about* Brazil, ethnographic discourse became a rich resource to reinterpret the Brazilian character.[474] From this perspective, Oswald's Cannibal is a metaphor for the Brazilian capacity to reclaim heritage while consuming foreign material, creating in his 1928 *Manifesto* possibly the most violent and striking metaphor for the hermeneutic act.[475]

Mario de Andrade's own interest in ethnology led to an expedition to the Amazon Rainforest in May 1927.[476] His subsequent novel *Macunaima* (1928) extended this satirical tendency (toward European ethnology) to its limit.[477] As Gouveia rightly cautions, however, reducing Brazilian modernism to yet another 'rupture with past tradition' is too short-sighted. Its underlying tension (between indigenous and urbane) is unavoidable because its artists sought to fuse these cultural forms - while continuing to maintain a confrontational ambivalence toward the latter.

---

[473] McNee, p, 205.
[474] McNee, Malcolm K. "Chronicles, Ethnographies, and the tension between nostalgia and destruction in Brazilian Modernism." *Romance Notes*, vol. 41, no. 2, 2001, pp. 199–208. p. 203.
[475] Vieira, Else Ribeiro Pires. "Liberating Calibans: Readings of Antropofagia and Haroldo de Campos' poetics of transcreation." *Postcolonial Translation*. Routledge, 2012. 95-113.
[476] Langfeldt, Marcia Caetano. "Um turista bem moderno: a expressão amazônica de Mário de Andrade na literatura e na fotografia." *Bergen Language and Linguistics Studies* 10.1 (2019): 16-16. Sandroni, Carlos. "Notas sobre etnografia em Mário de Andrade." *Estudos Avançados* 36 (2022): 205-224.
[477] Andrade, Mário de. *Macunaíma: o herói sem nenhum caráter*. (Brazil: Universidade Federal da Fronteira Sul, 2019).

By far the most fascinating author of *Modernismo* is also its most political. It can be found in the colourful career of Patricia Galvão (1910-1962). Like Clarice Lispector, she was also in favour of abortion and divorce. Galvão 'shared the modernists' avant-garde positions',[478] culminating in her marriage to Oswald de Andrade in 1930.

> For a time she lived with him on a small island where he was fleeing creditors. In 1931, she was arrested at a military rally for Sacco and Vanzetti in Santos, where a black stevedore died in her arms. Travelling to Buenos Aires for poetry declamation, she met the exiled Brazilian Communist leader Luís Carlos Prestes and the Argentine writers Jorge Luis Borges and Victoria Ocampo.[479]

Galvão wrote *Parque industrial: Romance proletario* [Industrial Park: A Proletarian Novel] (1930) under the pseudonym Mara Lobo.[480] Ideological to its core, the novel focuses on the struggles of women in São Paulo as they work in factories during the city's brutal industrialisation. Geographically the novel concentrates on Braz, an overcrowded factory district, and the Esplanada Hotel on Rua do Arouche, an exclusive venue. She does this in order to emphasise the widening social disparities of the era. Stylistically, claims translators David K. and Elisabeth Jackson, the novel 'bridged the years where many writers combined modernist experimentation with themes of social realism.'[481] Despite its ideological vocabulary, Galvão nonetheless makes a convincing portrait of a society in need of change. In one scene, a young factory-worker called Corina feels pressured into meeting the 'bourgeois' men of São Paulo in the hope of meeting a suitable partner.

---

[478] Jackson, David K. "Afterword," in: Galvão, Patrícia & Elizabeth and David. K. Jackson, *Industrial Park: A Proletarian Novel* (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), pp. 118-119.
[479] "Afterword," p. 119.
[480] Galvão, Patrícia & Elizabeth and David. K. Jackson. *Industrial Park: A Proletarian Novel* (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1993).
[481] *Industrial Park: A Proletarian Novel*, p. xiii.

He lets a bill fall and shouts speeding off:

Don't lose it! It's a hundred bucks! […]

The falling drizzle is heavier than her crying. The large polkadot chintz runs.

It had been just like this for her mother![482]

Galvão left Oswald de Andrade along with her young son in 1933, allegedly interviewing the psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud on her way to China. Sadly, she sold her interview to a journalist she met in Hollywood, and since then the document has never been recovered.[483] Once arriving in China, Galvão took the Trans-Siberian Railroad to Moscow. In 1935 she moved to Paris, 'where she studied at the Université Populaire, wrote for *L'Avant-Garde*, and took part in street demonstrations until 1935.'[484] Returning to Brazil the same year, Galvão was imprisoned for five years under the Vargas regime. Suffering from cancer and alcoholism in her final years, in 'a final encounter with the bizarre at her wake,' a friend's farewell embrace 'tipped over her casket, and her body rolled out onto the floor.'[485]

Between 1934 and 1937, Paulo Duarte convinced Mário de Andrade to oversee the Departmento de Cultura at São Paulo University. According to Duarte, these were the best years in Andrade's professional life.[486] November 1937 marked a shift. Mário de Andrade was expelled from the University just as the Estado Novo came into effect. Before his death in 1945, his lecture *O Movimento Modernista* (1942) offered a summary account. It is by turns contradictory, lyrical, bitter and exhilarating - much like the movement itself.

[482] *Industrial Park: A Proletarian Novel*, p. 45.
[483] *Industrial Park: A Proletarian Novel*, p. 120.
[484] *Industrial Park: A Proletarian Novel*, p. 120.
[485] *Industrial Park: A Proletarian Novel*, p. 123.
[486] Mendes, Erasmo Garcia. "Paulo Duarte." *Estudos Avançados* 8.22 (1994): pp. 189-193.

II.II.V: Conclusion

In the fleeting history advanced in this Chapter, I have sought to reveal the untranslatability underlining Brazil's existence from its first contact with the Portuguese in 1500. Following the institutionalised Romanticism of the 19th century, I explained how these colonial projects contributed to a form of 'internal splitting', a long-established phenomenon in post-colonial societies. This internal division has been recognised in the Brazilian nation itself by Holanda. As I suggested in the previous Chapter, it is precisely this internal splitting that unites the post-Soviet and post-colonial contexts more broadly.

A more contemporary account suggests that 'Bovarism' still holds today,[487] when sociologist Luiz Eduardo Soares reflects that

> There is something revelatory in the caricature […] That authorization and recognition means that society believes in the portrait it renders of itself, which, in turn, implies the following: by believing in the truth of the image, we perpetuate and confirm it in action, so that, over the long term, the reality bends to the image.[488]

Such internal divisions are visible across Murilo Mendes and Clarice Lispector's writings, as the next two Chapters aim to manifest. What is at stake in Section II, then, is the means to establish *Pravda* as a literary theory for the comparative analysis and dialogue between post-Soviet and post-colonial literary texts. Yet this is an explanatory model that could only be established with recourse to those literary texts themselves.

[487] *Visão do Paraíso*: Os motivos edênicos no descobrimento e na colonização do Brasil (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2010), p. 99.
[488] Soares, Luiz Eduardo. *Rio: Extreme City* (London & New York: Penguin Books, 2016), p. 32.

Section Two Chapter Three: *Pravda* & Murilo Mendes

Readers unfamiliar with the work of Murilo Mendes (1901-1975) might be tempted to see what anthologies say of him. If they do, those readers will find effusive praise. The poet's contemporary, Manuel Bandeira – whose extensive anthologising must grant him some authority – claimed that Mendes was the strangest, most complex and productive writer of his generation.[489] If in doubt and looking to more recent anthologies, one finds there the same pitch undimmed. The translator Giovanni Ponteiro claims Murilo Mendes 'stands alone as one of the most elusive and complex voices among Modernist poets.'[490]

Somehow - despite such praise and a career spanning two continents, 29 volumes of poetry, two collections of prose and an autobiography praised as 'the only memoir' to assert 'itself as an avant-garde work'[491] - those readers may be disappointed to find out that Mendes remains almost entirely untranslated into English at the time of writing. This Chapter may not have the answer to 'why' in any absolute sense. Yet it can, at the very least, offer a provisional case in support of its further inquiry.

This Chapter's first task, then, is to introduce this author to an Anglophone readership. Establishing his early context, I take the liberty of translating various excerpts. As I move on to discuss, the charge of untranslatability can often be a fixed designation, one blind to the stark and enduring inequalities of global translational exchange: this is absolutely a legitimate claim in the case of Mendes. I then move onto a poem from his first collection, *Mapa* (1930). Using this as my point of departure, I conclude with my attempt to conceptualise *Pravda* as a literary theory, one applicable to Mendes's context and the Soviet context equally.

---

[489] Bandeira, Manuel «Murilo Mendes», in *Apresentação da Poesia Brasileira*, in *Poesia Completa e Prosa* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Nova Aguilar, 1990), p. 629.

[490] Pontiero, Giovanni. *An Anthology of Brazilian Modernist Poetry* (London: Pergamon Press, 1969), pp. 163-64. p. 164.

[491] Massi, Augusto. "Murilo Mendes: a poética do poliedro" in: Pizarro, Ana. *América Latina: palavra, literatura e cultura*. (São Paulo: Memorial, 1995), pp.

II.III.I: Background

Mendes was born in Juiz-Fora, Minas Gerais in 1902. Over the centuries, Mendes' hometown acquired a particular reputation amongst Brazilians for its uncompromising terrain and inhabitants. Back in the wake of an uprising in 1720, Governor Pedro Miguel de Almeida e Portugal had written the following:

> Of Minas and its inhabitants, sufficient be it to say […] that these are intractable people […] The earth appears to exude rebellion; the waters to emanate tumult; the gold to provoke confrontation; the wind to disseminate revolt; insolence is vomited from the clouds; insurgencies are determined by the stars; the climate is a tomb for peace and a cradle of mutiny; nature is ill at ease with herself, replete with inner turmoil, as it is in hell.[492]

Such descriptions did not appear commensurate with 20th century modernity. A new capital, Belo Horizante, was violently reconstructed. Small villages were destroyed in its wake.[493] Planned for maximum dramatic effect, at the highest point of the city was a rectangular plaza of government buildings and 'in the centre, a statue representing liberty.'[494] Growing up in an environment where architectural innovations and industrial developments felt chaotic, absurd and destructive, I suspect Mendes's attitude to modernism itself is likely inseparable from this early experience.[495] Continuing his studies in Niterói, Mendes finally leaves for Rio de Janeiro in 1920.

---

[492] Almada, Márcia, and Rodrigo Bentes Monteiro. "O Discurso e a Noticia: manuscritos sobre a revolta de 1720 atribuídos a Pedro Miguel de Almeida, 3 o conde de Assumar." *Tempo* 25 (2019): pp. 1-25.
[493] *Brazil: A Biography*, p. 366.
[494] *Brazil: A Biography*, p. 367.
[495] For example, Cardoso recently considers how Mendes' early work engages with the artificiality of historical landmarks and the rupture they ostensibly memorialise - a connection I do not consider incidental. See: Cardoso, Rodrigo Octávio. "Indigestão colonial em alguns poemas da Revista de Antropofagia." *Scripta* 25.55 (2021): pp. 122-150.

Arriving in Brazil's bustling cultural capital, he works a series of jobs to make ends meet. As a telegrapher, a notary, a school inspector, a scrivener, an appointment at the Ministério de Fazenda and another at the Banco Mercantil[496]: these positions allow him to integrate himself into the city's thriving artistic circles. He becomes privately enamoured with the possibilities of the new movement through his friendships with painter Ismael Nary and the poet João Cabral.[497]

Ismael Nary (1900-1934) arrived in Europe at the same time Mendes arrived in Rio, attending the Académie Julian in Paris. As a painter, he grows more interested in Expressionism than in indigenous themes. On his return to Rio, Nary works in the architecture section of the National Heritage service at the Ministry of Finance, where he meets Mendes in 1921.[498] The poet sees in his friend's paintings the vibrant possibilities of new forms, demonstrating the ongoing evolution of *Modernismo* in the following decade and beyond. As such, it is important for those unfamiliar with this context to grasp that Nary and Mendes 'belong to a later phase of Modernism,' insists Pontiero, that is, one 'released from the propaganda and primitivism' of Oswald and Mario de Andrade. 'Freedom of form and expression was now something established and accepted.'[499] Candido also cautions that these 'high-flying poets' were not influential beyond their own countries, less famous still in the mother countries of Europe from which their language originated.[500] Nary also exerts a more personal influence over Mendes, encouraging the poet to convert to the obscure Catholic doctrine of *Essencialismo*, stating that freedom is found in detachment from time and space.[501]

---

[496] Pontiero, Giovanni. *An Anthology of Brazilian Modernist Poetry* (London: Pergamon Press, 1969), p. 163.
[497] Carvalho, Ricardo Souza de. *Comigo e contigo a Espanha: um estudo sobre João Cabral de Melo Neto e Murilo Mendes*. Diss. Universidade de São Paulo, 2006.
[498] Mendes, Murilo. *Recordações de Ismael Nery*. Vol. 4. (São Paulo: Edusp, 1996), p. 21.
[499] *An Anthology of Brazilian Modernist Poetry*, p. 163.
[500] "Literature and Underdevelopment," in: Becker, Howard S., and Antonio Candido. *Antonio Candido: On Literature and Society*. Princeton University Press, 2014. pp. 119-141; p. 131.
[501] See: Frias, Joana Matos. "A poética essencialista de Murilo Mendes." *Revista da Faculdade de Letras: Línguas e Literaturas, 17, 2000, p. 287-306* (2000).

Mendes becomes a prominent Brazilian surrealist poet, publishing poems in *Revista Anthropofagia*, *Verde*, *Terra Roxa e Outras Terras* and other magazines between 1924 and 1929.[502] A conscious and sometimes critical attitude to modernity is evidenced in a passage from his first collection:

> Girlfriends don't date us anymore.
>
> Because now, we are civilized
>
> Driving in a car, thinking about cubism.
>
> The night is a sum of sambas
>
> I've been listening to for many years.[503]

In five lines, the tension between modernity and tradition is artfully expressed. Civilization is interpreted here as the exhaustion of impulse, where human contact is substituted for technological innovation and disinterest. The Brazilian night beyond the poet's vehicle carries the perennial sound of undifferentiated sambas depicted as rumbling on, unchanged for years. This is matched by Mendes' tendency, elsewhere, to universal address and globular metaphor:

> I am the look that penetrates the layers of the world,
>
> I walk under the skin, shaking off my dreams.
>
> I don't despise anything I've seen,
>
> All things are forever etched in my cache.[504] (*Contiga de Malazarte*)
>
> Imbalance of forces,
>
> Convulsive matter, burning to be defined.
>
> O, soul that does not know all its possibilities
>
> The world is too small to fill you.[505] (*Man, Struggle & Eternity*)

---

[502] *An Anthology of Brazilian Modernist Poetry*, p. 163.
[503] Mendes, Murilo. "Noturno Resumido," in: Mendes, Murilo. *O visionario: poemas (1930/33) (*Brazil: Olympio, 1941), p. 32.
[504] Mendes, Murilo. *Poesias* (1925-1955) (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria José Olympio Editora, 1959), p. 12.
[505] *Poesias (1925-1955),* p. 12.

My body is tired of working the cogs of the world.

The alarmed senses scream:

The Devil has more power than God.

I need to throw up life, with the blood

Of all I cursed, all I loved.[506] (*The Exile*)

World, or *Mundo*, figures often in Mendes' poetry as an index for the unknowable and as a metaphor for various layers of abstraction. Across the excerpts translated above, the world is by turns layered, 'afire,' and yet 'too small to fill' the inexpressible demands of the individual. Despite this, the world is always separate, detached and eccentric from the poet's perspective.

Brazilian scholarship has unearthed much from his correspondences,[507] and has identified a variety of influences on his work from Ancient fragments to Paul Valery.[508] Mammì takes up the ambitious task of reconstructing the poet's aesthetic theories on the visual arts.[509] Trielli Ribeiro concentrates on his urban polyphony,[510] Rodrigo Octavio Cardoso's more far-ranging study of 'indigestible colonialisms' points to how Mendes' poetry engages with the artificiality of landmarks and the ruptures they are meant to reflect.[511] Oliveira insists Mendes followed Brazilian modernism from afar, not joining any group,[512] as is substantiated by the poet himself: 'I try to obey a kind of internal logic of unity despite contrasts, change or tears; and I have always avoided programs and manifestos.'[513]

---

[506] *Poesias (1925-1955)*, p. 46.

[507] Lima Martinez, Lis Yana, and Lucia Sá Rebello. "Murilo Mendes: Memória e Vida Cultural." *Caderno de Letras* 33 (2019): 233-249.

[508] Rennó Assunção, Teodoro, "Heraclitus of Ephesus in Murilo Mendes' *Poliedro*" in: de Fátima Silva, Maria, Lorna Hardwick, and Susana Marques Pereira, eds. *The Classical Tradition in Portuguese and Brazilian Poetry*. (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2022), pp. 418-443.

[509] Mammì, Lorenzo. "Murilo Mendes, crítico de arte." *Remate de Males* 32.1 (2012): 81-93.

[510] Ribeiro, Guilherme Trielli. " O ouvido e a cidade: Murilo Mendes e a paisagem sonora do Rio de Janeiro." *Revista Laboratorio* 9 (2020).

[511] Cardoso, Rodrigo Octávio. "Indigestão colonial em alguns poemas da Revista de Antropofagia." *Scripta* 25.55 (2021): 122-150.

[512] Oliveira, Vera Lucia de. *Poesia, mito e história no Modernismo brasileiro* (São Paulo: Editora UNESP, 2001), p. 19. Translation mine.

[513] As quoted in: Jackson, David K. "A vanguarda literária no Brasil: bibliografia e antologia crítica." *A vanguarda literária no Brasil* (1998), p. 259.

II.III.II: Untranslatability or inequality?

I will go on to look at his 1930 poem *Mapa* from his first collection. Before which, Mendes's status as an untranslatable author prompts some further refutation. Judging from the disparity between critical praise and English translation, readers may conclude that the fault lies with the work itself. Is Mendes untranslatable, or simply untranslated? If my earlier translations have not already proven so, the ease with which one translates *Noturno Resumide* (1930) from Brazilian-Portuguese into English suggests Mendes' reception is more a reflection of uneven translational hierarchies than the difficulties of an untranslatable author.[514]

Night suspended in the rough hand
That worked in the circus of times before
The houses where people sleep, separate,
Crossed in a bed
Bought with Turkish instalments.

The Moon and the Manifestoes of modern art
Fight within an empty poem.

My sly neighbour, next door
Had in his life a comrade
Who threw himself off Floor 5:
Everyone has their little life.[515]

[514] See: Venuti, Lawrence. *The Translator's Invisibility*, p. 12: 'British and American book production increased fourfold since the 1950s, but the number of translations remained roughly between 2 and 4 percent of the total—notwithstanding a marked surge during the early 1960s, when the number of translations ranged between 4 and 7 percent of the total. In 1990, British publishers brought out 63,980 books, of which 1625 were translations (2.4 percent), while American publishers brought out 46,743 books, including 1380 translations (2.96 percent).'

[515] Mendes, Murilo. "Noturno Resumido," in: Mendes, Murilo. *O visionario: poemas (1930/33)* (Brazil: Olympio, 1941), p. 32.

Which altogether suggests that this issue extends beyond Mendes alone. The translator Leonard Downes once commiserated that most Brazilian poetry 'is as unknown outside its country of origin' as 'an obscure African dialect transmitted orally.'[516] Downes wrote these words in 1954. Has the situation changed since then? Sadly, when praising Brazilian sociologist Cândido's literary criticism, Damrosch makes a similar claim, suggesting Cândido's lack of foreign reception means 'he might as well have been writing in Tamil.'[517]

As Ventui has elaborated at length, the market for translation and circulation is still overwhelmingly unequal. Economic, cultural and geopolitical 'hierarchies create an imbalance in translation patterns,' whereby major languages 'tend to be the most translated,' and thus 'tend to translate more frequently among themselves, consolidating their prestige and resources while neglecting languages that possess different degrees of minority.'[518] Sadly, the lack of English translations of Mendes' work only reconfirms this long-uneven dynamic, though the Brazilian critic Cândido sees this as a situation of exceptional paradox. Though he does not discuss translation explicitly, the breadth of the sociologist's proposition addresses the issue of illiteracy, development, and unequal distribution between Brazil and the European continent with devastating rigor:

> the possibilities of communication for Latin American writer are greater, compared to the rest of the Third World […] Nevertheless, we can imagine that the Latin American writer is condemned always to be what he has been: a producer of cultural goods for minorities […] simply the few groups disposed to read.[519]

[516] Downes, Leonard. *An Introduction to Modern Brazilian Poetry* (São Paulo: Clube de Poesia do Brasil, 1954), p. 9.
[517] *Comparing the Literatures*, p. 148.
[518] Venuti, Lawrence. *Theses On Translation: An Organon for the Current Moment* (Flugschriften: online, 2019), p. 17. Available via: https://flugschriften.com/2019/09/15/thesis-on-translation/.
[519] "Literature and Underdevelopment," in: Becker, Howard S., and Antonio Candido. *Antonio Candido: On Literature and Society*. Princeton University Press, 2014. pp. 119-141; p. 123.

Following Pascale Casanova, the Brazilian critic Roberto Schwarz insists literature that reaches the metropolitan cultural centres tend to avoid peripheral texts from the 'influx of historical connotations, or in other words, the energies of the context.'[520] This was noted as early as 1978 by Itmar Even-Zohar. Meditating upon the uneven dynamics between established national literatures and 'peripheral' literary traditions, he describes how

> A highly interesting paradox manifests itself here: translation […] becomes a means to preserve traditional taste. This discrepancy between the original central literature and the translated literature may have evolved in a variety of ways, for instance, when translated literature […] soon lost contact with the original home literature which went on changing, and thereby became a factor of preservation of un-changed repertoire.[521]

Considered in respect to Mendes and his contemporaries specifically, this assessment is relevant insofar as it can be said to describe how Brazil's modernist artists pursued new syntagmatic strategies for what they considered an equally complex and promising modern Brazil. It was, in this sense, a great process of unlearning. In this latter sense, of course, is not to say Mendes's work is out of place among his European Modernist and surrealist contemporaries.[522] Yet the singularity of his poetics is nowhere better demonstrated than in Mendes's *Mapa*.

---

[520] Schwarz, Roberto. "Competing Readings." *New Left Review* 48 (2007): 85.

[521] Even-Zohar, Itamar. "Polysystem theory." *Poetics today* 1.1/2 (1979): pp. 287-310. p.

[522] A new generation of Latin American scholars claim it is the colonial context that most visibly differentiates modernists like Mendes from his counterparts. On this point one can show, as Pouzet-Duzer does, that Paris was ahead of Rio in relation to *Modernismo*'s foremost trope. On March 1st, 1902, Alfred Jarry published '*Anthropophagie*' in *La Revue Blanche*, criticising the colonial character of anthropology; in 1909, Remy de Gourmont's '*Apologie du Cannibalisme*' appeared; while on the third Dada evening, at the Théâtre de l'Œuvre on March 27th, 1920, André Breton read the '*Manifeste cannibale dada*' aloud to his group. These parallels miss a crucial point. The French surrealists fought aggressively against what was a comparatively mild society, but for the surrealists of Latin America these social and political impediments were anything but imaginary. See: Pouzet-Duzer, Virginie. "Dada, Surrealism, Antropofagia: The Consuming Process of the Avant-gardes." *L'Esprit créateur* 53.3 (2013): 79-90.

II.III.III: *Mapa* (1930)

The American poet Emily Bishop arrives in São Paulo in 1951 through an American fellowship. Expecting to stay for two weeks, she ends up living in Brazil intermittently for almost two decades,[523] eventually editing and publishing an anthology of twentieth century Brazilian poetry in 1972.[524] As such, the poem under analysis here is one of only two poems that *has* received English translation. It is through W. S. Merwin's translation that I discovered Mendes myself, and it is this translation that the following analysis refers to.

Map (1930)

They glued me into time, they dressed me up
in a live soul and a body in pieces. I am
bounded on the north by the senses, by fear on the south,
on the east by St. Paul the apostle, by my education on the
    west.
There I am in a nebula, revolving; I am fluid;
later I am aware of the earth, I walk like the others
they nail me to a cross, all in one life.
High school. I am in a rage, they call me by a number, I
    loathe the hierarchy.
They put a sign on me that says *Man*, I laugh as I go, I walk,
    I lurch.
I dance. I laugh and cry, I'm here, there, disjointed,
Liking everybody, liking nobody, fighting with the spirits of

[523] See: Monteiro, George. *Elizabeth Bishop in Brazil and after: a poetic career transformed* (North Carolina: McFarland, 2012); Machova, Mariana. *Elizabeth Bishop and Translation* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).
[524] Bishop, Elizabeth. (ed.) *An anthology of twentieth-century Brazilian poetry* (United Kingdom: Wesleyan University Press, 1972).

the air.
Somebody from the earth is signalling to me, I don't know any
longer what's good
Or what's evil.
My head went flying over the bay, I am hanging in the ether,
in terror,
stupefied with lives, smells, motions, thoughts,
refusing to believe in any technique.
I am like my forebears, I balance on Spanish arenas,
that's why I sometimes go out in the street fighting with
legendary characters,
then later I'm with my nutty uncles, guffawing,
on the inland plantation, looking at the sunflowers in the
garden.
I'm on the other side of the world a hundred years from now,
inciting the populace to revolt.
I am desperate at not being able to be present at all the events
of life.
Where can I hide my fear? The world dances in my head.
It's a samba.

Triangles, stars, women walking,
omens blooming in the air, different weights and motions
attract my attention,
The world is about to change its face,

death will reveal the true meaning of things.

I shall walk in the air,
I shall be in all the births and all the dyings.
I shall nestle in the hollows of the bride's body,
in the hearts of ailing artists, of revolutionaries…
Everything will become transparent:
volcanoes of hatred, explosions of love, other faces will appear
on earth,
the wind that comes from eternity will suspend its steps,
I shall dance by the flashes of lightning, I shall kiss seven
women,
I shall shake in the voodoo rites of the sea, embrace souls
in the air,
Insinuate myself into the other recesses of the world.

Souls in despair, I love you. Souls not content, and burning.
I loathe those who hoodwink themselves,
who play hide-and-seek with life, "practical" men…
long live St. Francis, and a selection of suicides and suicidal
lovers,
and the soldiers who lost the battle, and the mothers who are
really mothers,
the women who are really women, the madmen who are
really madmen,

Long live the transfigured, who were either perfect or fasted

long…

long live me, who brings into the world the state of

transcendental confusion.

I am the prey of the man I was twenty years ago,

of the few loves I had,

Life of burning plains, of deserts quaking under the fingers of

love,

it is all in the rhythm of the poet's brain. I subscribe to no

theory

I am in the air,

in the souls of criminals, of the despairing lovers,

in my modest room on Botafogo Beach,

in the thoughts of men who move the world,

neither sad nor light-hearted, a walking two-eyed flame,

forever changing.[525]

[525] Bishop, Elizabeth. (ed.) *An Anthology of 20th Century Brazilian Poetry* (New England: Wesleyan University Press, 1972), pp. 48-54.

Me colaram no tempo, me puseram

uma alma viva e um corpo desconjuntado.

('They glued me into time, they dressed me up

In a live soul and a body of pieces.')

If Modernism is often distinguished by its ability to inherit and occupy a tradition while revealing that same tradition's inconsistencies, then *Mapa* embodies that very contradiction. Biography, conversation and hallucination mingle chaotically. From its first sentence, Mendes's poem signals an active resistance to the constraints of linearity, '*colaram*' into time against his will. The '*corpo*' of the poem is then dismembered, stretched across geographical areas, transcending space as much as time:

Estou

limitado ao norte pelos sentidos, ao sul pelo mêdo,

a leste pelo Apóstolo São Paulo, à oeste pela minha educação.

('I am Bounded on the north by the senses, by fear on the south

On the east by St. Paul the apostle, by my education on the west')

We could read the '*educação*' of the West as an ironic acknowledgement of the cultural inheritances of (and uncomfortable hierarchical relations with) Western European culture. Moreover, it further disembodies the speaker and extends this voice beyond the corporeal: '*estou aqui*, *estou ali*, *desarticulado*'. However, while Mandel'shtam's poem *The Twilight of Freedom* (1918) in Section I reflected a desperate need to regulate the chaos of the present, Mendes mobilises free verse to travel through various scenarios at random. While there is no extant evidence that Mendes had the Russian revolution in mind when writing this poem, translator Merwin takes the unexpected liberty of investing '*levantando*' ('raising') with revolutionary connotations. This intervention may be designed to suggest Mendes is speaking to, or on behalf, of the events that led it to occur:

Estou no outro lado do mundo, daqui a cem anos, levantando populações […]

me aninharei nos recantos do corpo da noiva,

na cabeça dos artistas doentes, dos revolucionários [...]

me insinuarei nos outros cantos do mundo

('I'm on the other side of the world a hundred years from now,

Inciting the populace to revolt […]

I shall nestle in the hollows of the bride's body,

In the heads of ailing artists, of revolutionaries […]

Insinuate myself into the other recesses of the world.')

Never is there a specific reference to national contexts beyond Botafoga Beach, as if to avoid the Eurocentric tendencies of Brazilian literature's earlier iterations. If in agreement with this translation, Mendes shares with Mandel'shtam (who Mervin also translated) the belief that revolution is continuous, ahistorical and circular: '*rodando*, *sou um fluido.*' If *Stimmung* helped convey in Mandel'shtam's poem of Section I the affective atmosphere of revolution, then Mendes' poem is more concerned with its subsequent realities.

Considering the para-textuality of the poem, Mendes's first collection 'celebrates Brazil's fascination with the Soviet Union,' according to Williams, who reads it as a 'prototype for cinematic poetry.'[526] I agree with Williams that Mendes managed to stylistically redeploy the strategies of Soviet editing, while Schnaiderman makes a convincing case for other Russian influences over Mendes's poetics. [527] Irrespective of these claims, my reading thus far has not led to understanding what role *Pravda* should play in our reading of this poem. It is in the following pages that I lay out my conception of this Russian Untranslatable.

[526] Williams, Bruce. "I Am the Eye That Penetrates: Cinema and the Nostalgic Gaze of Murilo Mendes's" Poemas"." *Chasqui* 30.2 (2001): pp. 35-45. p. 36; p. 40.
[527] Schnaiderman, Boris. "Bakhtin e a literatura brasileira. Abordando a obra de Murilo Mendes." *Literatura e sociedade* 23.26 (2018): 167-172.

II.III.VI: *Pravda* as a literary theory

I wish to identify a particular passage. It does not so much confirm *Pravda* so much as *describe* it, effectively enumerating the contexts referenced through this Section so far. This may seem a strange inversion of theory and text. As Damrosch points out, theory is a dynamic force on literary reinterpretation 'only if the material is allowed to exert real pressure on the theory, modifying it in turn.'[528] With this in mind, I wish to return to Mendes's following few lines:

> They put a sign on me that says *Man*, I laugh as I go, I walk,
> I lurch.
> I dance. I laugh and cry, I'm here, there, disjointed…[529]

From this, Mendes's poem can help outline *Pravda* as a three-stage process, each stage of which I will presently address. As such, I take these lines as representative not only of Mendes's poetic gift but of the post-Soviet and post-colonial experience more broadly. This must necessarily come with a caveat. No work of literature can hope to stand for so vast and complex a series of experiences, of course: my purpose is rather to offer *Pravda* as a three-part explanatory model with which to probe such questions and find common ground between these two previously disparate areas of inquiry. As a three-stage process, the first is epistemic, the second linguistic, and the third is individual. True to its Soviet inheritance, I have posed this as a series of dialectics. In the first instance, the dialectic lies between the institution and the individual.

[528] Damrosch, David. *Comparing the Literatures* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020), p. 143.
[529] "Mapa," p. 51.

1) The institution and the individual

The 'epistemic violence' of Brazil's colonisation, so often referred to in the previous Chapter, takes place, in this first stage, in a form that is primarily epistemic. The individual's ability to navigate the very boundaries between truth and fiction starts to blur as their referents alter at a rate that forbids consistent individual autonomy of comprehension. This first stage is where the 'epistemic violence' occurs, in which the individual's grasp on reality grows complicated. It is also here the Soviet and Brazilian contexts converge. Mendes motions to the dehumanising consequences of accepting definitions from without (and above), a reality both nations shared.

'They put a sign on me that says *Man*'.[530] To my reading, Mendes illustrates here the absurdity of his linguistic situation, one equally resonant with silenced dissent in the early Soviet context as it is with a country named 'the Land of the True Cross' upon arrival.[531] The alienation and estrangement of speaking in a colonially imposed language could not be clearer, but Mendes pointedly ends this passage with a nonconfrontational rejection of this dynamic: 'They put a sign on me that says *Man*, I laugh as I go.'[532] The first stage of *Pravda*, then, is the dialectic between the institution and the individual (and resultingly, over time, the ability of the individual to discern between truth and fiction).

[530] "*Mapa*," p. 51.
[531] "The Discovery of Brazil," p. 42.
[532] "*Mapa*," p. 51.

2) Language and reality

The second stage is one described by Mendes as 'I laugh as I go, I walk/ I lurch/ I dance, I laugh and cry'. Mendes' description of this rejection of the first stage, furthermore, mirrors 'the rapacious stranger' walking through the unfamiliar modernity of Marx and Engel's predictions.[533] The physical world of movement, interaction, laughter and tears is depicted as *a sanctuary from language itself*. Yet Mendes' repetitious singular address makes this list disorientating.

It is here, in the second stage of *Pravda*, that the Soviet/colonial individual attempts to emplace the referents they have been imposed onto the world around them. The measure between their lives and the language used to describe it creates a vacuum that can be disturbing to the individual, but also creatively productive. This stage is often fraught with the determination to retranslate and reformulate meanings from the past (Oswald's redefinition of the Cannibal is exemplary in this sense[534]).

This second stage is also characterised by the realisation that language falls short of capturing this new reality. One can detect this energy to redefine, later in the poem, when Mendes refers to 'the mothers who are really mothers,' 'the women who are really women,' and 'the madmen who are really madmen.'[535] In each persistent tautology the poet expresses his frustration for clarity, as if he is desperate to unmask the physical world from its various (misleading and distortive) linguistic denominations.

[533] Steiner, George. "Marxism and the Literary Critic," in: *Language and Silence* (London: Atheneum, 1967), p. 322.
[534] Andrade, Oswald de & Bary, Leslie. ``Cannibalist Manifesto." *Latin American Literary Review*, Vol. 19, No. 38 (Jul – Dec 1991), pp. 38-47.
[535] "*Mapa*," p. 51.

3) The Internal Dialectic

No matter how many times *eu* (or 'I') is pronounced in Mendes' poem, it cannot prevent the 'internal dialectic' that Schwarz and Starling alluded to. The final words read: 'I'm here, there, disjointed.' All dialectics in the Soviet and postcolonial context lead here: to 'the internal dialectic' within the individual, the inevitable consequence of a radical dissociation from one's language and means of expression. It is evident in the '*Bovarismo*' and 'internal dialectic' that Holanda, Schwarz and Starling recognise in the Brazilian identity.[536] It is equally visible amongst the writers and intellectuals who underwent the 'deformation' of language in the Soviet Union. Here it is worth recalling a quote I deemed overlooked in Sigov's account in *The Dictionary*:

> The meaning of these words has been deformed almost before our very eyes, because now they have become synonyms of "lie" and "truth" … (Dal', *Tolkovyi Solvar*, 2: 529) [537]

Thus, the first stage of *Pravda* instils a confusion between truth and falsity; the second a disturbing but productive confusion between reality and language; while the third and final stage of *Pravda* can be read as: 'I am here, there, disjointed.' Prominent accounts of post-colonial studies do little to contradict this. Homi Bhabha claims that although 'the "unhomely" is a paradigmatic colonial and post-colonial condition,' it can nonetheless be recognised 'in fictions that negotiate the powers of cultural difference in a range of transhistorical sites.'[538] That range of transhistorical sites, as I see it, can be readily extended to the Soviet and post-Soviet context(s). Attention paid to such commonalities can only open further ventures, and I hope my conceptualisation of *Pravda* goes some toward this goal.

---

[536] *Brazil: A Biography*, p. xxiii.
[537] *The Dictionary*, p. 817.
[538] Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 9.

II.III.V: Conclusion

As is worth restating in conclusion, *Pravda* is more an issue for epistemology than translation. The introduction of this word as a three-step conceptual schema applicable to Soviet and post-colonial contexts alike may provide steps toward ending what Chioni Moore describes as 'the great silence' between these areas of research.[539] Incorporating elements common to both contexts, while indelibly shaped by its own socio-political narrative, *Pravda* can thus be a means of re-evaluating these contexts through this sequence in ways that support comparative analysis, cross-cultural and interdisciplinary exchange.

Mendes' singularity is most violently expressed, in this particular work, in his rejection of *homo* (Man) as a linguistic determinant. Mendes thus detaches himself not only from the world but from his own identity. *Mapa* is published in 1930. It is a year that sees another Brazilian revolt. These uprisings culminate in a coup that overthrows Brazil's President, Washington Luís, on October 24th.[540] This paves the way for the Vargas regime that leads to authoritarian rule. Ironically, Vargas had been present at the Modern Art Week of 1922, marking 1930 the accumulative milestone of its various, inconsistent goals.[541] The *Museu de Arte Murilo Mendes* (MMAM) is established in Mendes' hometown, Juiz de Fora, containing over 2,800 books donated from the poet's collection by his widow, Maria de Saudade Cortesão Mendes.[542] Yet it is high time that Mendes' achievements were recognised beyond his place of origin.

[539] Moore, David Chioni. "Is the post-in postcolonial the post-in post-Soviet? Toward a global postcolonial critique." *PMLA/Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 116.1 (2001), p. 111-128; Etkind, Alexander, *Internal Colonization* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011), p. 26.
[540] Young, Jordan. "Military aspects of the 1930 Brazilian revolution." *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 44.2 (1964), pp. 180-196.
[541] Ferrua, Pietro. "Futurism in Brazil." *Neohelicon* 5.2 (1977): pp. 185-194.
[542] Mendes, Moema Rodrigues Brandão. "Memória Cultural do Museu de Arte Murilo Mendes: Acervos sobre papel." *Manuscrítica. Revista de Crítica Genética* 35 (2018): 102-117.

Section Two Chapter Four: *Pravda* & Clarice Lispector

Revisiting the three stages of *Pravda* sketched out in the previous Chapter, I will suggest in what follows that no author in the modern Brazilian context offers a better example of its second stage – whereby language and social reality diverge in personally confusing but creatively productive ways – at greater length and more successfully than Clarice Lispector (1920-1977). As confirmation to this end, her debut novel *Perto do Coração Selvagem* [*Near to the Wild Heart*] will prove illustrative. However, without recourse to history, the model of *Pravda* already sketched risks becoming insufficient, abstract or uninformed. The historical leap from Mendes's debut (1930) to Lispector's first novel (1944) therefore demands some preliminary context, to understand the conditions in which Lispector's early work emerged. Given this, and the prose work under analysis, this Chapter seeks to make a series of conclusions that somewhat extends its length.

Introducing Lispector's life and context, I intend to analyse her novel's various attempts to depict the scene of untranslatability. After this is established, I will move onto her critical reception, concentrating specifically on that of Hélène Cixous. Following Cixous, I will move onto insights gleaned from Translation Studies on Cixous's interpretation of Lispector, leading me to revise and redefine ideas about untranslatable authorship and instrumentalism as Venuti advances it. It becomes altogether clear that few Modernist authors better articulate the scene – and not just the *theme* – of untranslatability, than Clarice Lispector. However, given the chronological leap at play between Mendes and Lispector's work (1930-1944), a brief historical interlude is needed first.

II.VI.I: 1930-1944

When Mendes's first collection was published in 1930, Brazil was in crisis. The decline in demand for coffee, on which the country long depended, was exacerbated by the global depression. This weakened the landed oligarchies of the country but energised the working classes to begin demanding concrete change.[543] The inaction of Washington Luis's government brought about a military revolt in October 1930, leading to the election of Getúlio Vargas.[544] His impact on Brazil cannot be underestimated.

Lessa recounts that President Vargas inspires more popular poetry in the country than almost any other historical or political figure.[545] Vargas 'almost never spoke openly or in private about his political strategies or preferences,'[546] but his fascination with the rise of Fascist Europe is obvious in hindsight. Between 1930 and 1945, Vargas established Brazil's labour laws, trade unions and social benefits, some of which have lasted decades. Almost all of these changes come at the price of political freedom.[547] When Luis Carlos Prestes led a Communist uprising against the Vargas regime in 1935, Vargas and the military were offered a perfect opportunity to establish a 'state of siege' in parliament, revoking all constitutional guarantees.[548] This culminated with the establishment of the *Estado Novo* ('New State').[549]

[543] Kucinski, Bernardo. *Brazil: State and Struggle* (London: Latin American Bureau, 1982), p. 17.
[544] Smith, Peter H., et al. *Modern Latin America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 164.
[545] Lessa, Origenes. *Getulio Vargas na literature de cordel* (Rio: Editoria Documentario, 1973), p. 59.
[546] Conniff, Michael. *Urban Politics in Brazil: The Rise of Populism, 1925-1945* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1981), p. 166.
[547] *Brazil: A Biography*, p. 432.
[548] *Modern Latin America*, p. 166.
[549] Yet did Vargas's brand of authoritarianism ever outgrow Brazil's post-colonial past? A former law lecturer from Coimbra University, elected to the Portuguese parliament in 1921, was António de Oliveira Salazar: 'Salazar's *Estado Novo* constitution of 1933, laid down the guiding doctrine of Portuguese colonial policy during the period in which Salazar maintained his dictatorial grip from his appointment as head of government in June 1932 until his incapacitation in September 1968.' See: Norrie Macqueen, *The Decolonisation of Portuguese Africa* (London: Longman, 1997), p. 9.

The *Estado Novo* declares economic production a function of the state, essentially pursuing Fascistic steps to rescue the country's economy.[550] Vargas never establishes a political party during this authoritarian phase. Instead, political parties are diminished, congress is closed, and state governors become presidential appointees.[551] Upon capturing the Communist leadership the following year, Prestes's Jewish wife, Olga Benario Prestes, is deported to Germany while pregnant, where she is gassed at the age of thirty-three.[552]

It is around this time that Clarice Lispector arrives in Murilo Mendes's home region, in July 1941. At the time, she was one of few female journalists in the country.[553] In a letter written from Belo Horizante, she describes her alienation in the city: 'The women here are almost all dark and short, with straight hair and listless expressions.'[554] The same year, her work also leads her to meet Getúlio Vargas, the Brazilian President himself. Interviewing him on Labour Day, Lispector will, in fact, be back in contact with him before 1942. After her twenty-first birthday on December 10th, 1941, Lispector is finally able to apply for naturalisation. In her letters to Vargas, she introduces herself as

> A twenty-one-year-old Russian who has been in Brazil for twenty-one-years minus a few months. Who does not know a single word of Russian but who thinks, speaks, writes and acts in Portuguese, making of this language her profession, and basing upon it all her plans for the near and distant future.[555]

[550] *Brazil: State and Struggle*, p. 24. Kucinski insists that the economic impact of Vargas's policies 'can be measured in real terms: taking 1914 as a base, the wage of qualified workers in the last years of the Estado Novo, in 1945, had been reduced by 56%.'
[551] *Brazil: State and Struggle*, p. 22.
[552] Moser, Benjamin. *Why This World?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 90.
[553] *Why This World?* p. 94.
[554] *Why This World?* p. 112.
[555] *Why This World?* p. 116.

II.VI.II: Background

A biographer believes there 'was no characteristic Clarice Lispector might have wanted to change more than her place of birth.'[556] She is born in Chechelnik, a small town in Podilia, Ukraine, on December 10th, 1920. For Jewish and Ukrainian families in such places sanitation is minimal, while the child mortality rate is high.[557] Desperate to escape Chechelnik with their three children, the Lispectors spend all their remaining savings in the winter of 1921 in order to arrive at Chisinau (now the capital of Moldova). Unable to find work amidst the millions in desperation, the family goes to the Russian consulate in Bucharest, Romania, after which they travel to Hamburg and then across the Atlantic Ocean to Brazil.

It is amidst these dramatic beginnings that Moser identifies what would become a consistent theme in Lispector's writing: the anxiety of nominal determinism. 'The question of names and naming,' he claims, 'dominates' her literary work, a theme that may have its 'origins in her own childhood, when she was suddenly assigned a different name.'[558] When her parents decided to change her name from Maia (meaning 'life' in Hebrew) to Clarice upon arriving in Brazil, it had a resounding impact on her perspective as evidenced in her telling admission years later:

> I lost myself so many years ago that I hesitate to try and find myself again. I am afraid to begin. Existing so often gives me palpitations. I am so afraid to be myself. I am so dangerous. They gave me a name and alienated me from myself.[559]

---

[556] *Why This World?* p. 8.
[557] *Why This World?* p. 12.
[558] *Why This World?* p. 33.
[559] Lispector, Clarice. *Um sopro de vida: pulsações* (Brazil: Editora Nova Fronteira, 1978), p. 15. Translation mine. In the scope of this Section more broadly, however, it chimes unmistakably with Murilo Mendes's 'Map', specifically the line 'They put a sign on me that says: *Man*.' Both extracts from both authors share the anxiety of linguistic designation, nominative determinism, and the sense of discomfort that results from having language imposed on oneself.

The Lispectors disembark in Maceió, Recife, where their struggles continue. Clarice's mother, ill during childbirth, was now weakened considerably. After three years they move to Recife, where Clarice's Mother died. Clarice was nine years old. As the author reached adolescence, the family moved to Rio de Janeiro in 1935 – coinciding with Vargas's consolidation of power. Distraught when her father also dies, on August 26th, 1940, Lispector nevertheless pursues studies in law at one of Brazil's most prestigious institutions at the time, the *Faculdade Nacional de Direito.* She also becomes one of few female journalists in the country, working for the state-run *Agencia Nacional*. Initially employed as a translator, she gradually moves to editing and reporting. The reality of the role is closer to the restrictive discourses of the Soviet Union than the avant-garde experiments of her future work: 'Their job,' her biographer writes, 'was not, after all, to discover news, but to dress up items from other papers, making it sound official before redistributing it to other outlets.'[560]

Another notable event from this period is her engagement and marriage to Maury Gurgel Valente, only three weeks after her naturalised status in Brazil is approved. Altogether, following her troubled beginnings, following her debut novel she comes to occupy an exceptionally privileged position in Brazilian society. I turn to that debut novel imminently. Written between May and November 1942, the novel's author recalled elusively how she wrote it 'in eight or nine months, while I was studying, working, and getting engaged – but the book has no direct influence from my studies, my engagement, [James] Joyce, or my work.'[561]

[560] *Why This World?* p. 95.
[561] As quoted in: *Why This World?* p. 125.

II:VI:III: *Perto do Coração Selvagem* [*Near to the Wild Heart*] (1944)

After her studies in law, Lispector is intensely aware that Brazilian courts prevent marital divorce.[562] Her biographer appears to interpret her debut novel as a rehearsal for this eventuality. Much of the novel written 'the year preceding her marriage,' Moser insists, 'is a meditation on its impossibility.'[563] Plot in this novel is secondary to description, and its descriptions are intensely subjective. Through this dreamlike *Bildungsroman* in a feminine key, it recounts the life and thoughts of Joana, through childhood, marriage and young adulthood. The novel's heroine struggles with the male figures in her life through various episodes: her father's death; her husband's adultery; her affection for an older male teacher. The novel is littered with statements that converge on the undecidability of language. My foregoing analysis will restrict itself to scenes that treat this theme.

Early in Lispector's narrative, the ability of language to express reality is denied: 'Everything that really mattered was precisely what she found herself unable to confide.'[564] As Lispector traces Joana's childhood, and what her family perceive as a sense of indifference and lack of morality, Joana shrugs: 'One lies and stumbles on the truth.'[565] Realising that her social identity is itself a question of translating one's past into the present, Joana lies prolifically to those she encounters. Truth is a property of speech, and speech is subjective.

> Yes, I know, Joana continued. The distance that separates feelings from words [*A distância que separa os sentimentos das palavras*]. I've already thought about this. And the most curious thing of all is that the moment I try to speak, not only do I fail to express what I am feeling,

[562] This would not change until 1977, coincidentally, the year of Lispector's death. The 66th amendment to Brazil's Constitution, passed in 2010, removed the prior requirement of one year's separation before a divorce could take place.
[563] *Why This World?* p. 119.
[564] Lispector, Clarice & Ponteiro, Giovanni, *Near to the Wild Heart* (London: New Directions, 1990), p. 14.
[565] *Near to the Wild Heart*, p. 18.

> but what I am feeling slowly transforms itself into what I am saying [*o que sinto como o que sinto se transforma lentamente no que eu digo*].[566]

Lispector here touches on the possibility that language is doomed to failure when used to communicate, anticipating the deconstructionist standpoint of later decades. The dilemmas of logocentrism are encapsulated in the realisation that 'what I am feeling slowly transforms into what I am saying,' that action is prescribed more by language than emotion. Yet, when Joana becomes old enough to marry Otávio, a mediocre scholar of common law, this interest in the ability of words to designate abstractions is delivered with more sophistication. Joana comes into his office while he is working, and she pontificates:

> Human – me. Human – people taken separately as individuals. […] If I go in search of them, I demand or give them the equivalent of those familiar words we are always hearing, *fraternity* and *justice*. […] They are the condition and not the fact in itself. Yet they end up by swamping our every thought and emotion because fraternity and justice are unattainable, they are contrary to nature.[567]

Communication is considered here as little more than the exchange of conditional terms. As readers, Lispector never lets us know if these words are spoken aloud or thought internally. Mendes listed 'the women who are really women, the madmen who are really madmen'[568] and I cannot ignore that, located here, there is a similar nominative anxiety to separate inherited signifiers from a living signified. In this sense, Lispector's linguistic scepticism is irreparably connected with Brazil's colonial past and her personal proximity to its institutions, while bearing unmistakable similarity with *Pravda* in its initial origins.

---

[566] *Near to the Wild Heart*, p. 87.
[567] *Near to the Wild Heart*, p. 86.
[568] Bishop, Elizabeth. (ed.) *An Anthology of 20th Century Brazilian Poetry* (New England: Wesleyan University Press, 1972), p. 52.

As the novel's narrative turns to the arc of Joana and Otávio's ill-fated marriage, it becomes a narrative characterised by silences, disagreements, secrets and miscommunication. Yet Lispector's prose allows her to interrogate the instability of social roles in more detail. Following their separation, Otávio meets Lidia, with whom he pursues an affair. Despite the situation that unites them, by the time the two women finally meet each other, both Joana and Lidia are surprised at how little animosity they feel for one another. They are both intensely aware of the emotions their surrounding society expects them to express:

> Lidia and Joana remained silent for one drawn-out moment. They didn't exactly feel themselves united, but without any need of words [*mas sem necessidade de palavras*], as if they had really come together simply to look at each other and then go away. The strangeness of their situation became clearer when the two women felt that they were not fighting. In both there was a gesture of impatience, both still had a duty to perform.[569]

Liminal together, the absence of speech exposes the fragility of the roles that ordinarily determine speech. Language, as depicted here, marks authentic expression secondary to the necessities of social constraint. In such places, Lispector is quietly subversive. Magnifying the moments when socially prescribed forms of language fails to map onto a speaker or society's reality, both women find themselves 'without any need for words,' suspended for a moment from the conventions that determines their exchange through their expected 'duty to perform.'[570] Joana ends their meeting with the simple admission: 'Stay with Otávio. Have your baby, be happy, and leave me alone.'[571] Toward the novel's end, Joana meets her husband once more, and it is, once again, silence that unites them more than language:

[569] *Near to the Wild Heart*, p. 131.
[570] *Near to the Wild Heart*, p. 131.
[571] *Near to the Wild Heart*, p. 134.

> He arrived. He stopped a few paces away from her. They stood there in silence. She with staring eyes, wide and weary. He was shaking, nervous and uncertain. All around the leaves rustled in the breeze, a bird chirped monotonously. The silence dragged on, waiting for them to recover their speech. But neither of them could discover in the other some opening word [*Mas nenhum dos dois descobria no outro o começo de alguma palavra*].[572]

To not discover in one another 'some opening word' is where Lispector's preoccupation with language finds its most poignant articulation in the novel. It ends with the same mixture of youthful hope and uncertainty characteristic of *Bildungsroman* fiction. 'What dominated in her was not courage [...] How could she be a hero and want to vanquish things? She was not woman, she existed, and what was inside here were movements lifting her in constant transition.'[573] Do we interpret her rejection of 'woman' as a rejection of gender essentialism or as a final paean to the untranslatability of a subject ensnared in a language that they experience each moment as illusory, uninhabitable or reductive? Lispector offers no easy solutions. She continues: 'whenever I might speak they will be slow, unthought words, not felt lightly, not full of a desire for humanity, not the past consuming the future!'[574]

> whatever I might say will sound preordained and complete! There will be no space inside me for me to know that time exists, that men and dimensions exist, there will be no space inside me even to notice that I shall be creating instant by instant, no, not instant by instant: forever fused, for then I shall live, only then shall I live more fully than in childhood […][575]

[572] *Near to the Wild Heart*, p. 149.
[573] *Near to the Wild Heart*, p. 185.
[574] *Near to the Wild Heart*, p. 186.
[575] *Near to the Wild Heart*, p. 186.

Whereas the *Bildungsroman* genre predominantly charted the maturity of European men, Lispector represents her heroine's self-discovery as indistinguishable from her *growing out of language*, recognising it as both a means of expression and the source of its frustration in the very moment(s) of that expression's failure. If the second stage of *Pravda* lies in the creatively productive confusion between language and reality (as established above), then Lispector's novel fascinatingly ends with its heroine awoken from this linguistic and epistemic condition.

The novel received immediate attention. Originally printed in a pink cover (common for female writers in Brazil at the time) with an initial press of only 1000 copies, it nevertheless drew enormous praise. Sergio Milliet's diary entry from 1944 exudes the novel's energetic reception in Brazil: 'But this is excellent! What sobriety, what penetration, and at the same time, despite its naked style, what psychological richness!'[576]

Milliet's enthusiasm takes more rigorous shape in the reception of literary critic and sociologist Antônio Cândido, then based in São Paulo. Cândido described the 'shock' of reading a novel that confronts and surpasses the regionalist novels of the 1930s.[577] Its publication marked 'a noble realisation' [*uma nobre realização*] of not just the Brazilian interior, but the interiority of Brazilians themselves. As a novel preoccupied with the problems of language, he concluded how it was 'an impressive attempt to take our limited tongue to unexplored domains, forcing it to adapt to mystery-filled thoughts'.[578] In October 1944, Lispector's novel won the prestigious *Graça Aranha* prize, where one critic claimed '*Near to the Wild Heart* is the greatest novel a woman has ever written in the Portuguese language.'[579]

---

[576] Milliet, Sérgio. *Diário crítico de Sérgiå Milliet (1940-1943)*. Vol. 6. (Brazil: Editora Brasiliense Ltd., 1940), p. 28. See: Fascina, Diego Miiler, and Alice Áurea Penteado Martha. "A recepção crítica de Clarice Lispector: momentos decisivos." *Revista Desenredo* 11.1 (2015). Translation mine.

[577] Referring to novelists like Jorge Icaza and José Lins Rego, he writes: 'While that fiction focused on the poor man as a refractory element in the march of progress […] turning against the dominant classes and seeing in the degradation of man a consequence of economic plunder, not of his individual fate.' See: "Literature and Underdevelopment," p. 138.

[578] Cândido, Antônio. "Perto do coaracáo selvagem," *Folha da manhá*, July 16, 1944. As reprinted in: Cândido, Antônio, *Vários escritos* (Sáo Paulo: Livaria Duas Cidades, 1977), pp. 124-31. Translation mine.

[579] *Near to the Wild Heart*, p. 125.

II.VI.VI: Lispector's Critical Reception & Translations

Lispector's popularity abroad allows her to be widely translated in her lifetime: a rarity for Brazilian authors to this day. Subsequent critics have since emplaced her work in a variety of discourses. Hélène Cixous is almost single-handedly response for Lispector's reception and retranslations, owing to her lectures in the early to mid-1980s, examined in more detail below. In the following decade, Earl E. Fitz argued that Lispector's novels reflect 'the quintessential post-structural dilemma': namely, 'because language can never entirely do what we want it to do' or 'be what we want it to be', 'we are forced to live out our lives thrashing about in a sea of uncertainty, doubt, frustration, miscommunication, and isolation.'[580] Fitz thus casts Lispector as a proto-post-structuralist. More recently, Claire Williams describes how Lispector's linguistic experiments 'at first provoked disapproval,' but have since been 'recognised for bearing a closeness to the jumbled forms of colloquial speech and the meanderings of the human brain.'[581]

The selection exhibited here is only a fraction of this author's critical reception. Lispector has been assimilated into almost every academic 'turn' since the 1970s: feminism, post-structuralism, post-colonialism, Marxism and now World Literature.[582] Her biographer Benjamin Moser, meanwhile, has been keen to reincorporate her into Jewish cultural history. Yet it is the very openness of her language to multiple interpretations on which these divergent interests meet. There is a gap between Lispector's work and its reception, at its widest in Cixous's interpretation. As I will go on to demonstrate, this is nothing other than the tension between instrumentalism, as Venuti defines it, and untranslatability, as Cassin describes it.

---

[580] Fitz, Earl E. *Sexuality and Being in the Post-Structuralist Universe of Clarice Lispector* (Texas: University of Texas Press, 1994), p. 43.
[581] Williams, Claire. *Encounter Between Opposites in the Works of Clarice Lispector* (Bristol: University of Bristol, 2006), pp. 179-80.
[582] See: Schmidt, Rita Terezinha. "Crossing Borders: Clarice Lispector and the Scene of Transnational Feminist Criticism." *Brazilian Literature as World Literature* (2018) pp. 243-263. Aguilar, Gonzalo. "Clarice Lispector in the Foreign Legion". *Journal of World Literature* 2.1 (2017): pp. 80-91.

II.IV.V: Cixous's 'conceptual discrepancies'

Hélène Cixous, a French-Algerian author, critic, playwright and poet, famously advanced the concept of *l'écriture féminine* in 1975, which she described as a form of writing that purposefully deviates from masculine norms.[583] It was a concept she discussed prior to finding Lispector's work, which she 'discovered,' four years later, in 1979. Cixous believed she had found in Clarice Lispector the archetypal object of *l'écriture féminine* as she defines it. In a series of lectures at the Université de Paris VIII between 1980 and 1986, Cixous reflects on reading Lispector's debut novel. 'Clarice's text comes from within. It is written from an unformulated hypothesis that writing is something living.'[584]

In her Paris lectures, Cixous recognises the vitality of language in Lispector's work while acknowledging the frailty with which it is often characterised: 'Clarice works on language itself,' and more specifically 'on the paradox that makes it so that things without body and reality are found and said more easily because they are nothing but words.'[585] Cixous continues that the object to which we try to correspond with language, 'this "thing" is written everywhere in [Lispector's] texts. To write it is almost an impossibility. There is always something left of a self.'[586] Indeed, Cixous's reading of Lispector is personal, poetic, inspiring and impassioned. Arrojo understands Cixous's 'pursuit of a feminine style' as contingent upon 'attitudes and ways of relating to the other which could give up the pursuit of power and mastery' – which Cixous argues is responsible for patriarchy, colonialism and coercive oppression.[587] Feminine writing, according to Cixous, would allow alterity to remain as such.

---

[583] Cixous, Hélène & Cohen, Keith & Paula. "The Laugh of the Medusa." *Signs*, vol. 1, no. 4, 1976, pp. 875–893.
[584] Cixous, Hélène & Andermatt Conley, Verena. *Readings: The Poetics of Blanchot, Joyce, Kafka, Leist, Lispector, and Tsvetayeva* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), p. 1.
[585] Cixous, Hélène & Andermatt Conley, Verena. *Reading with Clarice Lispector* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), p. 12.
[586] *Reading with Clarice Lispector,* p. 15.
[587] Arrojo, Rosemary, 'Interpretation as possessive love: Hélène Cixous, Clarice Lispector and the ambivalence of fidelity,' in: Bassnett, Susan et al. (eds.) *Postcolonial Translation: Theory and Practice* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2012), pp. 141-161; p. 145.

Problems with Cixous's account emerge when she claims that Lispector's omission of the singular pronoun is a matter of creative feminine agency. Actually, this is a norm of spoken Portuguese.[588] This distance is never acknowledged in Cixous's lectures; but becomes instead repressed until it hardens into a curious, inexplicable distrust of translation itself. Cixous rejects translation on grounds that remain obscure, claiming 'we no longer listen to what things still want to tell us, we simply translate and translate, everything is translation and reduction.'[589] Elsewhere, Cixous claims that since her approach implies 'the blurring of the limits between author and interpreter,' as such, 'translation is first of all adamantly avoided.'[590] The collusion here of translation and reduction deserves further inquiry, because it is here that the structural weakness of Cixous's critique can be exposed.

In her preface to Cixous's Paris lectures, translator Verena Andermatt Conley makes the awkward point that Cixous's reading of Lispector is entirely and unequivocally dependent upon translation. 'Lispector's voice transforms Cixous', Conley writes, 'by way of Brazil, in bilingual editions or French translations.'[591] As a result, Conley is forced to admit that 'conceptual discrepancies' occasionally arise: 'A comparison of French and English translations of Lispector for this volume also reveals numerous conceptual discrepancies, often inflecting interpretation and thus further complicating the translator's task.'[592] It is precisely the nature of that task that remains in question, and where Lawrence Venuti's own thoughts on translation find relevance.

---

[588] See: *Reading with Clarice Lispector,* p. 69.
[589] Cixous, Hélène. 'L'approche de Clarice Lispector: Se Laisser ire Clarice Lispector. A Paixao segundo C. L', in *Poétique: revue de théorie er d'analyse littéraires*, Vol. 40, 1979, pp. 408-19, p. 412. Reprinted in *Entre l'écriture*, Paris, des fenmes, 1986, and translated by Deborah Jenson as 'Clarice Lispector: the Approach', in *'Coming to Writing' and Other Essays*, (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1991), pp. 59-77. Cixous's first reading of Lispector in English, 'Reading Clarice Lispector's Sunday before going to sleep', trans. Betsy Wing, appeared in a special issue of *Boundary 2* on Cixous, edited by Verena Anderniart Conley, Vol. 12, 1984, pp. 41-48.
[590] *Readings: The Poetics of Blanchot, Joyce, Kafka, Leist, Lispector, and Tsvetayeva*, p. 128.
[591] *Reading with Clarice Lispector,* v. iii.
[592] *Reading with Clarice Lispector,* v. iii.

II.IV.VI: Colonial relations revived

Regardless of Conley's understatement, it takes years for this oversight to be addressed. With the advancement of Translation Studies in the years since Cixous's lectures, Rosemary Arrojo, Anna Klobucka and Marta Peixoto do not view her interpretations of the Brazilian author charitably.[593] Arrojo complains that what Cixous calls 'extreme fidelity' to Lispector's texts, instead 'ends up serving and celebrating its own interests and goals.'[594] In this light, Cixous is repeating the same epistemic violence she claimed to remedy with her *l'écriture féminine*. As Arrojo asks, 'is it possible for a self-professed pacifist, protective reading not to be also an interfering translation?'[595] Klobucka takes up this line of argument, confirming Cixous's approach to Lispector as 'an aggressively 'masculine' approach to difference':[596]

> Cixous's alleged 'extreme fidelity' to Lispector's otherness cannot stand even the most superficial exam. This peculiar brand of 'fidelity' turns out to be a true intervention, a rewriting, in which what belongs to the author and to the reader is literally shaded by omissions and misquotations, and in which Lispector's Portuguese is often disregarded or taken to be a perfect translation of French.[597]

Klobucka draws attention here to the linguistic deficit in Cixous's interpretations. She goes on to insist that Cixous disregards 'everything' in Lispector's texts that 'does not comply with the principles of feminine writing.'[598]

---

[593] Arrojo, Rosemary, 'Interpretation as possessive love: Hélène Cixous, Clarice Lispector and the ambivalence of fidelity,' pp. 141-161; Klobucka, Anna, "Hélène Cixous and the Hour of Clarice Lispector." *SubStance*, vol. 23, no. 1, 1994, pp. 41–62; Martin, Susan. "A Paixão Segundo Peixoto: Uma Leitura Da Violência Em Clarice Lispector." *Revista De Crítica Literaria Latino americana*, vol. 21, no. 42, 1995, pp. 241–246; Peixoto, Marta, "The Nurturing Text in Hélène Cixous and Clarice Lispector." In: *Passionate Fictions: Gender, Narrative, and Violence in Clarice Lispector* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), pp. 39–59.
[594] Arrojo, Rosemary, p. 144.
[595] 'Arrojo, Rosemary, p. 145.
[596] Arrojo, Rosemary, p. 160.
[597] Arrojo, Rosemary, p. 151.
[598] Arrojo, Rosemary, p. 153.

Through such approaches, Klobucka argues that Cixous's contact with Lispector - in its attempts to 'evade the violence of translation and the mediation of patriarchal language' - instead 'turns out to be just another instance of the same relationship […] that she so vehemently rejects.'[599] Shiach concurs with this, provocatively insisting that Cixous's is 'not talking about the real Clarice Lispector, a Brazilian left-wing modernist writer who died in 1977, but rather exploring the power of 'Lispector' as a symbol. Through this conceit, Cixous poses 'women' as a problem, and 'feminine writing' as a solution.[600]

My reason for focusing on Cixous aside from Lispector's other critics, should by now be clear. The colonial undertones of these critiques bear an unmistakable resemblance with the modern Russian and Brazilian contexts already covered in this Section. When 'extreme fidelity' names a form of textual violence, Venuti's remarks on instrumentalism comes to mind (in particular, the common phrases by which it conceals its own operations). If the search for feminine writing eludes translation itself, it is easy to recall the terminological confusion of early Soviet society already covered. Yet I suggest Cixous's reception also illuminates another parallel, namely, that of Denis's *Resumé*. Again, we observe the rewriting of Brazilian culture with Parisian ink:

> We might say that Cixous's 'discovery' of Lispector's work, which coincidentally took place on an anniversary of Columbus's 'discovery' of the new continent, also repeats the basic strategies and reasoning of the European conquest of America. […] a 'discovery' that is also an invasion […] a 'discovery' which is also a transformation and, of course, a renaming that is done primarily in the interest of those who are in a position to pursue such an ambitious enterprise.[601]

[599] Arrojo, Rosemary, p. 155.
[600] Shiach, Morag. *Hélène Cixous, A Politics of Writing* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 161.
[601] Arrojo, Rosemary, p. 156.

Cixous's reading of Lispector has undeniably improved the Brazilian author's global readership. Yet while Cixous's translator Conley claims 'Lispector's voice transforms Cixous'[602] subsequent scholars of translation have passionately argued the obverse. Critics from the field of Translation Studies are all at pains to show that Cixous's interpretation of Lispector is essentially hypocritical, committing the same 'epistemic violence' Denis and his European contemporaries were accused of earlier in Section II.

The Brazilian feminist scholar Elena Carrera revisited all this at the turn of the new millennium. This delay, along with the article's subdued tone, is in some ways understandable: the journey from Brazilian novel to World Literature was not always smooth.[603] Carrera brings into focus the paradox of peripheral authorship in a global context: is it better to be misinterpreted than not read at all? Echoing Shiach, Carrera despairs how 'the dense metaphorical web' in which Cixous tries to capture the Brazilian author 'leaves the reader with little more than a series of names with which to evoke her.'[604] In contrast with the accounts above, Carrera is sensitive to the conditions in which these 'readings' take place. Referring to the Paris lectures as nothing more than a series of 'public confessions and meditations,' Carrera concludes that it is 'difficult is to read Cixous's texts *outside* the sympathetic context of her seminars and accept the didacticism with which they are loaded.' But the French author coerces those literary texts into 'an arena in which Cixous finds herself facing questions of how to live.'[605] It is worth seeing presently how this contrast between the openness of Lispector's writing and attempts to incorporate her into subsequent agendas reflect a deeper tension between instrumentalism and untranslatability, as articulated by their respective proponents, Lawrence Venuti and Barbara Cassin.

---

[602] *Reading with Clarice Lispector,* p. v. iii.
[603] Guillén, Claudio. "Weltliterature." *World Literature: A Reader* (2013), 142-49.
[604] Carrera, Elena. "The reception of Clarice Lispector via Hélène Cixous: reading from the whale's belly." *Brazilian Feminisms* (1999), 85-100; pp. 92-93.
[605] Carrera, Elena. p. 96; 97. Emphasis mine.

II.IV.VII: Instrumentalism & Untranslatability

Reassessing the foundational polemics at the start of this study, Cixous's reading of Lispector offers a concise object of analysis for both Cassin and Venuti's conclusions on the topic. To briefly revisit the distinction Venuti promoted in respect to translation, the hermeneutic and instrumentalist approaches to translation differ in purpose and mode of engagement. Hermeneutic translation, for Venuti, 'conceives of translation as an interpretive act that inevitably varies source-text form, meaning and effect according to intelligibilities and interests in the receiving culture.'[606] Instrumentalism, by contrast, 'conceives of translation as the reproduction or transfer of an invariant that is contained in or caused by the source-text, an invariant form, meaning or effect.'[607]

Where do Cixous and Lispector fit within this schema? It cannot be doubted that Cixous's lectures are an interpretative act. Notwithstanding her lack of Portuguese, her conclusions (as confirmed by Arrojo, Klubucka and Shiach) are decisively instrumentalist. Her assimilation of a foreign author into a predetermined theory of literature (while effacing all elements of the source-text which do not comply with that theory) appears to attest to all of Venuti's critiques of Apter and Cassin - most pertinently, that of turning 'the past into a mirror of the analyst's own obsessions.'[608] For while Emily Apter's Introduction to *The Dictionary* concedes 'it is by no means self-evident what "untranslatability" means,'[609] Cassin's meditations on this may prove more insightful for present purposes: 'To speak of *untranslatables* in no way implies that the terms in question, or the expressions, the syntactical or grammatical turns, are not and cannot be translated: the untranslatable is rather what one keeps on (not) translating.'[610]

---

[606] *Contra Instrumentalism*, p. 1.
[607] *Contra Instrumentalism*, p. 1.
[608] *Contra Instrumentalism*, p. 59.
[609] Apter, Emily. "Introduction," in: (eds.) Apter et al, *The Dictionary* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2014), p. x.
[610] *The Dictionary*, p. xvii.

Which implies that the Untranslatable is often granted its status through the plurality of meanings it extends. If this is so, then perhaps Lispector allows us the opportunity to understand untranslatability anew. In this case, it can be gestured to and defined not as a form of language that is untranslatable practically speaking; but as a text that can be considered untranslatable by virtue of its endless, varied and multiple translations. In light of Cassin's description, we can designate a text that invites varied interpretations as an object of untranslatability *ad infinitum*.

The source-text invariant on which instrumentalism is premised 'does not exist,' Venuti meanwhile attests: 'If any text can support potentially infinite interpretations, then any text can be translated in potentially infinite ways.'[611] Meanwhile, though Everett applauds Apter's originality, 'it is less clear how individual literary translations might enact the kind of untranslatability she advocates.'[612] In response to this complaint, I would proffer Lispector as the untranslatable author exemplar, if we subscribe to Cassin's definitions and revise our definition of untranslatability to accommodate a text of multiple, contradictory interpretations.

[611] Venuti, Lawrence. *Theses on Translation: An Organon for the Current Moment* (New York: Flugschriften, 2019), p. 8.
[612] Everett, Simon. "Remembered Hills: Tonal Memory in English Translations of Chinese Regulated Verse," in: Large, Duncan et al (eds.) *Untranslatability: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2019), p. 114-127.

II.IV.VIII: Conclusion

Over the course of this Section I explained why the Russian term *Pravda* could only be called untranslatable with admission to its recent political history. That political history cannot be footnoted or summarised easily. Neither is the word's political history visible to foreign readers when the word *Pravda* is translated into words like 'truth' in English or *vèrité* in French. In this sense, my account of the word (and my argument for its potentially untranslatable status) diverges from Sigov's entry in *The Dictionary*. Once establishing its socio-political history, I argued that not only can the word *Pravda* be applied to literary works beyond the Russian-speaking world, but that it could, more specifically, solve the *impasse* between post-Soviet and post-colonial studies. This could be achieved, as I said, by using *Pravda* to articulate the paradoxes common to either society: the confusion of truth and falsehood, language and object, or the internal dialectic within the individual writing in these conditions. There is no space within this Section to attempt the third, final iteration of *Pravda* as I have theorised it. However, my analyses of Mendes and Lispector has attempted some preliminary advancement toward using *Pravda* for this purpose.

Mendes's poetry became a source of understanding for the phenomena to which I determined it, while Lispector's debut novel proved a satisfiable case study for interrogating *Pravda*'s second stage, namely, the distinction between language and reality. In the final analysis, Lispector's untranslatability is a paradox. Her work is translated with apparent difficulty yet continues to be met with resounding praise. Her singularity is arguably found in the multivocality of her words to multiple meanings, thereby stimulating the process of relativism and comparison *in extensio*. This reflexive distrust of words likely began with her own renaming upon her arrival in Latin America, yet in the context of Brazilian modernity it grew to encompass the broader disjunction between language and reality that the three stages of *Pravda* were established to examine.

Section Three Chapter One: *Saudade*

Stimmung was philosophical and *Pravda* political, but the Portuguese word *saudade* lastly draws this study toward the category of Emotional Untranslatability. Put differently, while *Stimmung* was conceived in fairly rarefied philosophical circles and *Pravda* became a political injunction in their discrete and respective national contexts, *saudade* stretches the word's history beyond a single origin, presenting a new range of issues along the way.

My first task here is explaining what this word means, and where it comes from. As before, I reference the *The Dictionary of Untranslatables*, departing from Fernando Santoro's entry (not on conceptual grounds but so as to be more inclusive of the Brazilian context). Often translated into English as 'longing', 'melancholy' or 'yearning,' *saudade* is nonetheless considered a 'a declaration of cultural integrity.'[613] The confusing part is that *saudade* is culturally protected in two places simultaneously. I consequently go on to consider the curious situation of how a word can be considered Untranslatable dually (in this case, Portugal and Brazil), leading to what I call a form of Untranslatable co-ownership. After this, Emily Apter and Lawrence Venuti's accounts diverge in respect to this word: *saudade* appears to find these thinkers at their most perceptive. However, as I go on to explain, it must be stressed that neither thinker conceives of or approaches *saudade* with notions of ownership in mind. This is the very quality I have correspondingly chosen to foreground in this account.

Necessary upon this incoming exposition is the subsequent task, carried out over the course of Section III, of using *saudade* to reinterpret German exilic post-war Modernist writing. Holocaust poets Mascha Kaléko and Paul Celan reflect the price of such remoteness, enacting in their work the associative discordance their exile (linguistic, national, political) served to determine. Yet, before all that, one must turn to the Portuguese word itself so as to better frame those later assertions and the contexts on which they depend.

---

[613] Giorgi, Kyra. *Emotions, Language and Identity on the Margins of Europe* (London: Palgrave Books, 2014), p.8.

III.I.I: Definition and Meaning

Put simply, to experience *saudade* is to feel the absence of something, or someone, far away in space or time. Literary descriptions of the word are numerous. The poet Roy Campbell calls *saudade* a sense 'of brooding exile,' or 'a homesickness which can even be felt at home,'[614] while novelist Katherine Vaz believes it stands for 'an absence' that constitutes 'the most profound presence in one's life,' a melancholy yearning for a time, place or person.[615] It can be traced back to a host of cognates in the Latin vocabulary: *secessio* (withdrawal, separation), *separatio* (a setting apart), *seductio* (a leading or drawing aside), or *secretus* (that which has been set aside or put away).[616]

A more extended series of definitions are delivered as part of a lecture series in 1978. Having already suffered tremendously under António de Oliveira Salazar's regime back home in Lisbon,[617] the Portuguese surrealist poet Natália Correia (1923-1993) devoted her lecture at Brown University to the temporal ambiguities of *saudade*.

Later translated by the University's leading Brazilianist, George Montiero, Correia devotes her lecture to an emotion she considers of incalculable value to the Portuguese identity. Describing how this emotion feels on a personal level, Correia describes *saudade* as a feeling of sadness, loss and emptiness, but also as a feeling premised on a sense of imprecise temporal disjunction. In her account, the sensation of *saudade* is inseparable from the sense that past and present become indistinguishable, marking her attempt to persuade her listeners as to its lack of equivalence in English. In the lecture text, Correia writes:

---

[614] Campbell, Roy. "The Poetry of Luiz de Camões", *London Magazine* 4 (August 1957), p. 23-33.
[615] Vaz, Katherine. *Saudade: A Novel* (New York: St. Martin Press, 1996), p.44.
[616] *Against World Literature*, p. 150.
[617] Dias, Cristina de Jesus Espiguinha. "Habemus Natália Correia: a unidade espiritual, num mundo em demanda." *Forma Breve* 15 (2018): pp. 199-205.

> I miss something from the past because it was good […] because I miss it, my present is non-existent, since what makes me alive is in the past […] Consequently, I exist in no one single time, existing in all times simultaneously.[618]

Divisions cease, timeframes merge, and thus the definition of *saudade* put forth here is offered as an ahistorical affective state immune from the conditions of history or contingency. She continues:

> *Saudade* expresses a fundamental characteristic of the Portuguese temperament […] The fact is that *saudade* describes a psychological situation in which the divisions of time cease. There is no past, no present, no future, or, better still, these three divisions of time are melted into the absolute moment of a soul exasperated by *saudade.*[619]

On first glance, readers may unknowingly subscribe to Corriea's first proposition above. Namely, that *saudade* is 'a fundamental characteristic of the Portuguese temperament'.[620] If this is so, the case for the word's untranslatability is a discussion quietly closed. Yet readers may struggle to explain why certain emotions are restricted to certain racial groups. In this sleight of hand, Correia reveals the implicit claim for linguistic essentialism that would not have survived a more thorough or rigorous interrogation. The problem here is that the lecture series itself was entitled 'Muses of Portugal and Brazil.' Correia therefore carefully avoids a tautology on which her claims for the Portuguese temperament fall short. She leaves unanswered how this word could long be considered the property of two nations at once, splitting its claims of linguistic and cultural essentialism across the Atlantic Ocean. Before pushing that inquiry further, it is best to turn to the word's storied history first.

---

[618] Monteiro, George. "Natalia Correia on Portuguese Surrealism: A Lecture in the United States" *Portuguese Studies*, Vol 31, No. 1 (2015), p. 126.
[619] "Natalia Correia on Portuguese Surrealism: A Lecture in the United States," p. 126.
[620] "Natalia Correia on Portuguese Surrealism: A Lecture in the United States," p. 126.

III.I.II: History

Saudade is a word borne amidst displacement. Its movement from oral phrase to textual concept is traced back to the 'philosopher-king' D. Duarte I (1391-1438).[621] Largely responsible for Portugal's maritime expansion, Duarte penned a 'taxonomy of feelings related to loss,' including 'the feelings of *saudade*.'[622] Published as *O Leal Conselheiro* (1438), *saudade* is therein rationalised by D. Duarte I as follows:

> It seems, because [*saudade*] itself is a feeling that the heart takes because it is far from the presence of someone or people that you love very much, or because you expect a next separation. And that gives me the times and places in which, as a delight, I enjoyed myself. I say affection and delight, because they are feelings that belong to the heart, where what matters is born longing [*saudade*], rather than reason or judgment.[623]

This is *saudade*'s earliest known conceptualisation, but I draw on it here also to see that before becoming a national myth or the subject of retrospective metaphor, *saudade* began life as a word that referred to the consequence of a global mobility that far outstripped those of other maritime countries. It led a country of barely more than a million people to explore half the world's surface over the course of a century.[624] That *saudade* sought to articulate or express initial responses to this global mobility does not appear insignificant.

In his exemplary account of the word in *The Dictionary*, Fernando Santoro follows the word's significance in Portuguese history and national myth. In the battle of Alcácer Quibir, Morocco in 1578, The disappearance of King Sebastian (1554-1578) 'produced a collective

[621] Dias, Cláudia, Jarek, Márcio & Debona, Vilmar, "Brief observations on the notion of *saudade*: cultural symbol and paradox," *Hermes Journal of Communication* Vol. 8 (2016), pp. 7-18.
[622] "Brief observations on the notion of saudade: cultural symbol and paradox," p. 9.
[623] Duarte, Dom. *O Leal Conselheiro* (Sydney, Wentworth Press, 2019), pp. 151-6. Translation mine.
[624] Prestage, Edgar. *The Portuguese Pioneers* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1933/1966), 2nd edition. p. ix.

feeling of mourning and hope that has characterized the Portuguese soul ever since.'[625] These abbreviated origins illuminate the word's importance in its own national context. Santoro goes on to clarify the word's function in myth as well as history: 'Ulysses is represented as the mythical founder of Lisbon,' Santoro continues, 'he is also supposed to be the mythical ancestor of the *saudade* felt by the navigators wandering the globe and their wives who waited for them.'[626] In an attempt to extend the reader's context on this point, I suggest that Svetlana Boym's (1959-2015) findings may help situate the broader maritime context in which the importance of *saudade* should be understood.

Various emergent nationalisms in the Romantic era claimed to have untranslatable words that alluded to the homesickness their respective nations inspired from a distance.[627] Except, paradoxically, 'one is struck by the fact that all these untranslatable words are in fact synonyms; and all share the desire for untranslatability, the longing for uniqueness.'[628] This leads *The Future of Nostalgia* (2001) to the fascinating conclusion that idiomatic words like *saudade* denote the integral conditions of progress more generally still: going so far as to claim that 'the very sentiment itself, the mourning of displacement and temporal irreversibility, is at the very core of the modern condition.'[629]

Seen from this perspective, *saudade* may come to nominate a broader category than it has until now. One need not subscribe to Romantic notions of statehood and homeland to recognise the ongoing relevance of these sentiments. It is at this point that the Brazilian context comes into view, reluctantly and chaotically, opening the history of *saudade* up to the scene of the King of Portugal's exile from his own Empire in 1807.

---

[625] *The Dictionary*, p. 930. See: Kottman, Karl A., *António Vieira's Preliminary Book to the History of the Future: Original Reading* (United Kingdom, Lulu Publishing Services, 2018).
[626] *The Dictionary*, p. 930.
[627] See: Teletin, Andreea, and Veronica Manole. "Expressing cultural Identity through *saudade* and dor: A Portuguese-Romanian comparative study." *Identity, Concepts, History, and Present Realities (A European View)* (2015): pp. 155-171.
[628] Boym, Svetlana. *The Future of Nostalgia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 13.
[629] *The Future of Nostalgia,* p. 10; p. xvi.

Torn between his long-standing allegiance to the British Empire and the Continental System established by Napoleon Bonaparte (1873-1808) to demand its blockade, King Dom Joao VI (1768-1826) fled Lisbon in 1807 as French troops poured into the Portuguese capital.[630] Dom Joao sailed across the Atlantic with a few hundred servants, landed in Rio and swiftly announced Brazil the new seat of his Empire. Largely bewildered at this spectacle,[631] after years of mounting Brazilian public dissatisfaction, in his final decree on April 6th 1821 the King wrote: 'I leave with such strong feelings of *saudade*, that I return to Portugal.'[632] From this it is understood that while *saudade* refers to absence, this does not necessitate the absence of *home*. As I will go on to explore, it may more accurately apply to the absence of ownership.

My only critique of Santoro's eloquent entry is the absence of *Saudosismo,* a short-lived literary and spiritual movement almost a century later, in 1900s Portugal. The lively but short-lived movement included Leonardo Coimbra (1883-1936), António Sérgio (1883-1969) and most famously Fernando Pessoa (1888-1935). The energy with which this word was re-invested to structure a new aesthetics should certainly be included in its narrative as a precedent attempt toward its possibilities. As can be read from the following passage, Teixeira de Pascoaes's (1887-1952) absence in *The Dictionary* should not be confused with a lack of enthusiasm for the word itself. He describes *saudade* in the following effusions:

> It is our divine word – I never tire of repeating it – containing the dream of our Race, its intimate and transcendent, messianic and redemptive design, and that is why it is untranslatable. Portuguese, it explains our great historical events and the soul of our great men, and creates our

[630] Rego, Marcos Lopez, and Hélio Reis Arthur Irigaray. "Administration in the twilight of the kingdom: Saint-Hilaire's records." *Revista de Administração Pública* 55 (2022): 1149-1164.
[631] Schultz, Kirsten. "Royal Authority, Empire and the Critique of Colonialism: Political Discourse in Rio de Janeiro (1808-1821)." *Luso-Brazilian Review*, vol. 37, no. 2, 2000, pp. 7–31.
[632] *Brazil: A Biography*, p. 224.

> dream for the future, a national Aspiration which will unite the Portuguese here and across the sea.[633]

I end my history of the word with this passage to follow the course of its history and conceptualisations chronologically while also ending on a note that confirms my overriding criteria here and throughout. For a single word to contain a people's dreams while also nursing its future betrays precisely the discursive paralysis for which these words were chosen, and whose intervention and interrogation out of this state I intend to continue in Section III. Extending the historical scope of Santoro's entry, I have attempted here to deviate from it only to be more inclusive of its Brazilian inheritance. Yet the sense of protective ownership over this word, despite this underlying paradox, must be confronted at length for its implications to come to light.

[633] Pascoaes, Teixeira de. "A saudade e o saudosismo." *Lisboa: Assírio & Alvim* (1988), p. 108. Translation mine.

III.I.III: Untranslatable Co-Ownership

I now arrive at the issue of *saudade* being cherished, exonerated and above all *owned* in two places at once. Its centrality to Portugal's own national mythologies has not prevented an annual public holiday in its honour in Brazil (every January 30th).[634] Despite an etymology inseparable from its colonial past, the word has become a rallying cry at various Brazilian festivals, whereby 'individual longing is transformed' in Giorgi's exceptional analysis of the word, 'into a collective belonging that relies on past sufferings' to 'transcend individual memories.'[635] If one of the stated intentions of this project was to rescue words from a state of discursive paralysis, then *saudade* provides an exceptionally difficult example.

The phenomenon of a shared protectiveness over a single word implies that a common linguistic inheritance extends linguistic ownership over certain terms. With the previous examples of *Stimmung* and *Pravda*, both were substantially grounded in German and Russian history over the course of their etymologies. Yet here one comes across a more anomalous situation: namely, how can a word be deemed singular in two places at once? How can the *claim for untranslatability* be sustained across two discrete nations? This can only be answered with recourse to the Brazilian conditions of its enunciation.

The Portuguese first made contact with sub-Saharan West Africa in 1443. 'After a few initial expeditions in which they raided coastal communities for slaves, they learned to establish relations with coastal chiefs whose permission and cooperation they traded.'[636] An estimated 4.9 million people were forcibly moved from Africa and taken to Brazil by the Portuguese from 1501 to 1866: the largest recorded number in history.[637] It is in the moment of this displacement that *saudade* reappears in a very different light.

---

[634] "The Making of '*Saudade*'. National Identity and Ethnic Psychology in Portugal" in Dekker et al (eds.) *Roots and Rituals. The Construction of Ethnic Identities* (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 2000), pp. 267- 287; Dias, Márcio & Debona: "Brief Observations on the notion of *saudade*" Hermes Journal of Commmunication 8 (2016), pp. 7-18.
[635] *The Future of Nostalgia*, p. 15.
[636] Newitt, M. D. D, *Portugal in Africa* (New York: Longman, 1981), p. 1.
[637] Lashley, Conrad. *Slavery and Liberation in Hotels, Restaurants and Bars* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2020), p. 59.

Forced into slavery upon arrival, 'great efforts were made' on the part of the Portuguese traders to avoid the 'downcast aspect' on the slave's faces when they were auctioned in city squares. The African arrivals were plied with stimulants like ginger and tobacco in the hope of removing what their traffickers referred to as ''*saudade* sickness.'[638] This context is notably absent in Santoro's account, but it nonetheless attests to the broad and complex impact of displacement on the word's meaning.

Brazilian novelist Moacyr Scliar (1937-2011) described the colonial Portuguese sailors as 'carrying with them to the New World' a nostalgia for what they left behind: Portuguese ships, he writes, 'had *saudade* at the steering wheel.'[639] Osvaldo Orico (1900-1981) came to observe Brazil's separation from Portugal and the development of its own modernity from the perspective of both a poet and diplomat over his lifetime. He argues that *saudade* split into two separate definitions (or came to acquire two discrete meanings) when it journeyed from the shores of Portugal to the Brazilian coast:

> The Portuguese *saudade* is one beyond a sense of "dying for love," it is often a sad feeling and the cause of pain. Its Brazilian counterpart is more joyful, imaginative […] It is a *saudade* which does not cry, it sings; it does not sting, it praises; the *saudade* which does not weaken, it strengthens; a *saudade* that does not hurt, but heals.[640]

These words challenge any hope of a final definition. One way out of this is to recognise what both meanings share. Both definitions denote emotions premised on (and stimulated by) memory. The object of desire to which it applies is one that is either anticipated, absent or lost. Yet Orico's passage confuses the negative status and associations it was previously attributed. This serves as a reminder that *saudade* is a term long characterised by paradox.

---

[638] *Brazil: A Biography*, p. 81.
[639] Scliar, Moacyr. *Saturno nos trópicos: a melancholia europeia chega ao Brasil* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2003), p. 99. Translation mine.
[640] Orico, Osvaldo. *A saudade brasileira* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora S/A Noite, 1948), p. 44. Translation mine.

Brazilian scholar Bittencourt's analysis captures this dimension better when claiming that the term is 'characterised by its contradictions', going on to describe *saudade* as 'a friendly evil, a wellness that makes us sick.'[641] This sickness stems from 'a bittersweet remembrance of extraordinary proportions of what left a mark in our lives - whether it is what we have lived, a loved one who is no longer near us' or someone 'who we long for.'[642] In this case, the lost object of desire to which the subject feels a sense of *saudade* grows obscure. It may be real, it may be imaginary, it may no longer exist.

Similarly, in his Brazilian-Portuguese Dictionary, Antônio Houaiss (1915-1999) defines *saudade* as a 'somewhat melancholy feeling of incompleteness connected by memory,' 'of departure from a place or thing, of absence of certain experiences and pleasure.'[643] Here a Brazilian source confirms a Portuguese definition. Yet this underlying contradiction, the problematic co-ownership of *saudade* across these distinct communities, is left wholly undiscussed in her account. To find out why, it will be vital to see how she and Lawrence Venuti diverge, most intensely, on the topic of this final Untranslatable.

[641] Bittencourt, Renato Nunes. *A saudade, a nostalgia e o inefável* (São Paulo: Escala, 2016), p. 117. Translation mine.
[642] *A saudade, a nostalgia e o inefável,* p. 117.
[643] Houaiss, Antônio. *Gramatica Houaiss da Lingua Portuguesa* (Sao Paolo: Publifoa, 1986), p. 411. As translated in: *Against World Literature*, p. 140.

III.I.IV: Apter and Venuti on *saudade*

Apter and Venuti both discuss *saudade* in their recent publications. Apter casts the Portuguese word as one overdue further conceptualisation, while Venuti's critique in *Contra Instrumentalism* (2019) aims at what he sees as the pitfalls of those assumptions. Firstly, in *Against World Literature* (2013), Apter claims the word's difficulty rises from 'the double function of mythmaking and critical distancing that distinguishes the Untranslatable's abilities.'[644] Apter then positions both *saudade* and *Fado* as 'semantic national monuments; heritage markers of Portuguese's belatedness as a national language, baroque periodicity, intellectual mannerism and splenetic affect.'[645] Unlike Santoro's entry definition of *saudade* in *The Dictionary*, Apter does not spend much time unpacking this assessment of the word's origin or its presence in Portuguese or Brazilian culture (nor its alleged but historically questionable accusation of 'belatedness'), choosing instead to reconceptualise the term via a series of authors, translators and theorists.

The word thus travels from António Lobo Antunes to Fernando de Pessoa, legitimating its analysis through a circularity of corresponding Portuguese texts. In between, *saudade* is applied to Samuel Beckett's translations of Arthur Rimbaud; Lydia Davis's translation of Gustav Flaubert; and is finally related to philosopher Quentin Meillassoux's notion of trans-finitude.[646] In relation to Beckett's translations, Apter insists what others have deemed 'aberrant translation' is instead the fact that 'Beckett was alive to the *saudade*-effect and wanted to communicate its Rimbauldian deregulation of the senses' through 'a kind of over-translation that embraces wild infidelity to the original and pushes the envelope of untranslatability.'[647]

---

[644] *Against World Literature*, p. 138.
[645] *Against World Literature*, p. 140.
[646] Meillassoux, Quentin. *After finitude: An essay on the necessity of contingency*. (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2010).
[647] *Against World Literature*, p. 147.

What Apter then refers to as 'the *saudade*-syndrome' is assumed self-evident in the work of Italian author Antonio Tabucchi: 'when the Portuguese characters speak', they produce 'a slightly seasick style reinforcing *saudade* as a trope of maritime linguistic dislocation.'[648] She ends her Chapter stating that she has 'consciously shifted' the word 'from its local usage as a term connoting human sentiment, idealism and religious transcendence to an ascription of materialist metaphysics.'[649]

According to Venuti, this chapter is 'typical.'[650] He notes that Apter begins by translating *saudade* as 'melancholia, moral ambiguity': 'But since untranslatability for Apter means not the inability to translate but repeated, relentless translation, she gives the English parenthetically and without comment, as if it didn't matter.'[651] Through a range of texts which Venuti lists in order to emphasise their arbitrary sequence, he claims that

> An interpretation that initially seemed local, relating the words to Portuguese history and politics through Lobo Antunes's novels, then expansive by incorporating a wider range of reference turns out to be utterly reductive: Apter removes texts from their traditions, situations, and moments, quotes them in English translation without commenting on those translations, and ends up equating everything to a single concept.[652]

Why exactly does Apter move away so rapidly from the origins of the word in question? For present purposes, my reading of Apter here supports Venuti's criticism, as neither 'the *saudade*-effect,' nor the '*saudade*-syndrome' seem in my reading neither salient nor re-applicable.

[648] *Against World Literature*, p. 149.
[649] *Against World Literature*, p. 155.
[650] *Contra Instrumentalism*, p. 65.
[651] *Contra Instrumentalism*, p. 65.
[652] *Contra Instrumentalism*, p. 66.

Apter seemingly overlooks 'the contingencies of translation'[653] for a word that can readily suit her theoretical purposes. Is there not, in this process, a risk of supplanting national meanings with supranational and contemporary contexts and of turning the past 'into a mirror of the analyst's own intellectual obsessions,' as Venuti earlier forewarned?[654] However, what deserves response in order to advance the present argument is that for all of Venuti's complaints, he does not try to correct Apter's mistake. Neither critic, in the final analysis, is attentive to the *emotional* quality of *saudade* nor its ramifications for concerns over ownership. Based on Apter and Venuti's differing accounts, I suggest that without this acknowledgement the word is irrevocably destined to become a container for other concepts and positions. It is at this point that intervention becomes necessary.

Elsewhere in *Against World Literature*, Apter puts forward a robust thesis, arguing that notions of literary ownership remain dangerously unthought.[655] Translation offers 'a particularly rich focus' for such explorations, she claims, one that 'challenges legalistic norms of ownable intellectual property.'[656] While this is an appealing proposition, my point here is that Apter's subscription to Houaiss's definition side-steps what could have been the more specific inquiry as to how an Untranslatable compels the same sense of ownership in two discrete communities at once. That the word *saudade* exists in a state of Untranslatable co-ownership is an oversight of her account that contradicts its promising observations elsewhere. From my own perspective, I consider this a neglected but sophisticated element of Apter's project, one I hope to incorporate here into my own understanding of Emotional Untranslatability.

[653] *Contra Instrumentalism*, p. 67.
[654] *Contra Instrumentalism*, p. 59.
[655] See: Apter, Emily. "What is Yours, Ours and Mine: On the Limits of Ownership and the Creative Commons." *Angelaki: Journal of Theoretical Humanities* 14.1 (2009): 87-100.
[656] *Against World Literature*, p. 303.

III.I.V: Emotional Untranslatability and linguistic ownership

The conceptual paralysis surrounding notions of linguistic ownership implies that it remains an area unthought, institutionally controversial, or socially taboo. This is likely due, in part, to the controversial nature of its ascription. It will be important here, before concluding, to run briefly through a series of conceptual frameworks whereby this notion of protective ownership over language has been recognised before now.

Most prominent is Benedict Anderson's idea of 'imagined communities,' which has become so embedded in humanistic thinking that 'it operates almost tacitly.'[657] Anderson argues that nations existed only in the imagination of those who share a language, considering printing and distribution as nationalism's foundations.[658] In an early attempt to confront translation theory, George Steiner's *After Babel* (1975) makes the more controversial claim that human language separates not out of a drive to communicate but for the sake of sustaining its tribal differentiations. 'All developed language has a private core', he insists. A distinct language can 'encode, preserve, and transmit the knowledge, the shared memories, the metaphorical and pragmatic conjectures on life of a small group—a family, a clan, a tribe.'[659]

Kyra Giorgi's more recent work on emotional untranslatability has recourse to these models. 'In groups, shared sadness and traumas – as well as shared joys – have the capacity to bind people together, especially if there is space for the public articulation of these emotions.'[660] *Saudade*, she insists, is particularly complicated 'by the irreconcilability of individual and collective emotions.'[661] A conceptual framework for emotional untranslatability and linguistic ownership, then, must necessitate a way of making this collective element more intelligible.

---

[657] *Born Translated*, p. 25.
[658] Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities* (London & New York: Verso Books, 2013)
[659] Steiner, George. *After Babel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975).
[660] *Emotions, Languages and Identities on the Margin of Europe*, p. 15.
[661] *Emotions, Languages and Identities on the Margin of Europe*, p. 15.

If so, I suggest the most relevant notion for present enquiries can be located in the idea of 'possessive collectivism,' a concept recently resuscitated by literary critic Rebecca Walkowitz from various anthropological studies.[662] Possessive collectivism denotes the attempt to make language into a form of exclusionary cultural property, one that entitles monolingualism or a policy of 'other-language abstinence' on its speakers.'[663] In this sense, it reflects precisely the tension between collective and individual emotion recognised by Giorgi.

To my reading, this is a concept not only well-suited to the analysis of *saudade* but also to the exilic literary modernism to which it later applies. In the rush to escape a collapsing Germany, its émigré authors were scattered emotionally, geographically and linguistically. For these exiled German poets, a sense of 'possessive collectivism' in this context was not necessarily the source of collective pressures as it was an attempt to salvage what remained of one's past identity and community through language.

I can go no further without recourse to the rethinking of literary and linguistic ownership, as gestured to by Emily Apter, and 'possessive collectivism' as advanced by Rebecca Walkowitz. Tellingly, Walkowitz is the only critic alert to the dimension of ownership in Apter's account; while Apter explores Walkowitz's notion of 'possessive collectivism' from an early draft of *Born Translated*.[664] In their mutual recognition, these valuable models advanced are relevant, as I see it, to *saudade* (and to the category of Emotional Untranslatability in *The Dictionary*, as I earlier ascribed it). I will next attempt a provisional account of *saudade* as a literary concept, based on the understanding and synthesising of these preceding sources.

[662] *Born Translated*, pp. 25-26.
[663] *Against World Literature*, p. 320.
[664] *Against World Literature*, p. 320-321.

III.I.VI: Conceptual aspects of *saudade*

Using *saudade* as a literary theory, conceptual tool or explanatory model should not have to restrict itself to the search for 'unhappy literature'; such a move would amount to mistranslation at its worst. Instead, reassembling the word's storied history, I suggest here one can draw three conclusions. These are the elements established through its original contexts but still applicable beyond those contexts. If one goes back further and deeper into the word's origins, it was a narrative of colonialism, departure, distance and exodus.

The point is that the stakes of 'reading for *saudade*' in literary works cannot, to my mind, be satisfied on the basis of finding and expositing upon that emotional tonality in the work alone. If the Emotional Untranslatable under discussion can be justified as an intervention here, it is through a hermeneutic recourse to its context. In this sense, I am not establishing a strict formula for using *saudade* as a literary theory. I am identifying the salient components of its meanings in its own context(s) so as to provide a flexible and provisional understanding of the word as a concept. I enumerate them here before pushing on to the post-war German literature to which I consider it a useful and relevant perspective:

1) **Linguistic estrangement**

   Exile and multilingualism have long been coextensive. Yet less notice has been given to what happens when a language is exiled from where it is most commonly spoken. The element of a literary text I expect this to speak to and engage with is primarily the language of the refugee or émigré that is retained out of necessity; but, in the longer term, also out of a sense of linguistic ownership. The tension of linguistic ownership is never more intensely present in literature than in the literature of exile. I also consider this a theme buttressed by Walkowitz's revived notion of 'possessive collectivism,' which strikes me as the most sophisticated explanatory model for this to be understood.

2) A sense of synchronic and diachronic deferral

Santoro's entry in *The Dictionary* and Natalia Correia's lecture share a property made visible through comparison. Santoro recalls how, with the disappearance of King Sebastian I at the battle of Alcácer Quibir in 1578, this absence 'produced a collective feeling of mourning and hope that has characterized the Portuguese soul ever since.'[665] Secondly, in Correia's poetic exposition of *saudade*'s meanings, her emphasis on its merging of timeframes is notable: 'I exist in no one single time, existing in all times simultaneously.'[666] In either case then, it becomes clear that *saudade*'s differentiation from terms like 'melancholy' in English is premised on *a sense of synchronic and diachronic deferral*. By this I mean that it is always orientated toward a time or place distant from the subject or the literary text's composition.

3) Uncertainty of target audience

This third tenet arguably arises from a combination of the former two. It is often directly addressed or orientated toward past or distant figures and places. I will further suggest that literature that reflects *saudade* in its contextual definition(s) is written for an uncertain audience. If the text is in dialogue with an absent figure of desire or loss, then it becomes less obvious to whom these literary works are intended. This cannot be separated entirely from the claim of untranslatability. This can result in what literary critics often call 'intimacy' or 'difficulty'; but can arguably also stand for a sense of voyeuristically reading something one was not intended to read, as if the very act of reading was in itself an act of betrayal or coercive insight.

[665] Santoro, Fernando. "SAUDADE," in: *The Dictionary*, p. 930.
[666] "Natalia Correia on Portuguese Surrealism: A Lecture in the United States," p. 126.

III.I.VII: Conclusion

Saudade is a word born amidst displacement to evoke a sense of absence or loss. After extending its treatment in *The Dictionary*, I have sought to explain what *saudade* means in its own context(s) while also revealing how it has straddled two discrete nations with competing claims as to its ownership. This has produced what I referred to as a case of 'Untranslatable Co-Ownership', whereby both nations have a competing sense of ownership over the same word and invest that word with the conviction of cultural singularity (despite each nation's exclusionary account). Let me explain this in more detail, before moving onto the ruins of post-war Germany to which I deem this an appropriate and relevant intervention.

In the wake of defeat, for Germany another battle began. It was a battle to be fought in (and over) its language. It is vital to reinterpret this period as one where it seemed difficult (if not impossible) for its contemporary figures to even *imagine* a context in which the German language was inseparable from its recent context. The poets I explore later in this Section should be read with this overt historical condition in mind.

Consequently, German exilic literary modernism was characterised by the enormous task of rethinking and recontextualising its own language. This was considered by its political leaders a matter of necessity. As such, the challenge it posed, psychologically on the individual authors and collectively on the language itself, is difficult to fully measure or overestimate. Inevitably, in the challenge of rethinking one's own language, translation became an issue of greater explicit reference and consideration to both poets.

My purpose then, will be to introduce and demonstrate the Portuguese Untranslatable *saudade* as an analytic tool of great import in opening up these authors to new readings and new interpretations. The only way of confirming this standpoint, of course, is supplanting this term into the context of post-war Germany, to see if *saudade* can illuminate a corresponding problem in the geographical and historical context to which it is applied.

Section Three Chapter Two: Post-war Germany

The losses incurred by post-war Germany were legion. Those losses have been well-accounted for and thus need not be further rehearsed here. What detains me in the following Chapter while introducing *saudade* to our last destination, is its applicative value to three overlapping, thematic strands: German exile; German language; and German Modernism. These three elements were so inexorably interdependent that any account of them must balance them to bring their repressed absences and interdependencies to light.

Doing so requires a schematic understanding of how these issues evolved under the considerable strain of their conditions. Exile became a necessity to many German-speaking intellectuals. The German language became a problematic entity even to those who used it. Modernist literature (or rather the more specific restriction to post-war exilic German Modernism) should thus be understood as a challenge to translation as it arises from a language that was not at ease with itself during these compositions. The strategies available to translators run from Andreas Nolte's pursuit of Holocaust piety[667] to John Felstiner's deliberate omissions.[668]

Before exploring that in more detail, of course, the most obvious observation moving forward is that Germany's loss took multiple and sometimes contradictory forms. This is reflected in aesthetics and language as well as in the scale of its physical devastations. It will be my more truncated ambition, over the course of this Section, to demonstrate how the Portuguese Untranslatable *saudade* may serve to deepen our attention to this, in texts and in ways that have not been explored before now. Following this historical emphasis, I conclude by outlining how an understanding of German Modernism is impossible without recourse to the impact of the conflict on the German language itself.

---

[667] See: Rose, Gillian. *Mourning becomes the law: Philosophy and representation*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[668] See: Felstiner, John. "Mother Tongue, Holy Tongue: On Translating and Not Translating Paul Celan," *Comparative Literature*, Spring, 1986, Vol. 38, No. 2 (Spring, 1986), pp. 113-136.

III.II.I: Pre-War German Modernism

In the German context, historian Richard Overly claims the conflict between notions of modernity and tradition 'long pre-dated 1933.'[669] The spectacle of the French Revolution (1789) and the Napoleonic Wars (1799-1815) brought with them a range of aesthetic and discursive advances. In the face of those changes, Hutton asserts, receptive German intellectuals, much like their 'post-colonial successors, were left with the ambivalence of their forced induction into modernity'.[670] In 1866, the historian Eugene Wolff attempted to give German modernity a theoretical foundation. In a lecture that year, Wolff declared 'our highest ideal is no longer antiquity, but rather the modern period […] the task of the present-day writer is to give a poetic shape to all the meaningful forces of contemporary life.'[671]

This optimistic stance toward Modernism was difficult to sustain into the early 20th century. During Adolf Hitler's (1889-1945) initial rise to power, anxieties ran through the German population that the wayward eccentricities of Modernist and Avant-Garde art reflected little more than 'Germany's debilitated post-war condition and moral bankruptcy',[672] a conviction the Nazi authorities encouraged. Paul Schultze-Naumburg's *Kunst und Rasse* [*Art and Race*] (1928) was a central text to this end, cultivating in the German public the belief that modern art was nothing more than the product of sick and diseased minds.[673]

---

[669] Overy, Richard. *The Two Dictators* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), p. 358. 'The enemy of official, collectivist culture was artistic individualism. In the thirty years before the dictatorships emerged, Europe experienced the flowering of an extraordinary age of cultural self-expression, Russia and Germany were at the forefront of the artistic avant-garde. The revolution in 1917 was hailed by many Russian artists and writers as an act of artistic emancipation and in the 1920s an experimental, pluralist culture emerged, encouraged by the aggressively anti-bourgeois outlook of the regime. The republican years in Germany after 1919 witnessed a rich variety of artistic expression; liberated from the old empire, profoundly influenced by the experience of war, defeat and revolution, uninhibited by popular prejudice or taste, many German artists and writers welcomed the opportunity to push art to the limits of social protest or morbid nihilism or indulgent innovation.
The explosion of experimental culture in the 1920s reflected a profound defence of artistic autonomy, for the avant-garde was subversive and independent, deliberately challenging and uncontrollable, self-consciously revolutionary and iconoclastic.'

[670] Hutton, Christopher M. *Race and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), p. 7.

[671] Wunberg, Gotthard. (ed.) *Die literarische Moderne: Dokumente zum Selbstverstä¨ndnis der Literatur um die Jahrhundertwende*. (Frankfurt am Main: Athenaeum Verlag, 1971), pp. 1–2. Translation mine.

[672] *The Two Dictators*, p. 358.

[673] *The Two Dictators*, p. 359.

Pseudoscientific attempts to discredit and marginalise various forms of Modernism would grow more forceful as the Nazis consolidated their power over the country's institutions. The first exhibition of *Entartete Kunst* ['degenerate art'] was held in Karlsruhe in 1933, to pointedly draw connections between modern art and failed republicanism.[674] 1933 also signalled the first significant literary departures. Only four years after winning the Noble Prize for Literature, Thomas Mann (1875-1955) fled Germany for Switzerland, then the United States in 1938. He settled in Princeton, next door to scientist Albert Einstein, until March 1941.[675]

Not all his contemporaries were as fortunate. German Modernism's diaspora was international in scope, from Mexico (Anna Seghers) to Brazil (Stefan Zweig) to Moscow (Herwarth Walden). Like Mann, Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956), Alfred Döblin (1878-1957) and Carl Zuckermeyer (1896-1977) made it to the United States by the end of the year (while Mascha Kaleko would not arrive until early 1939). Once there, material safety concealed a more complex situation: 'they spoke at least the rudiments of their new country's language, but nobody understood their own; they established tight social networks among themselves but encountered utter indifference amongst their hosts.'[676]

This process reached a symbolic apotheosis in 1937. That year, the German regime ordered Adolf Ziegler's *Die Ausstellung "Entartete Kunst"* [Exhibition of Degenerate Art] to be held in Munich. The exhibition served, in reality, as an opportunity to remove all remaining works of artistic Modernism from the public domain.[677] Authorities realised that if the

[674] *The Two Dictators*, p. 359.
[675] Konzett, Matthias. *Hermann Broch, Visionary in Exile: The 2001 Yale Symposium*. Ed. Paul Michael Lützeler. Rochester: Camden House, 2003), p. 70.
[676] (46-47, Boes); Liner, Deborah. "Mass Trauma and Cultural Amnesia: A Case Study of a Society's Untranslatable Excess." *Studies in Gender and Sexuality* 23.1 (2022): 65-77; Pillen, Alex. "Language, translation, trauma." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 45 (2016): 95-111.
[677] *The Two Dictators*, p. 359.

dissemination of Modernist art could not be stopped, at least its site of aesthetic and institutional presentation could be transgressed:

> The objects taken from public galleries had a red sticker next to them with the words 'Paid for from the taxes of the labouring German people.' Jumbled up with the artworks were drawings and paintings by psychiatric patients to demonstrate to the visitor that the avant-garde had indeed been deranged.[678]

Notwithstanding this, Overly points out that Nazi cultural policy 'was never simply a war on modernism.'[679] Rather, popular culture was treated 'as something that belonged to the entire community' and 'the fabric of everyday life, not as something abstracted from it.'[680] It is on this point that 'possessive collectivism' comes to mind as an explanatory model: one informative of both the pressure exerted on the German language within Germany and the pressure to preserve it abroad. Unsurprisingly, this produced very different interpretations of the language itself, as I will go on to show.

Foreign Modernists differed radically in their response to the regime. Samuel Beckett, having turned his back on academia, was distraught when he arrived in Hamburg in 1936 to have travelled to see thousands of paintings now locked away for good.[681] Knut Hamsun, a Norwegian novelist who had won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1920, wrote precisely the individualistic kind of novels that the Nazi regime officially abhorred. Still, they were flattered by his open and impassioned support for their regime.[682] By the time German forces began to occupy the surrounding European nations, these considerations became secondary.

---

[678] *The Two Dictators*, p. 360.
[679] *The Two Dictators*, p. 362.
[680] *The Two Dictators*, p. 376.
[681] Boyd, Julia. *Travels in the Third Reich* (London: Elliott & Thompson, 2017), pp. 224-228.
[682] *Travels in the Third Reich*, p. 210.

III.II.II: Nazism & the German language

One of the many casualties of the conflict (and the one of highest consequence to the present argument) was the German language itself.[683] As a result of conflict and destruction it became a language in crisis, as explicated by its most eminent proponents. Foundational to this view are the observations of Victor Klemperer (1881-1960), a German-Jewish Professor of Romance languages in Dresden. Klemperer realised how Hitler's fear of 'the thinking man' was revealed in 'a constant stream of new expressions.'[684]

His first reaction to the tightening restrictions was evasion and academic remoteness. Yet the final blow for Klemperer was the banning of all Jews from all libraries. 'After that I was driven out of my own house and everything else followed, every day something new.'[685] Relegated to marginality under the Nazi regime, Klemperer began to obsessively note down the transformations of German language he witnessed.[686] The result is likely the most rigorous linguistic analysis of the regime attempted among contemporary accounts:

> And what happens if the cultivated language is made up of poisonous elements or has been made the bearer of poisons? Words can be like tiny doses of arsenic: they are swallowed unnoticed, appear to have no effect, and then after a little time the toxic reaction sets in after all.[687]

---

[683] See: Michels, Eckard. "Deutsch als Weltsprache? Franz Thierfelder, the Deutsche Akademie in Munich and the promotion of the German language abroad, 1923–1945." *German History* 22.2 (2004): pp. 206-228. Tashinskiy, Aleksey, Julija Boguna, and Tomasz Rozmysłowicz, eds. *Translation und Exil (1933–1945) I: Namen und Orte. Recherchen zur Geschichte des Übersetzens*. Vol. 53. Frank & Timme GmbH, 2022. Wells, C. J. "Language in Limbo? Post-1945 German." *Landmarks in the History of the German Language* 52 (2009): 253. Kämper, Heidrun. "The Americanization of the German language." *The United States and Germany in the era of the Cold War, 1945-1990: a handbook. Volume 2: 1968-1990*. German Historical Institute, 2015, pp. 326-333.

[684] Buruma, Ian. *Year zero: A history of 1945*. (Amsterdam: Penguin, 2014.), p. 3.

[685] *Year zero: A history of 1945*, p. 11.

[686] See: Klemperer, Victor & Brady, Martin. *Language of the Third Reich: LTI: Lingua Tertii Imperii.* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2006). pp. 265-266.

[687] *Language of the Third Reich: LTI: Lingua Tertii Imperii*, pp. 15-16.

Subsequent historiography advances understanding of Nazism's linguistic violence while taking issue with this view. Kaplan, for one, objects that Klemperer's account does not leave enough room for the personal agency of German citizens themselves.[688] Wesley Young's work in some ways supports Klemperer, certainly insofar as he sees Nazi language as preparative and deliberate. Language in this view acts as a preparation and rehearsal of future actions and intention: 'The Party had murdered its enemies figuratively long before murdering them in fact.'[689] Yet Wesley Young points out that it was not only the undesirable elements of German society that Hitler sought to marginalise through language. Assessing a series of esoterisms 'habitually barked out in Nazi oratory,' Wesley Young lists: '*Dynamik*, *Instinkt*, *Idee*, *Garant* (guarantor), *Agitation*, *Paladin*, *heroisch*, *total*, and *fanatisch*' - words like this, he claims, 'turned up in almost every Nazi speech.'[690]

> How many German plebians and peasants knew the meaning of *diffamieren*? Very few, most likely; and for that reason the word, shouted in high decibels by a Hitler or a Goebbels, might well awe them. […] At the very least, the rhythm of his words and inflection of his voice could divert attention from the substance – or lack of substance – of his rhetoric. In other words, it could stifle thought.'[691]

The philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1975) - whose attempts to conceptualise the German Untranslatable *Stimmung* detained me back in Section I - walked a more historically problematic path by the time the conflict ended. Having turned his back on his Jewish mentor,

---

[688] In a more balanced assessment of accounts like Klemperer's, Kaplan writes: 'Diary keeping and other forms of non-public autobiographical writing emerged as a crucial means to refashion a beleaguered sense of self, weigh options, and map new discursive strategies. During the emerging racial dictatorship that denied Jewish Germans their right to define themselves, these forms of writing about themselves became acts of contestation with explicitly political connotations.' See: Pegelow Kaplan, Thomas, *The Language of Nazi Genocide: Linguistic Violence and the Struggle of Germans of Jewish Ancestry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 93.
[689] Young, John Wesley. *Totalitarian Language: Orwell's Newspeak and Its Nazi and Communist Predecessors*. (Virginia: University of Virginia, 1987), p. 91.
[690] *Totalitarian Language: Orwell's Newspeak and Its Nazi and Communist Predecessors*, p. 81.
[691] *Totalitarian Language: Orwell's Newspeak and Its Nazi and Communist Predecessors*, p. 81.

the influential phenomenologist Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) and taking his University post in 1928, Heidegger had in fact come to pledge allegiance to the Nazi government.[692] Challenged to reconcile this position with enough post-war absolution to allow him to continue teaching, his response was devious and effective.

From 1945 onward, Heidegger would turn to questions of language. However, this had little in common with the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) or what would come to be called 'The Philosophy of Language.' Instead, Heidegger postulated that 'Man acts as though he were the shaper and master of language, while in fact language remains the master of man.'[693] In this schema, language speaks through the human. In this sense, language is what determines human communication and therefore human action. By implication, then, language holds responsibility for action in the final account.

This apparent reversal was well-received in philosophical circles across Western Europe and was considered highly thought-provoking. Yet in their attempt to continue mining this German philosopher's difficult texts, a far greater provocation quietly materialised. Despite his previous and public commitments to the Nazi project, staggeringly, the initial reception of these ideas and their earliest audiences could not recognise that this new view of language served to facilitate a narrative of plausible deniability toward the events that Heidegger had committed to, and that had eventually led to Germany's destruction. That Heidegger's thoughts on language have been adopted without sufficient reference to these conditions, speaks itself to the historical inertia that literary theory must better learn to confront.

[692] There is a great deal of material on this topic, most of it premised on the veracity of Heidegger's genuine commitment to these events. This debate has been put to rest by the publication of Heidegger's Black Notebooks, which reveal a fundamentalist attitude sustained throughout the conflict. See: Di Cesare, Donatella. *Heidegger and the Jews: The Black Notebooks* (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2018); Rockmore, Tom. *On Heidegger's Nazism and philosophy* (California: University of California Press, 1997); Sharpe, Matthew. "On reading Heidegger—after the "Heidegger case?" *Critical Horizons* 19.4 (2018): pp. 334-360.
[693] Heidegger, Martin & Albert Hofstadter. *Poetry, Language, Thought* (USA: Harper & Rowe, 1971), p. 144.

III.II.III: Berlin 1945

Berlin was the epicentre of the conflict's ruin, which by 1945 was impossible to overstate.[694] German reactions to their defeat were polarised and confused, frequently manifested in forms of violent revenge. Even after the war was over, Dorine Schell, a Czech actress of German ancestry, was arrested in Prague. Women with an assumed German heritage were made to eat pictures of Hitler. Hair hacked off their heads was stuffed into their mouths. Watching from afar, a mob cried: "You German pigs! Fattening yourselves all those years, well, you have your Fuhrer to thank for this!"[695]

The Italian director Roberto Rossellini bravely travelled to Berlin to make *Germany Year Zero* (1948), a neorealist film made with a local and nonprofessional cast. The viewer is faced with a city, itself emblematic of a civilization, in a state of utter disrepair. "We were men before, National Socialists," says one character, "now we are just Nazis."[696] Walking around Berlin in August 1945, a journalist saw a German woman in a tattered dress and large men's shoes, sticking out her tongue at a female Russian soldier. "You are well fed and we Germans starve," she said, before spitting on the ground.[697] Writing from Berlin in the wake of defeat, Ruth Andreas-Friedrich's diary captures this singular moment:

> Everywhere feverish political activity. As if there were a rush to make up for twelve years' lost time. "Antifascist" groups are shooting up like mushrooms. Banners and posters. Notices and signs. At every street-corner some political group had been formed […] Not all of these anti-Hitler groups can look back at a long struggle. With some of them resistance began only as Hitler's ended.[698]

---

[694] Rolleston, James. "After Zero Hour: The Visual Texts of Post-War Germany." *South Atlantic Review*, vol. 64, no. 2, 1999, pp. 1–19, p. 2.
[695] *Year zero: A history of 1945*, pp. 96-97.
[696] Rossellini, Roberto. *Ano Zero* (Produzione Savlo D'Angelo & Tevere Film, 1948).
[697] *Yank*, August 10th, 1945, p. 6; Quoted in Stafford *Endgame, 1945*, p. 507.
[698] Andreas-Friedrich, Ruth. *Battleground Berlin: Diaries, 1945-1948* (United States: Paragon House, 1990), p. 27.

Nowhere was a sense of vengeance more visible than from the Russian invading forces, for whom the destruction of Berlin was a matter of ideological as well as personal import. "Woe to the land of the murderers," said Marshal Georgy Zhukov before invading Berlin. "We will get our terrible revenge for everything."[699] The Russian army pillaged, raped, beat and stole its way to the German capital, as statistics confirm.[700] However, what these statistics conceal is the inclination to revenge was not difficult to exert on the Russian troops. Many of them had lost families and friends, often in horrific circumstances, and thus needed little encouragement.[701]

On April 26th, 1945, a photograph by the war correspondent Allan Jackson showed Russian and American troops shaking hands over the River Elbe. Staged to signal the end of the war, historically it is often interpreted as the beginning of the Cold War, a civilizational polemic that would extend ideological divisions globally that dominated the rest of the century. Berlin itself was a microcosm of this situation, which was subsequently split between an American, British, French and Soviet zone. 'Amazingly, despite Berlin's obvious four-power status, unambiguous arrangements for access to it had never been negotiated.'[702] Unaddressed following Germany's defeat and occupation, these 'arrangements' would dominate the second half of the twentieth century.

[699] Naimark, Norman M. *The Russians in Germany: a history of the Soviet zone of occupation, 1945-1949*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 79.
[700] Gebhardt, Miriam. *Crimes Unspoken: The Rape of German Women at the End of the Second World War* (Frankfurt: Wiley, 2016).
[701] *Year zero: A history of 1945*, p. 80.
[702] Kissinger, Henry. *Diplomacy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), p. 472.

In Boeschenstein's analysis, the impact on German literature was both material and orientational: 'Publishing was, for some years, strictly supervised', but even once this was no longer the case, 'German authors, by instinct and, most likely, by inclination as well, wrote in tones of shock and horror with respect to past events.'[703] This orientation toward the past was painful but no doubt necessary in the process of Germany's socio-political reawakening.

America and Great Britain's revenge over Germany was executed economically to the tune of ten billion dollars.[704] The Allied victors soon came to realise, however, that any future German government would have to be purged of Nazi elements to regain any public or global legitimacy. Unfortunately for their leaders, it soon became clear that removing Nazi elements would 'lead to a collapse in education, social services, or any semblance of economic recovery.'[705] They feared this would result in prolonged occupation, viral transmission, extended poverty and a temptation to alternative ideologies. American General Douglas MacArthur, stationed in Tokyo, was convinced that "starvation… renders a people an easy prey to any ideology that brings with it life-sustaining food."'[706]

What made these experiences unspeakable leads one to consider what role language would have in these conditions. In the same way that *saudade* is an Untranslatable under the co-ownership of Brazil and Portugal, the symbolic inertia of a divided capital is impossible to disentangle from the damaged identity of post-war German writing. The German language in the wake of the conflict was a quagmire of alienated forms and disabused associations. Yet it must be confronted that this process was already underway in Germany long before 1945.

---

[703] Boeschenstein, Hermann. *A history of modern German literature*. Vol. 40. (Oftringen: Herbert Lang et Company Ag, 1990), p. 113.

[704] Studies confirm that the United States and Great Britain managed to ascertain patents, copyrights and trademarks amounting to around $10 billion. See: Wehler, Hans-Ulrich. *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte* (Germany: Verlag nicht ermittelbar, 1987); Gimbel, John. "The American Exploitation of German Technical Know-How after World War II." *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 105, no. 2, 1990, pp. 295–309.

[705] *Year zero: A history of 1945*, p. 180.

[706] Cohen, Theodore. *Remaking Japan: The American occupation as new deal*. (New York: Free Press, 1987), p. 145.

III.II.IV: Modernism & Exile

When the Nazis came to power, philosopher Ernst Bloch (1885-1977) had to flee the country. In a 1939 lecture of great foresight to the struggles ahead, Bloch claimed: 'It is not possible to destroy a language, without in that act destroying its culture. On the other hand, it is not possible to preserve and develop a culture without speaking the language in which it is formed and is lived.'[707] These insights, pronounced through thought and literature, would dominate German Modernism in the wake of the conflict.

Alongside the damage incurred from its reigning ideology, the German language would also experience a great demographic dispersion in this period.[708] Success was no guarantee of safety, leaving German-speaking intellectuals to depart their language and reimagine it elsewhere. Austrian novelist Stefan Zweig (1881-1942) left Vienna for London in 1934. He wanted to continue writing in German but came to realise that 'a secret and tormenting shame [*quälende Scham*]' permeated German writers, as it was impossible for them now to disentangle their words from the fact that 'decrees of oppression' were 'conceived and drafted' in 'the same language in which we write and think.'[709] In his 1942 memoir, he further reflects 'I have indeed been torn from all my roots […] All my work, in the language in which I wrote it, has been burnt to ashes in the country where my books made millions of readers their friends. So I belong nowhere now, I am a stranger or at the most a guest everywhere.'[710]

> The times provide the pictures, I merely speak the words to go with them, and it will not be so much my own story I tell as that of an entire

[707] Bloch, Ernst. *Zerstörte Sprache, zerstörte Kultur.* in: Winkler, Michael. (ed.) *Deutsche Literatur im Exil 1933-1945. Texte und Dokumente*. (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1977), pp. 346-372. p. 367.
[708] Kettler, David & Garz, Detlef (eds.) *First Letters After Exile by Thomas Mann, Hannah Arendt, Ernst Bloch, and Others*. (Blackfriars: Anthem Press, 2021).
[709] *Culture in Nazi Germany*, p. 258.
[710] Zweig, Stefan & Anthea Bell. *The World of Yesterday* (London: Pushkin Press, 2008), p. 19.

> generation—our unique generation, carrying a heavier burden of fate than almost any other in the course of history.[711]

It is telling that Zweig feels the pressure weigh on him to carry his narrative entirely by himself, and only briefly gestures here to the prospect of sharing the ownership of these memories with his contemporaries. Zweig's account was not unique. In fact, this statement conveys the issues of identity that haunted those who survived and escaped these years. Survival guilt was compounded by a sense that language (for many, the last remaining source of identity) was irreversibly damaged. Linguistic exile thus added yet another layer to the losses accrued.

Having established herself through roles in Schiller and Goethe adaptations in the 1920s, German actress Helene Thiemig (1889-1974) escaped to Hollywood to flee Hitler's regime, but complained that one had been "alienated from one's own language," while Lion Feuchtwanger concurred, saying that certain turns of phrase in German were simply not translatable.[712] German words 'were committed to saying things that no human mouth should ever have said,' wrote critic George Steiner.[713] In the wake of Germany's defeat, his country in tatters, Thomas Mann wrote a poignant piece on this condition himself:

> When I think back, before the beginnings of our exile, to that time of uprootment, of agitation, of anguish, of homelessness – what was our predominant emotion, our ever-occurring thought in all our personal anxiety? It was pity: anticipatory pity that certainly underestimated the time of retribution;[714]

---

[711] *The World of Yesterday*, p. 20.
[712] Kater, Michael H. *Culture in Nazi Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), p. 258.
[713] Steiner, George. "The Hollow Miracle" in: Steiner, George. *Language & Silence* (New York: Atheneum, 1967), pp. 140-143.
[714] Mann, Thomas. "The End." *Free World* 9 (1945), p. 15. Interestingly, *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Mann* ends with 'a critical examination of the translations of Mann currently available in English, reminding us that despite his popularity in the English-speaking world, part of his claim to fame lies in his uniquely skilful and untranslatable use of the German language.' See: Robertson, Ritchie. (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Mann* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. xiv.

Mann does not consider his experience singly. Rather, one reads here a sense of collective ownership over the language and culture preserved by him and his contemporaries. It is as if Mann is suggesting that in the defeat of Hitler's regime, the chance for the German language to be reborn required a renewed but also collective effort. In this sense, one cannot shy away from the fact that Mann's is an essentially recuperative position. Recuperation demands an original loss to recuperate. Between this aspect and what Mann describes here as 'an anticipatory pity' bears a remarkable resemblance to the Portuguese word *saudade*, an emotion premised on collective memory, distance, loss and anticipation. That Mann considers this a condition universal across the range of his exilic contemporaries goes some way toward establishing it as an angle from which these authors deserve to be reinterpreted. As I go on to show, *saudade* could well articulate this quality across a range of post-war exilic German writing.

It is on this basis that I have chosen to focus on exiled post-war authors in this final Section, namely Mascha Kaleko and Paul Celan. This is because it is in their work, I assert, that this condition is exhibited at its most intense. Yet I should better qualify what elements of that circumscription detain me foremost. In his *Prolegomena on a Theory of Exile* (1995), Frühwald alludes to this conclusively:

> Accordingly, it seems to me that the job of exile studies is to train the communicative and cultural memory using a historically and anthropologically relevant object. Studying exile in this way [...] would be listened to and understood far beyond the circle of those "affected" and outside of academic circles.[715]

[715] Frühwald, Wolfgang. "Die „gekannt sein wollen ". Prolegomena zu einer Theorie des Exils." *Haarmann, Hermann (Hg.): Innen-Leben. Ansichten aus dem Exil. Ein Berliner Symposium. Berlin*. 1995. Translation mine.

While my approach in Section III takes something from this definition, I must be clearer as to the further restrictions imposed on what follows. I have sought two post-war exilic Modernist poets who continued to write in German despite their distance from that nation. I do this in order to not only address what I see as the articulation of *saudade* in this literary context, but also to assess 'historically and anthropologically relevant' objects of analysis with an attention to the German language in its estranged form. When looking at each author more closely, it becomes clear that this was an irreducible element of their poetics.

While I will make appropriate and occasional engagement with critical models on Holocaust writing, primarily drawing upon the work of Gillian Rose,[716] Peter Davies[717] and Jessica Lang,[718] what remains of highest priority is showing how the Portuguese word *saudade* (with its connotations of loss and displacement) can offer a way of reapproaching these authors anew. I have chosen the poems that both poets wrote in respect to the same event, *Kristellnacht* in 1938. The secondary purpose of each Chapter will be a greater attention to the topic of untranslatability as addressed by both.

Receiving the Bremen Book Award, Paul Celan would recall in 1960 of his dreadful war experiences: 'Only one thing remained reachable, close and secure amid all losses: language. […] In spite of everything, it remained secure against loss.'[719] Language became a stage on which their personal psychological economies of loss and recuperation, distance and intimacy, were played out in literary form. That this would later create issues for translation was not lost on these authors. Both address it explicitly, but differently. For Kaleko, untranslatability is a topic addressed from the perspective of linguistic exile. For Celan, it is premised upon a survival unobtainable outside of language, as will go on to be seen shortly.

---

[716] Rose, Gillian. *Mourning becomes the law: Philosophy and representation*. Cambridge University Press, 1996.
[717] Davies, Peter. *Witness between languages: The translation of Holocaust testimonies in context*. Vol. 4. Boydell & Brewer, 2018.
[718] Lang, Jessica. *Textual Silence: Unreadability and the Holocaust*. Rutgers University Press, 2017.
[719] Celan, Paul & Waldrop, Rosemary. "Bremen Speech" in: *Collected Prose* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 34.

III.II.V: Conclusion

The notion of barbarism is premised on the idea that the Other cannot be understood (hence the meaningless "bar-bar" sound of the speech that it is meant to imitate). Hitler's cultural and military policies led to the estrangement of the German language from its own speakers, its past and arguably its future. If, as Boletsi puts it, the opposition of civilization and barbarity came to mark Germany's 'negative limits'[720] at this time, then I am interested with these post-war German poets to find the roots of their Modernism at the edge of this negative limit. Put differently, as the German language recuperated itself, how did that happen from the distance of post-war linguistic exile?

In truth, this is not the first study to examine such themes among such cultural objects.[721] That those who suffered under these conditions would reflect emotions of loss or longing in their work is, after all, difficult to argue for as an original discovery in itself. Where I pointedly diverge from this previous material, is in the intervention proposed over the course of this work, whereby an Untranslatable from the previous linguistic context is applied to the next. Out of this schema, I intend here to interpret *saudade* as an explanatory model for exilic authorship, and as a way of mapping the various longings that span the reach and record of global literary history. From this perspective, it is proposed as a literary theory that transcends this particular context, and thus not proposed as something restricted to the specific authors or historical context to which I apply it presently. Yet I consider its applicability to this context profound.

[720] Boletsi, Maria. "Barbaric encounters: Rethinking barbarism in CP Cavafy's and JM Coetzee's Waiting for the barbarians." *Comparative Literature Studies* 44.1/2 (2007): pp. 67-96. p. 68.
[721] See: Bower, Kathrin. "Searching for the (M) Other: The Rhetoric of Longing in Post-Holocaust Poems by Nelly Sachs and Rose Ausländer." *Women in German Yearbook: Feminist Studies in German Literature & Culture* 12.1 (1996): pp. 123-147; Pennington, Evan. "Upheaval and the Unutterable: A Comparative Analysis of Post-Exilic and Post-Holocaust Jewish Poetry." *LOGOS: A Journal of Undergraduate Research* 4 (2011).

As I will go on to describe, Mascha Kaléko escaped to New York, while Paul Celan would eventually settle in Paris. Both were forced to escape the atrocities against Jewish minorities, yet both continued to write in German. This is a fact already established in the reception of either author; indeed, as referenced briefly above, this was not uncommon. However, it will be integral to my further inquiry in Section III to see whether it is possible to draw out more nuanced conclusions on this phenomenon with reference to *saudade* as an Emotional Untranslatable and untranslatability as a thematic focus.

I decide it adequate, then, to use these authors to probe the issues of exile and linguistic estrangement. If using saudade as a means to measure the distance of literary address through time and space, then a closer look at these poet's work must necessarily try to formalize and confirm that assumption. As a recent collection points out, for the English-speaking world, almost all Holocaust writing is translated writing.[722] Thus the issue of translation and untranslatability forms the secondary account for their inclusion here. Kaléko offers her own views on untranslatability, writ from the perspective of exile that the Nazi regime made necessary. In the final Chapter, Paul Celan manipulates personal pronouns in order to establish *saudade* as an architecture of distance, exile and longing.

[722] "Barbaric encounters: Rethinking barbarism in CP Cavafy's and JM Coetzee's Waiting for the barbarians," p. 68.

Section Three Chapter Three: *Saudade* & Mascha Kaléko

Mascha Kaléko (1907-1975) misses *Kristallnacht* by two weeks; Paul Celan arrives in Berlin the day after.[723] It takes more than a decade after the war ends for either poet to express their experience directly. Considered sequentially in the following two Chapters, both Mascha Kaléko's *Memento* (1956) and Paul Celan's *La Contrescarpe* (1962) write upon this event with a mixture of obfuscation and confession. They were nonetheless very different poets unified in their exile from Germany, its language and culture – even if they never replaced this looming absence through the ulterior locations and identities this subsequently forced them to assume.

Kaléko's first book of poetry was published in January 1933, portraying the young female experience of then-thriving Berlin. While this month coincided with the rise of Adolf Hitler to power,[724] few of her early readers or critics could possibly have imagined how deeply her life and career would be intertwined with politics. Her career therefore represents a German modernity that never was, as reflected by a well-received poet later thrown by circumstance and censorship into exile and obscurity. It is when reading Kaléko's work from the perspective of exile (from New York and Jerusalem) that the ramifications of *saudade* begin to take shape.

This is largely because, while her locations changed over time, the direction of her referential address remained persistently fixed on the home she had lost. This sense of loss is tantalising in its moral ambivalence, as I will come to outline below. I will then turn to Kaléko's own reflections on untranslatability from the perspective of exile, from a short piece written in 1961. I point out the ways in which this provides an account of untranslatability written from the perspective of exile, contributing altogether to the conceptual development of *saudade* as a literary theory.

[723] Steinweis, Alan. *Kristallnacht 1938* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2009), p. 3.
[724] Nolte, Andreas. *The Poems of Mascha Kaléko* (Burlington: Fomite, 2017), p. 13.

III.III.II: Background

Born to an Austrian mother and a Russian father in Galicia, the poet is born with the name Golda Malka Aufen on June 7th, 1907 in Chrzanów, Southern Poland. With the onset of World War One, her mother decided to move the family to Germany. They arrived in Frankfurt, then Marburg. In 1918, as the conflict receded, the family moved to Berlin, where Kaléko's parents married in 1922.[725] Life in the West for Jews from the East was not easy, and the poet learned early that '"home" is a fleeting ideal.[726]

Kaléko completed her formal education and took up a series of secretarial positions, attending evening courses on psychology and philosophy in Berlin. This helped her develop a poetics of the everyday: as her pioneering English translator Andreas Nolte puts it, 'Kaléko wrote about the low-level employee just trying to make ends meet, the joy and pain of falling into and out of love.'[727] Linguistically, he adds, Kaléko was more interested in wit and simplicity than aesthetic experimentation: her poems were 'presented in the readers' own language, employing words and phrases they would use themselves in everyday life.'[728]

Examples of brevity and wit can be found throughout her early poems. These works are short, rhythmic and lyrical. They appear in daily newspapers each morning that the young professionals of Berlin read while commuting to or from work. 'In 1930s Berlin,' writes Nolte, 'many of Kaléko's poems helped readers understand their own lives a little bit better,' leading them to realise or remember that their own circumstances 'were not much different from those of other people.'[729] The poem *Mein schönstes Gedicht* [*My Most Beautiful Poem*] provides a characteristically unpretentious example of these earlier and comparatively more innocent works:

[725] *The Poems of Mascha Kaléko*, p. 31.
[726] *The Poems of Mascha Kaléko*, p. 31.
[727] *The Poems of Mascha Kaléko*, p. 33.
[728] *The Poems of Mascha Kaléko*, p. 33.
[729] *The Poems of Mascha Kaléko*, p. 35-36.

Mein schönstes Gedicht,

Ich schrieb es nicht.

Aus tiefsten Tiefen stieg es.

Ich schwieg es.

[My best poem ever?

I wrote it never.

From deepest depths uprushed it.

I hushed it.][730]

Absence did not yet play the role it later would in her poetics. As her popularity increased throughout the early 1930s, Kaléko enjoyed 'a large following, regular publications in daily newspapers, her poems set to music by the foremost entertainers of the time',[731] receiving praise from Thomas Mann (1875-1955), Herman Hesse (1877-1962) and Alfred Polgar (1873-1955).[732] She is often found at the Romanisches Café in the Charlottenburg district of Berlin, spending evenings with authors like Erich Kästner (1899-1974) and Kurt Tucholsky (1890-1935).[733] 'Sitting around the marble tables, people would drink coffee, smoke and chat, but they would also read and write poems, create scripts for new films, and play chess.'[734] In this sense, it is little wonder that Kaleko would look back on this fondly. Much as Berlin's contemporary architecture reflects a European empire partly conceived but never realised, Kaléko's work reflects a German Modernism interrupted by political dissolution.

[730] *The Poems of Mascha Kaléko,* pp. 35-37.
[731] *The Poems of Mascha Kaléko*, p. 19.
[732] Kaléko, Mascha. *Das lyrische Stenogrammheft* (Germany: Rowohlt, 1956), p. 4.
[733] Towards the end of the Weimar Republic, as the political situation in Germany became more violent, the Romanisches Café gradually lost its role. As early as 1927 the Nazis instigated a riot on the *Kurfürstendamm* during which the café, as a meeting place for the left-wing intellectuals they hated, was among the targets of violence.
[734] Bergelson, Lev. *Memories of My Father: The Early Years (1918-1934)* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 78-89.

III.III.III: Exile

This starts to change around the middle of the decade. In 1935, Kaléko is abruptly excluded from the State's Literary Guild. On July 15th that year, some 200 protestors descended on the fashionable Kurfürstendamm avenue of Berlin, attacking anyone thought to be of Jewish extraction.[735] The city's mood was darkening. Even if political poetry was never Kaléko's ambition, 'what was meant to sound light-hearted and hopeful' now appeared in her work as 'strained at times.'[736] In January 1937, Nazi authorities contacted her publisher, who agreed to prohibit any further distribution of her works. Her last books are sold in April of that year.[737] The poet would later reflect on these experiences as "those few shining years before the great darkening."'[738] On October 3rd, 1938, just two weeks before the turning-point of *Kristallnacht* in Berlin, her and her husband composer Chemjo Vinaver (1895-1973) emigrate to New York. Her diaries from this time have been recovered in part. Kaléko's entry, from June 20th, 1941 reveals a less than peaceful transition:

> We are without money. Without friends. Without connections. Without hope. Fare is missing. Shoes are missing. Medicine for [her son] is missing. School won't keep him if we can't pay. Damn money. Humiliating not to have one. Oh, how the 'friends' go away, as if from the plague. […] I'm escaping. Books. Nietzsche, Heine, Wolfe, Steinbeck, Whitman. I don't think we'll ever rest easy here.[739]

[735] Gottlieb, Moshe. "The Berlin Riots of 1935 and Their Repercussions in America." *American Jewish Historical Quarterly*, vol. 59, no. 3, 1970, pp. 302–28.
[736] *The Poems of Mascha Kaléko*, p. 57.
[737] *The Poems of Mascha Kaléko*, p. 53.
[738] *The Poems of Mascha Kaléko,* p. 53.
[739] Kaléko, Mascha, Diary Entry, 20th June 1941. Available via: https://en.we-refugees-archive.org/archive/mascha-kaleko-about-her-first-impressions-from-new-york/

These jottings testify to the rapidity of her new environment and the hopelessness she sometimes felt in her attempts to adapt to it. The first few years of New York 'proved to be very difficult.'[740] Kaléko learnt English quickly, often translating for her husband, but continued to write in German.[741] Even if a sense of ownership over that lost language persisted, it was now one forced to negotiate the indifference of American people to the war in Europe, a recurring theme in her poems from this era.

Altogether, the significance of this move is less important here for its geographical distance from Berlin, than for the thematic continuities in Kaléko's poetry that continue and persist in her corpus *despite* that same distance. Kaleko left Germany geographically long before she could bear the thought of giving up its language. Kaleko's poetry from this time forth must thus be read as enunciated at a distance from its subject. 'Her work remained focused on Germany and was full of homesickness and sadness in this new and strange environment.'[742]

[740] *The Poems of Mascha Kaléko*, p. 73.
[741] Benteler, Anne. *Sprache im Exil: Mehrsprachigkeit und Übersetzung als literarische Verfahren bei Hilde Domin, Mascha Kaléko und Werner Lansburgh* (Germany, J.B. Metzler, 2019), p. 241.
[742] *The Poems of Mascha Kaléko*, p. 73.

III.III.VI: Andreas Nolte's translations

Kaléko's foremost English translator Andreas Nolte's work on the poet is admirable and exhaustive. Translating and publishing a career-spanning collection of her poetry in 2010,[743] Nolte's second edition in 2017 attempts to be as comprehensive as possible, containing a Preface, Foreword, Introduction and Bibliography, while separating the periods of her life and work into Six Chapters (each with their own explanatory Introduction).

Nolte acknowledges how much of Kaléko's present obscurity stems from the fact that 'her texts existed in the original German only'; as such, too many 'people simply could not access her work or learn about the poet herself.'[744] Nolte recalls pursuing the project with a mixture of impassioned discovery, urgency and modesty, claiming his translations 'represent the best compromise I am capable of between crudely converting the German original word for word and creating an English poem that makes sense and sounds right.'[745] This sounds like an innocuous approach to translation, yet where does this viewpoint meet with Mascha Kaléko's own thoughts on the untranslatability of poetry (and lyric poetry more specifically)? The clue lies in Nolte's admission that a 'good poem is defined by more than the visible sum of its words.'

> Kaléko has written poems in which a particular word is of great importance, even a first letter is meaningful, or a certain first and/or last word of the poem has significance. Some of this simply cannot be reproduced in translation without changing the content significantly, but I have attempted to keep many of these poetic patterns intact.[746]

[743] Kaléko, Mascha. *"No Matter where I Travel, I Come to Nowhereland": The Poetry of Mascha Kaléko* (United States: Department of German and Russian, University of Vermont, 2010).
[744] *The Poems of Mascha Kaléko,* p. 21.
[745] *The Poems of Mascha Kaléko*, p. 25.
[746] *The Poems of Mascha Kaléko*, p. 23.

III.III.V: *Memento* (1956)

It would not be until Spring 1956 that Mascha Kaléko would finally return to Berlin. Very little is known of this trip, but it would be careless to assume it was not a journey of great personal import and defiance. Given the obscurity of this visit, the remaining testament to this experience and what it meant for this poet can only be surmised from a poem of that year, entitled *Memento*. I personally find this poem remarkable for the unmistakability of its subject matter, its transparency of language and its brevity of form. Relying here upon Andreas Nolte's translation, I posit it here as exemplary not only of Kaléko's corpus but also representative of the model of *saudade* I intend to advance over the course of Section III. The present Section hinges on my ability to persuade the reader as to its applicability to these authors and texts, which will depend on recalling its meanings in its own context(s).

The poem appeared in a collection entitled *Das Lyrische Stenogrammheft* (1956).[747] Disconcertingly, its introductory pages put surprisingly little emphasis on the poet's context. Rather than mention the World War or the conflict's impact on the German language, the Holocaust or the multiple escapes from Europe it came to inspire, its editors calmly describe this collection as an extension of the author's contribution to a key Modernist trope. 'These "lyrical shorthand" from the world of eight-hour everyday life, the melancholic "furnished" existence, the young lovers of our day - in short, from the world of all those oppressed by the same suffering: the big city of this 20th century.'[748] I will use this curious circumscription as a point of departure for discussing the role of audience, a key tenet of *saudade* as I conceive it in Section III. Before pushing forward with that inquiry, however, it is necessary before all else to turn to the poem itself.

[747] Kaléko, Mascha. *Das Lyrische Stenogrammheft* (German: Rowohlt, 1956).
[748] *Das Lyrische Stenogrammheft*, p. 4. Translation mine.

Vor meinem eignen Tod ist mir nicht bang,

Nur vor dem Tode derer, die mir nah sind.

Wie soll ich leben, wenn sie nicht mehr da sind?

Der weiß es wohl, dem gleiches widerfuhr;

– Und die es trugen, mögen mir vergeben.

Bedenkt: den eignen Tod, den stirbt man nur,

Doch mit dem Tod der andern muß man leben.

Allein im Nebel tast ich todentlang

Und laß mich willig in das Dunkel treiben.

Das Gehen schmerzt nicht halb so wie das Bleiben.

[The fear of my own death is not so strong,

It's just the deaths of those who I adore.

How shall I live when they are no more?]

He knows it well who can identify

– And those enduring it I hope forgive.

Just think: one's own death one just has to die;

But with the deaths of others one must live.

Alone in fog I fumble death along

Get pushed into the darkness all obeying.

The leaving hurts not half as much as staying.][749] (Nolte)

[749] *The Poems of Mascha Kaléko*, pp. 100-101.

Expressing with great simplicity the sense of loss, linguistic exile, and 'survivor's guilt' prevalent and inevitable across the expanse of post-war exilic literature, Kaléko articulates with great economy of language something broadly felt in the wake of the conflict.[750] The question of how to live with absence is profoundly delivered in its final question, coinciding in this respect with Katherine Vaz's earlier description of *saudade* as nominating 'an absence' that constitutes 'the most profound presence in one's life.'[751] It asks of its reader: How does one learn to survive such absence? From the perspective of the literary critic many years later, how does one approach such questions?[752]

Turning back to that storied Portuguese word with which I intend to probe these questions anew, the emotional tonality of *saudade* can no doubt be identified here. One can say that this poem 'reminds' them of the emotion of *saudade*, or that it carries its emotional tonality in the way it is written or read aloud. But what would such claims accomplish, how would they advance understanding of the literary text in question - and why would such claims need other languages to begin with? In my prior conceptions of this Portuguese Untranslatable, my understanding of the term fell outside of those affective registers. As I interpret *saudade*, it is premised on linguistic displacement; a sense of synchronic or diachronic deferral; and, finally, an uncertain audience. Let me address those elements in the poem consecutively below, in the hope of developing that final tenet, of uncertain audience, further over the course of the present analysis.

---

[750] Nutkiewicz, Michael. "Shame, Guilt, and Anguish in Holocaust Survivor Testimony." *The Oral History Review*, vol. 30, no. 1, [Oxford University Press, Oral History Association], 2003, pp. 1–22.

[751] Vaz, Katherine. *Saudade: A Novel* (New York: St. Martin Press, 1996), p.44.

[752] See: Lang, Jessica. *Textual Silence* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2017), pp. 19-20: 'What happens when we read Holocaust texts? While my argument here is not a proposal for a middle ground between the creation of a new kind of receptivity and the elimination of any need for it, I do want to underscore the "moment" of criticism on which these critical "readers" focus in common: an unreadable aspect of Holocaust texts which is in my view foundational to Holocaust texts. […] Theoretical explorations of the act of reading argue that readability is in general dependent on a dialectical contract between reader and text, but the trauma of the Holocaust effectively fractures this relationship, creating a space and position where reading is interrupted and finally impossible. Unreadability in these terms is a characteristic aspect of texts about the Holocaust that, although more difficult to identify in texts further removed from it, is as essential to second- and third-generation accounts as to eyewitness accounts.'

I will begin by suggesting that *saudade* offers a useful frame through which to understand the notion of exile from one's own language, a connection as valid in respect to Portuguese colonialism as it is to Germany's 1945 defeat. The element of linguistic displacement in this poem can only be gathered by its mode of address. Only with the biographical knowledge of Kaléko and her partner's emigration does the silence of those she refers to in the poem carry a greater emotional weight. '*Das Gehen schmerzt nicht halb so wie das Bleiben'* ['The leaving hurts not half as much as staying'].[753] She summarises her bondage to people and places that no longer exist. In this sense, *Memento* is a testament to linguistic displacement insofar as it evokes that displacement through the expressed inability to communicate with those to whom it refers and to whom it is addressed.

Moving on to tropes of synchronic or diachronic deferral, I consider this an invaluable tool for recognising how *saudade* can be cultivated and conceptualised as an intervening theory across literature (perhaps even the leading reason for its inclusion as an Untranslatable and analytic tool). Synchronic deferral here means the inability to communicate in the language one writes at the time of composition. For Kaleko, as for Celan, the opportunity to speak one's language was limited in their new environments. Diachronic deferral refers to the way in which languages alter over time – here, displacement also plays a role. Vladimir Nabokov once remarked that it was impossible to stay attuned to the slang of one's languages after too long in emigration.[754] For Kaleko, her choice between personal safety and linguistic community further compelled her to express the complexity of her situation. Yet interestingly, her translator Nolte does not follow her there. The reasons for this, on either account, are due in large part to the synchronic and diachronic deferral evident in this poem.

[753] *The Poems of Mascha Kaléko*, pp. 100-101.

[754] "Metaphors apart, I feel a certain hardening of my vocabulary, with London's modish phrases and New England slang no longer oxygenating the bloodstream of my style. In a sense, the same thing occurred in regard to my Russian after several years of expatriation in Berlin and Paris." See: Nabokov, Vladimir. *Think, Write, Speak: Uncollected Essays, Reviews, Interviews and Letters to the Editor*. (London: Penguin Books, 2019), p. 68.

Where monolingual English readers come across the words 'Get pushed into the darkness all obeying,' this line could more accurately be translated as: 'And let me drift willingly into the dark.'[755] In that substitution hinges much of this translator's approach. Between the passivity of 'drift' and the accusation of 'push' lies a historical gap of Holocaust reception and historical presuppositions that must be confronted when making an account for the translation of such work. Scholars like Peter Davies and Jessica Lang have made brave attempts to bring these issues to light. Their work has sought to reveal that the Holocaust experience is as historically contingent in its reception as any other:

> the kind of truth these texts are considered to convey has shifted considerably in the decades since 1945. They have over time been considered acceptable as legal evidence, as historical proof, as underpinning for philosophical arguments or ethical systems, or as a medium for conveying authentic experience. This has affected the way they have been *read*, *published*, and *translated*.[756]

This brings to mind not only Nolte's decision above, but also the mild paratextual Introduction to this poem in its initial publication. Put differently, it is a powerful reminder that the contingency of a translation is no less radical than the contingency of its original publication. Read from this perspective, an author engaged in producing work whereby the target-audience of the literary work is pointedly absent, may go some way toward explaining the difficulty of translating such work. Where the source-text is vague as to who it addresses, the translator's task can be complicated by assumption. Later, rather than translating the second line of the final stanza as: '- And those who wore it may forgive me,' Nolte chooses to remove Kaléko's original line. This is worth inquiry.

---

[755] *The Poems of Mascha Kaléko,* pp. 100-101.

[756] Davies, Peter. "Testimony and Translation." *Translation and Literature*, vol. 23, no. 2, Edinburgh University Press, 2014, pp. 170–84; p. 172. Emphasis mine.

It implies the hope for reconciliation not with Germany itself but with its *victims*. Nolte carefully removes this layer of the poem's complexity in favour of what Gillian Rose has referred to as Holocaust piety,[757] whereby the event of the Holocaust is framed in its reception as irredeemably ineffable. Yet in the balance of this decision, Nolte omits a line that beautifully captures both the estrangement of exile as well as the complex ethical landscape occupied by those who survived this event (and the absent audiences to which such work was directed and addressed). In the process, he makes the mistake of potentially overlooking the audience to which the poem is directed. It is here that one touches on the third dimension of *saudade* as I conceive – that of an uncertain audience.

That is why I suggested earlier that one way of identifying *saudade* as a conceptual designation in the literary context is to consider *literary works addressed to an absent audience*. This requires some further clarity. The blindingly obvious objection that *all* literature is written for an absent audience is a response that misunderstands my present thesis, echoed in Lang's assertion that 'in the absence of the events themselves, readability is an essential condition for representation.'[758] The ability to outlive the absence of others was not, in Kaléko's case, a morally uncomplicated proposition. It was rather a question of *how to survive one's own survival*. Conclusively, the poem addresses an audience that no longer exists. Or at the very least, that the author knows will never read, hear or receive these words. In this sense, the intimacy of such work feels, at times, uncomfortably voyeuristic.

This third dimension of *saudade* as I propose it will be further developed in the following Chapter, in respect to Paul Celan. For now, Kaléko's own thoughts on untranslatability, in prose form, should go no further without mention.

---

[757] Rose, Gillian. *Mourning becomes the law: Philosophy and representation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 41-62.
[758] *Textual Silence*, p. 93.

III.III.VI: *Von der Unübersetzbarkeit lyrischer Dichtung* (1961)

Brief and obscure, the following analysis offers the first reappraisal of Kaléko's text in English. Directly rendered as *The Untranslatability of Lyrical Poetry*, Kaléko wrote this unpublished typescript in 1961, later published by her estate.[759] So while it may not have the confident development of Marina Tsvetaeva's piece (Section I Chapter VI), it nonetheless articulates briefly the question of untranslatability from the perspective of linguistic exile. Kaléko begins this piece by recalling how a journalist in New York once asked her why she bothered writing in German. Would it not make more sense to write poems in English? She reflects:

> It does not seem to occur to anyone who has not had direct and painful contact with this problem that in order to be able to write poetry in a language, it is not enough to know that language [*daß man diese Sprache beherrsche*], the language must conquer us [*die Sprahe muß uns beberrschen*].[760]

Why and how does linguistic ownership persist, against all odds? Kaléko immediately throws her readers into the scene of cultural disassociation and exile, where she is left in the strange position of having to defend a language from which she has every right to feel alienated. Yet that alienation deserves emphasis in this account. 'Direct' [*direkten*] and 'painful' [*schmerzlichen*] are how she characterises the predicament of linguistic exile.[761] Yet she does not stop there. Her play on language may be undetectable in my translation above, but in the original she makes the subtle leap from implying the ability of the poet to 'master' a language [*beherrsche*] and the ability for the language in question to 'conquer,' 'overwhelm' or 'dominate' [*beherrschen*] the poet.[762]

---

[759] Kaléko, Mascha. *Von der Unübersetzbarkeit lyrischer Dichtung*. In: Rosenkranz, Jutta von. (ed.) *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe*. (München: Verlag, 2012), pp. 833–834.
[760] *Von der Unübersetzbarkeit lyrischer Dichtung*, p. 833.
[761] *Von der Unübersetzbarkeit lyrischer Dichtung*, p. 833.
[762] *Von der Unübersetzbarkeit lyrischer Dichtung*, p. 833.

In the journey from *beherrsche* to *beherrschen*, there is an eloquent and suggestive subtlety to the adding of one letter to this word to alter its purpose and context, arguably illuminating in this wordplay the semantic journey from the choice between the hermeneutic or instrumentalist approaches to translation as Venuti conceives it.[763] Much as Tsvetaeva claimed in Section I that *Nachdichten* in German articulates the experience of literary translation, with its English equivalents of 'recreate' or 're-poeticise,' here Kaléko plays with the German language to distinguish between the impulse to *master* a language or be *dominated* by that same language. This leads one to inquire to what extent *saudade* could be recast as the exile or estrangement from one's own language. The subtle movement from mastering a language to being conquered by that language on the basis of one letter, illuminates perhaps a broader attitude to interpretation itself. This is a view more pronounced still in Kaléko's following passage:

> But we only speak the language in which we first said MOTHER and I LOVE YOU. The emotional associations of childhood and early youth, the emotional and intellectual property [*Geistesgut*] that is enclosed in our mother tongue like the deepest kernel of a shell, are what we lack in a newly acquired language [*neuerworbenen Sprache*]. Every one of us emigrants knows the truism that concepts are often missing, not just words, in a foreign language, because the mentality of every nation manifests itself in the absence or presence of certain concepts in its vocabulary [*die Mentalität der Nation sic him Fehlen oder Vorhandensein bestimmter Begriffe in ihrem Sprachschatz kundtut*].[764]

[763] Venuti, Lawrence. *Contra Instrumentalism* (Nebraska: Nebraska University Press, 2019).
[764] *Von der Unübersetzbarkeit lyrischer Dichtung*, p. 833.

Speaking on behalf of the linguistic emigrant, Kaléko considers language a barrier to universal communication and creative activity. In other languages, 'concepts are often missing, not just words,' she asserts, due to the emotional associations intrinsic to human vocabulary.[765] In the absence or separation from the *Müttersprache* or literal Mother, the emigrant she generalises into focus is one lost in a language whose emotional associations do not determine their usage or add value to their definition.

Firstly, Kaléko posits the idea that different cultures develop differently according to what is (or is not) present in that specific culture's lexicon. This encapsulates poetically the ideas put forward more formally by Whorf and Sapir, extending that debate.[766] What this ultimately comes down to is the proposition that the presence or absence of certain words or concepts determines how a culture develops, just as a plant is strained to broaden in a certain direction or to grow up to a certain height. In truth, Kaléko reminds us here that the concept of untranslatability itself is in some ways inconceivable without at least a qualified or restricted subscription to this governing principle.[767] For Kaléko's ontology of language, in as far as it can be discerned from this passage, premises language on association. Association itself is premised on memory. Memory is itself premised on the past, and 'is made from the subtle as well as potentially violent negotiation between what is remembered and what is eliminated.'[768] Memory, in the final analysis, is itself premised on ownership: *Geistesgut.*

---

[765] *Von der Unübersetzbarkeit lyrischer Dichtung*, p. 833.

[766] See: Sapir, Edward. "The Status of Linguistics as a Science", *Language*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (Dec. 1929), p. 210.

[767] As such, a reminder of precisely what that governing principle is may be of use here. Barbara Cassin, as stated in the Introduction, considers *The Dictionary* an opportunity to refute the idea of universal knowledge untouched by the determining conditions of language. See: Walkowitz, Rebecca L. "Translating the Untranslatable: An Interview with Barbara Cassin," in: Marcus, Sharon & Caitlin Zaloom (eds.) *Think in Public: A Public Books Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), pp. 309-318. That Kaléko considers the justification of untranslatability on the grounds that different cultures exist through different epistemologies arguably supports the central idea by which *The Dictionary* operates. In this view, the lines that separate human communities are drawn between languages, concepts and ideas, not geographical boundaries, borders or nation-states.

[768] Buenescu, Helena. "Comparativism as Wounds of Possibility," in: Ipsen, Gesche, Matthews, Tim & Obradović, Dragana. (eds.) *Provocations and Negotiation* (Amsterdam: Rodolpi, 2013), pp. 5-19. p.7.

Therefore language, for Kaléko, is more subject to memory, emotion and association than determinative meanings or aesthetic experimentation. One can observe its measure in Kaléko's own life trajectory and the manner in which her work is 'focused on Germany,' despite the range of her locations of composition.[769] Whether she was writing poetry in New York, Jerusalem or in transit between the two, Kaléko's persistent concentration of her lost home reflects Kettler's definition of exile: stuck between two places, 'the focus of their attention is on their unfinished business between them and the first place, not their limited business with the second.'[770] When looking at Paul Celan in the final Chapter, these facets will come together more fully and their consequences clearer. Resuming Kaléko's piece, if the mentality of nations range and vary then it is no wonder, she goes on, that poetry is especially vulnerable to such essentialist complaints:

> This is not an insignificant reason among all the reasons why poetry, let alone lyrical poetry, is so difficult or impossible to translate.
>
> [*Das ist ein nicht unwesentlicher Grund unter all den Gründen dafür, daß Dichtung und schon gar Versdichtung, sich so schwer oder gar nicht übersetzen läßt*.][771]

The first question this raises is one of degree. What renders lyric poetry *more* untranslatable than other poems, and what sets it at a greater distance from the translator's interpretation? What exactly grants lyric poetry this most privileged and impenetrable status? In response, Kaléko's parting word on translation, at the piece's end, is this. She mentions toward the end that Penguin Publishers 'know very well' [*weiß wohl*] why their foreign poetry anthologies 'have in addition only prose translations of the verse words' [*daneben lediglich Prosaübersetzungen der Vers-Worte gibt*].[772]

---

[769] *The Poems of Mascha Kaléko*, p. 73.
[770] Kettler, David. *The Liquidation of Exile* (London & New York: Anthem Press, 2011), pp. 1-2.
[771] *Von der Unübersetzbarkeit lyrischer Dichtung*, p. 834.
[772] *Von der Unübersetzbarkeit lyrischer Dichtung*, p. 834.

One may well deduce from this end to the unfinished piece that it is the lyrical form and structure that struggles or refuses to be culturally transmitted via literary translation. When form is altered, this signals for Kaléko the translator's defeat. This recalls Brodsky and Bonnefoy's argument (Section I Chapter III) on free verse translations, presented here as more reflection than polemic. Kaléko and Brodsky cohere in their view that the form of poetry is what is untranslatable across cultures; not the meanings conveyed. 'Poetry' in this account, 'especially poetry that plays with idiomaticity,' claims Anna Benteler in her study of the poet, is 'as good as untranslatable.'[773]

However brief, this piece by Kaléko nonetheless makes a positive contribution to the theorisation of untranslatability, in this instance from the perspective of exilic literary (and linguistic) authorship. She outlines how language must map not only onto reality, but onto the *associations* through which that reality is woven. Association, in turn, can only be formed through the exercise and endurance of experience and memory. What is more, while she does not rise to the journalist's provocation, the trajectory she describes between memory and association betray a heavy sense of ownership over language amidst the loss of material stability. Words without concepts, and concepts without words, instead speak to the ambiguities and epistemic gaps she describes as only becoming visible in the course of linguistic exile.

[773] *Sprache im Exil: Mehrsprachigkeit und Übersetzung als literarische Verfahren bei Hilde Domin, Mascha Kaléko und Werner Lansburgh*, p. 238. Translation mine.

III.III.VII: Conclusion

Let me summarise what has been covered. Mascha Kaléko, a long-obscured German-Jewish poet who spent most of her life outside her linguistic home, has earned her enduring contemporary revival of interest following Nolte's exceptional work of translation and preservation. Introducing her life and work, I then explained how her poem *Memento* (1956) not only evokes *saudade* as it was defined in Section III Chapter I, but that an analysis of Nolte's translation reveals (and conceals) an arguably more complex poet than his translations imply. Moving then onto her own thoughts on untranslatability, and then Nolte's translational enterprise in more detail, I will now make the following conclusion.

Kaléko insisted that poetry, and especially lyric poetry, is 'difficult or impossible' to translate.[774] She justifies this on the grounds that prose translations of verse often approach their lyric originals with a degree of scepticism. Prose translations, to Kaléko, confirm that it is not determined meaning that is lost in translation so much as associative richness and lyrical structure. Kaléko's singularity is one overwhelmingly informed by geographical displacement and the associative damage caused to the language she continued using. This places her stubbornly at the margins of a cultural tradition in with which she no longer wished to embed or compare herself.

Considering Nolte's translational strategies, he suggests Kaléko's virtue as an author is: 'simple language, the universal themes, the true and believable emotions,' all of which supposedly 'fit well into our time as they did into hers and anytime in between.'[775] As it appears to my reading, this emerges from an implicit presupposition that Kaléko's own early reception can pre-determine what qualities will appeal to her English-speaking audience when encountering her works for the first time in another language.

[774] *Von der Unübersetzbarkeit lyrischer Dichtung*, p. 834.
[775] *The Poems of Mascha Kaléko*, p. ???

However, there is a perceptible epistemology behind Nolte's translations of Kaléko. In the attempt to promote Kaléko's literary survival, Nolte has offered her poems as unproblematic a treatment as possible in the hope that they will travel further via their resonant simplicity. Her poems are translated with their structure, rhythm and rhymes intact. Yet such a treatment is only partial, not least for overlooking the element of absent audience that typifies exilic literatures, that I have suggested *saudade* be used to circumscribe. Even if her contribution to the conceptualisation of *saudade* remains uncertain at this juncture, the final words of *Memento* still resonate with its definition:

> *Bedenkt: den eignen Tod, den stirbt man nur,*
> *Doch mit dem Tod der andern muß man leben.*
> [Just think: one's own death one just has to die;
> But with the deaths of others one must live.][776]

[776] *The Poems of Mascha Kaléko*, pp. 100-101.

Section Three Chapter Four: *Saudade* and Paul Celan

"*Nach Auschwitz ein Gedicht zu schreiben, ist barbarisch*" ["To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric."].'[777] Theodor Adorno's (often mis-contextualised and misunderstood) statement suggests that what cannot be represented in verse must be passed over in silence. What was once the ineffable zone of the *Absolut* gestured to by late German Romanticism finds itself, in the post-war German context, here in a state of radical inversion whereby language is petrified by its own referential scope and implicative physical force. Celan's poetry takes a paradoxical and ambiguous approach to the horrific events with which his work is chiefly associated.

His poetry begs to be thought through. Yet it is no easy task to explain how these often fragmentary and obscure works produce such striking intellectual and emotional responses from his readers. In some ways he can arguably be interpreted as a philosopher traumatised into verse, producing what many have claimed is one of the most important bodies of poetry written in the 20th century, most of it written in the wake of its most infamous event. As such, that a Holocaust survivor like Celan should present a poetics orientated toward the past should not be altogether surprising.

In the previous Chapter, I set out the suggestion of seeing *saudade* in the literary context as literature directed to an absent audience. This can help formalise this aspect of Celan's work in the foregoing analyses. The following Chapter establishes the poet's life, before delving into exactly how and why I think the Portuguese Untranslatable *saudade* helps reveal an element of his poetry previously neglected through various forms of ill-conceived mystification. Next, the role of untranslatability in Celan's work leads to the parting suggestion that Celan was not conscious of his own untranslatable style of writing, but that he knowingly attempted to contribute to an Untranslatable Canon.

[777] Adorno, Theodor. *Prismen. Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft* (Berlin &Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1955), p. 30.

III.IV.II: Background

Celan was born in 1920 in Czernowitz (then Romania, now Ukraine), some 224 miles from where Lispector was born a month later. At home his family speak German, at school he learns in Romanian.[778] Their Jewish faith forces him and his family into a ghetto complex in 1941. The treatment of Jews in Romania was among the worst recorded in Axis Europe. Celan's experience is no exception. Him and his family are forced into a ghetto complex in 1941.[779] Every Saturday night, Gestapo knock on doors at random and whole families disappear without a word. After a friend tells him about an abandoned cosmetic factory situated beyond the Gestapo's patrols, Celan begs his parents to hide there with him. His parents refuse. In a rage, Celan storms out and goes to a gathering with his friends instead. The next day, he returns and finds the apartment empty. He would later hear that his father died of typhus in a Ukrainian labour camp, and his mother was shot in another.[780]

Soon after this, he is captured and interned in a labour camp. Celan 'either escaped or was released, returning home not long before the Soviets reoccupied Czernowitz in late March.'[781] Returning to a barren landscape where Socialism is begrudgingly constructed by those who remain, Celan finally decides to leave for good. After a brief stay in Bucharest where his range of languages start to widen, Celan goes on to Vienna. Disappointed and isolated in the city (despite speaking German) he finally arrives in Paris in 1948. It is where he spends the rest of his life, marrying painter Gisèle Lestrange in 1952 and teaching, translating and writing poetry in German from the safe distance of the French capital. Celan's decision to continue writing in German despite the ordeals he suffered and witnessed has been the subject of exhaustive curiosity. Yet this is not the only source of mystification the poet has inspired.

---

[778] *Paul Celan: Poet, Survivor, Jew*, p. 6.
[779] Snyder, Timothy. *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), p. 218.
[780] *Paul Celan: Poet, Survivor, Jew*, p. 14.
[781] *Paul Celan: Poet, Survivor, Jew*, pp. 22-23.

III.IV.III: Reading for *saudade* in Paul Celan

'*Heimat*,' Celan once told his friend Jean Daive in Paris, 'is an untranslatable word. And does the concept even exist? It's a human fabrication: an illusion.'[782] This statement marks a fascinating point of departure for considering the intersection of Celan's poetics and this Portuguese word. As stated near the start of this Section, whether it was African slaves being transported to Brazil or Portuguese monarchs bidding farewell to Rio, *saudade* has been an idiom cultivated in displacement. Through a variety of historical circumstances, it has referred to a sentiment inextricably connected with and conditioned by modes of distance, exile and geographical or historical estrangement.

Recollecting and reiterating the attributes of this Emotional Untranslatable, I will now suggest how I find them figured in Celan's own work. It can be found, I suggest, in the recurring motif of pronouns and direct address, manifested across Celan's published and unpublished output. This has drawn the attention of translators as well as critics. 'The irreconcilable ambiguity of Celan's formulation,' writes critic Werner Hamacher (1948-2017), 'in which the absence of the you suspends the I, that of the I suspends the you, and along with it discourse itself is suspended' to the point of formulating an address 'to nobody and nothing.'[783] Translator Hamburger views this phenomena in almost mystical terms, claiming nothing is more 'characteristic' of the strangeness of Celan's work

[782] Daive, Jean & Waldrop, Rosemarie. p. 221.
[783] Hamacher, Werner. "The Second of Inversion: Movements of a Figure through Celan's Poetry," *Yale French Studies* Vol. 69 (1985): pp. 276-314, p. 294.

> than their unidentified personal pronouns, the "you" that can be the woman addressed in a love poem or an alter ego or a deity or only the amorphous, unknowable "other" to whom all Celan's poems make their way; the "he", "she", or "they" that enters a poem without any introduction or identification.[784]

These accounts of Celan's work are of a descriptive nature but will be of importance moving forward. Confronting the oddity of the poet's address, my reading of Mascha Kaleko in the previous Chapter decided that 'reading for *saudade*' in literature can circumscribe literature written for an absent audience. Taking this conception over to Celan's corpus, given his more extensive reception over the years, his translators here touch upon an important element of his poetics that I assert only *saudade* – as cultivated in its original contexts – can answer to. I turn presently to *La Contrescarpe* (1963), a poem in which the implicative dimensions of this encounter, between Untranslatable word and untranslatable poet, come to light.

[784] Hamburger, Michael, "Introduction," in: Celan, Paul & Hamburger, Michael. *Selected Poems* (London: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 33.

III.IV.VI: *Contrascarpe* (1962)

What I propose here is an assertion on what I recognise as a device across Celan's work. It appears with such frequency that I limit myself here to an example of principal interest. The poem *La Contrescarpe* (1963) refers to the poet's stopover in Berlin while on the train to Paris.[785] It is 1938, and Celan arrived in the German capital the morning after *Kristallnacht*, when Jewish homes, hospitals, schools and businesses were violently destroyed while German authorities resist intervening.[786]

Über Krakau
bist du gekommen, am Anhalter Bahnhof
floß deinen Blicken ein Rauch zu,
der war schon von morgen.
[Via Krakow
you came, at the *Anhalter*
railway station
a smoke flowed towards your glance,
it already belonged to tomorrow.][787]

What is unmistakable is that the personal pronouns in Celan's work establish their point of reference resolutely either in the past or toward a projected futurity. This leads me to conclude that these pronouns are not referent to 'an alter ego or a deity,' [788] as Hamburger speculated, but rather to a complex economy of loss, deferral and retrieval within Celan's poetics whereby an absent audience is engaged with. As I see it, the principal function of this device is the survival of the self through language. This is a claim that requires unfolding.

[785] Celan, Paul & Pierre Joris. *Selections* (California: University of California Press, 2005), p. 24.
[786] Steinweis, Alan. *Kristallnacht 1938* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2009), pp. 82-83.
[787] *Selections*, p. 24.
[788] *Selected Poems*, p. 33.

Rather than the 'amorphous, unknowable "other"' to whom Hamburger thinks all of Celan's poems are directed,[789] I will suggest that given the isolation and remoteness Celan was forced to negotiate, it is ultimately unsurprising that his first point of reference and address was more likely simply his *past self*, as he travailed these dangerous, hostile or unrecognisable landscapes. Another passage from Hamburger's translations of *Die Niemandsrose* proves particularly poignant:

Ich weiß,
Ich weiß und du weiß, wir wußten,
Wir wußten nicht, wir
Waren ja da und nicht dort,
Und zeweilen, wenn
Nur das Nichts zwischen uns stand, fanden
Wir ganz zueinander.
[I know,
I know and you know, we knew,
we did not know, we
were there, after all, and not there
and at times when
only the void stood between us we got
all the way to each other.][790]

[789] *Selected Poems*, p. 33.
[790] *Selected Poems*, p. 63.

Given the scope and nature of Celan's experiences, it appears to me compelling to bracket these personal pronouns in the poem as significant. Their significance does not automatically clarify their meaning or to whom they are addressed. If there is any hope of deciding to whom this is addressed to, then two alternatives seem to emerge. Either this is Celan's attempt to address himself throughout the various horrors he witnessed. Or, alternatively, it is addressed to an absent audience.

This is not to say that the author himself would have considered this a contradiction. He may well have assumed that he was no longer the same person as he once was, and with good reason (which may go some way to explaining his suggestion to Jean Daive that the idea of 'homeland' was an untranslatable utopia). Seen in this light, it may be more accurate to consider these various pronouns and direct addresses as a series of attempts to master or cultivate a sense of *ownership* over his past experiences. It is a fragile ownership to be sure, inasmuch as language is acknowledged as the only living testament to those experiences. Such a reading coheres with Correia's assertion that the experience of *saudade* leads its subject to reside 'in all times simultaneously.'[791]

In the case of Mascha Kaleko in the previous Chapter, her translator Nolte emphasised that, despite surviving the Nazi atrocities and escaping to the United States, her work 'remained focused on Germany and was full of homesickness and sadness in this new and strange environment.'[792] In other words, despite a distance of almost 4,000 miles, her new environment did not prevent her continuing to write about Germany, in German. In the case of Paul Celan, his hardship, exile and escape to Paris did not prevent him doing the same. While Kaleko addressed untranslatability directly in the previous Chapter, the case made against Celan on this score is much larger. One can go no further without reference to this element of his poetics.

[791] "Natalia Correia on Portuguese Surrealism: A Lecture in the United States," p. 126.
[792] *The Poems of Mascha Kaléko*, p. 73.

III.IV.VI: Celan's Untranslatability

Untranslatability is a claim made toward Celan more often than perhaps any other Modernist author. That does not mean it is correct. It is actually a theme of his reception borne out by first-hand accounts, statements by the author himself, by his translators and his critics. I will enlarge on each set of claims sequentially here, before settling on a poem that I believe exemplifies this quality and its purposes for the poet. Edmond Jabès reflected that

> The satisfaction Paul Celan expressed concerning translations, published or about to be published, puzzled me. 'It is difficult to do any better', he would add. Is it because, deep inside, he knew, better than any other writer, that he was an untranslatable author?[793]

One can derive from this insight the fact that Celan prided himself on this quality in his work. Consider, by extension, Jean Davie's curious exchange with the poet. 'Have you thought of writing another language?' Celan asks him. When Daive says no, and asks Celan himself, the poet allegedly said: '"Yes, sometimes, in French… but it's not possible." He smiles.'[794] On either count, Celan himself remains oblique in response to these claims. It is thus important to consider his own statements on the subject. The answer to Daive's question may be found in a statement from before Celan's arrival in Paris. Asked how he could still write in German after the war, he replied "Only in the mother tongue [*Muttersprache*] can one speak one's truth. In a foreign tongue the poet lies."'[795]

At first glance, one reads a defence of linguistic essentialism. Yet such a thesis is difficult to sustain for a poet who accumulated various other languages and foreign idioms into his work. Which makes it is a statement worth further scrutiny. To my reading, it confirms Celan's prolific grasp of languages as one ultimately driven by a paradoxical impulse. On one

[793] Jabès, Edmond. 'The Memory of Words', translated by Pierre Joris, in: *Selections*, pp. 217–23. p. 217.
[794] Daive, Jean & Rosemarie Waldrop. *Under the Dome: Walks with Paul Celan* (San Francisco: City Lights Publishers, 2020), p. 88.
[795] As quoted in: *Paul Celan: Poet, Survivor, Jew*, p. 46.

hand, the need to displace physical absence with linguistic content. On the other, it reflects Celan's distrust of language, which, as should be clear by now in this study, was a resident feature of Modernist writing in many places. Celan made a further statement on untranslatability in a note scribbled in the margins of a draft for his 1960 speech in Bremen.

Although it did not make the final text, it alludes to the poet's own conscious incorporation of untranslatability: '*Es gibt kein Wort, das, ausgesprochen, nicht den übertragenen Sinn mitbrächte: im Gedicht meinen die Worte unübertragbar zu sein*', Celan writes, which Joris translates as: 'in the poem, words mean to be untranslatable,' yet 'there is no word which, when spoken, will not contain its translated meaning.'[796] One gathers from this admission that translation acted for Celan as a way to transcend being *through* language. Language, in such a schema, is no longer a mechanism of expression as it is a mechanism of deferral. Translation became a means through which to transcend, supplant and surpass experience.

It remains to be seen if this is supported by Celan's translators. They offer, alongside their praise, as close an indictment of untranslatability as any translator will likely submit. Michael Hamburger's translations of Celan's poetry wins the first European Translation Prize in 1990. Despite already having translated Bertolt Brecht, Nelly Sachs and Georg Trakl by this point, he is forced to admit that

> it is as a translator too, that I insist on the essential difficulty of [Celan's] poetry. These can be illumined, but not resolved or dissolved, by scholarly research. It is the difficulty and the paradox that demand a special attention to every word in his texts, and this attention is something other than what is normally meant by "understanding". I am

[796] Celan, Paul & Böschenstein, Bernhard and Schmull, Heino (eds.) *Meridian: Drafts – Complete – Materials*. (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2011), p. 54; trans. Joris, Pierre; emphasis in original.

> by no means sure that I have "understood" even those of his poems […] which I have been able to translate over the years.[797]

For an award-winning translator of such standing to confess to their limitations is notable. By portraying Celan as an author immune to analysis, what hermeneutic principle would satisfy Hamburger's definition of 'understanding,' and what can be inferred from his doubt that scholarship can extend it? If a text can be translated while not being understood, does this earn it the definition of untranslatability on which Apter and Cassin have staked their project?

These questions are provoked further elsewhere. Celan biographer John Felstiner's own claims on the poet's untranslatability demand reconsideration. From Felstiner's perspective, the impossibility of translating Celan has both ethical and aesthetic grounds: when an author 'builds into his speech a drastic questioning of language and poetry themselves, then I feel the translator's reluctance all the more keenly, almost as a matter of principle.'[798] For this reason, what is already left foreign and untranslated in the poems by Celan himself assumes an unchangeable status: 'For if the Hebrew word says tacitly, "Here something cannot be uttered in German," then probably I should not utter it in English either'.[799] Felstiner therefore defends the claim of untranslatability on effectively reparative grounds.

Rather, Felstiner's notion of Celan's untranslatability is a compensatory gesture in which the foreign is rendered sacred according to the historical conditions of its enunciation. If translation is founded on the hermeneutic interpretation and understanding of a given text, then Felstiner advances the view that the translator's omission can in fact be a source for the reader's own interpretation to take over. A similar sentiment arises in his biography of the poet, when referring to Celan's most famous poem into English.

---

[797] *Selected Poems*, p. 20.
[798] Felstiner, John. "Mother Tongue, Holy Tongue: On Translating and Not Translating Paul Celan," *Comparative Literature*, Spring, 1986, Vol. 38, No. 2 (Spring, 1986), pp. 113-136. p. 113.
[799] "Mother Tongue, Holy Tongue: On Translating and Not Translating Paul Celan," p. 114.

> Over the years, alone or with family or friends or students or in public, I have listened a hundred times to Celan reciting "*Todesfuge*" and have watched people who don't understand German register a dumbstruck recognition that deepens my respect both for the poem and for the nearly possible task of translating it.
>
> Nearly possible – which means ultimately impossible.[800]

To chart the course of a literary work's popular reception while withholding the idea that translation of that same literature is even *possible* runs suspiciously close to the instrumentalist attitude Venuti earlier warned against. Before concentrating on a text that renders Felstiner's point here more tangible, it is worth briefly addressing how Celan's critics (as well as contemporaries and translators) articulate and argue for the author's untranslatability. As stated earlier, the claim of untranslatability toward Celan has come from the author's contemporaries, his translators, and as I lastly explore below, from his critics. The relevance of these statements rests somewhere between the experience of reading Celan's poetry and the larger philosophical arguments and schematic models in which his work is placed.

The French philosopher Lacoue-Labarthe (1940-2007) goes so far as to call Celan's poems 'completely untranslatable' and 'invulnerable to commentary. They necessarily escape interpretation; they forbid it. One could even say they are written to forbid it.'[801] The German philosopher and hermeneuticist Hans-Georg Gadamer affirms these reflections in the following formulation: 'For Celan, the "I" cannot be used hypothetically or interchangeably; it is not a universal. It is untranslatable.'[802] With this sleight of hand, Gadamer unwittingly conflates the poet's singularity with the impossibility of translation, with little evidence for the latter claim.

---

[800] *Paul Celan: Poet, Survivor, Jew*, p. 32.

[801] Lacoue-Labarthe, Phillippe & Tarnowski, Andrea. *Poetry as Experience* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2005), p. 33.

[802] Gadamer, Hans-Georg & Heinemann, Richard, Krajewsji, Bruce (eds.) *Gadamer on Celan: 'Who Am I and Who Are You?' and Other Essays* (New York: SUNY Press, 1997), p. 46.

It is readily observable to me that these accusations are neither substantiated through example or with reference to translation nor, in fact, necessarily converge in their definition of the term. Instead, untranslatability is utilised against Celan as part of much broader philosophical arguments in both accounts.

This leads me to lastly adhere with Beals, who observes correctly that while Celan may have been declared untranslatable probably more than any poet in recent memory, this claim often rests on 'some version of an equivalence model of translation, one that enjoys no great favour among contemporary theorists.'[803] Indeed, notions of translation and equivalence have been vigorously debated over the decades, but are seen by many in Translation Studies today to mischaracterise the theories and activities to which they attend.[804] However, another poem from Celan's oeuvre cannot go unconsidered here, presenting, as I argue it does, the possibility of a literary Canon of untranslatability.

[803] Beals, Kurt. "Alternatives to Impossibility: Translation as Dialogue in the Works of Paul Celan" *Translation Studies*, 7.3 (2014), pp. 284–99, p. 284.
[804] For a more comprehensive overview of this topic, see: Panou, Despoina. "Equivalence in translation theories: A critical evaluation." *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 3.1 (2013): 1.

III.IV.VII: The Untranslatable Canon

One particular instance suggests to me that Celan was not only conscious *of* untranslatability but consciously sought to embed himself *into* a tradition, or literary canon, of untranslatability. Qualified more discretely, I suggest this offers a glimpse of an Untranslatable Canon, potentially one contribution among many. As such, it entertains the possibility of a literary tradition running parallel with the more well-received accounts of Modernism, tradition and language set out by the likes of T. S. Eliot or Ezra Pound.[805] It is not one circulated through manifestos or pamphlets, but one traced through a lineage of marginalia, translation, reception, wilful obscurity and intensified demands on the reader.

Celan's 1963 collection *Die Niemandsrose* [*The No One's Rose*] is dedicated to Osip Mandel'shtam (Section I Chapter III), who he considered a kindred spirit.[806] In the collection is a poem entitled *Und mit dem Buch Aus Tarussa*, translatable as *And the Book of Tarassa*. I restrict myself here not to its content but the epigraph with which it begins. Above the poem itself is a quote from Marina Tsvetaeva's *Poema Kontsa* (Section I Chapter VI), translated by Feinstein as: 'All poets are Jews.'[807] This quote was no doubt lost on the poem's early readership. However, Kliegerman interprets this epigraph as not just a matter of incidental obscurity but as an intertextual gesture of far-ranging significance, one of consequence to both poets in a single gesture. He explains that

> While Tsvetaeva's words gesture to the notion of a totalizing identification with the Other, Celan's withholding of translation attests to the very preservation of alterity. By denying the reader access to the opening inscription, the poet makes part of the poem irrecuperable.[808]

[805] See: Eliot, Thomas Stearns. "Tradition and the individual talent." *Perspecta* 19 (1982): pp. 36-42; Pound, Ezra. "The Tradition." *Poetry*, vol. 3, no. 4, 1914, pp. 137–41.
[806] Celan, Paul. *Die Niemandsrose* (S. Fischer: Frankfurt am Main, 1963).
[807] Tsvetaeva, Marina & Feinstein, Elaine. *Selected Poems* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 108.
[808] Kliegerman, Eric. *Sites of the Uncanny* (Berlin: DeGruyter, 2012) p. 11.

Meanwhile, Felstiner suspects Celan 'meant his audience to stumble over that Russian saying', interpreted as a disruptive gesture premised on the reassertion of cultural identity.[809] 'Celan's Cyrillic epigraph also asserts - in a language his German admirers would have trouble perceiving - that his poetry drew its strength from a defiant Jewishness.'[810] I have no interest in undermining these interpretations, but I suspect neither do justice to the implications at play here. Namely, what remains at a distance from these analyses is the inquiry as to whether this was an attempt to construct an untranslatable literary tradition.

Like Tsvetaeva, Celan was interested in enlarging his demands on the reader, leading them to uncover the legacy and tradition of a defiant and difficult (if not outright untranslatable) tradition of authorship. Celan's incorporation of Tsvetaeva in his epigraph departs significantly from the idea of untranslatability as an obstacle to understanding, interpretation or translation. Rather, as seen in Tsvetaeva's own reflections of untranslatability, the opposite is evoked. Celan withdraws understanding from the reader in order to make a more sustained demand on their attention. Only from this perspective can critics better understand why *Die Niemandsrose* is often regarded as marking the poet's deliberate turn to obfuscation and hermeticism despite the author's protests: "Read! Just keep reading, understanding comes of itself."[811]

I have altogether suggested here that untranslatability, in this instance, allows Celan to embed himself in a tradition of untranslatable authorship through an act of deliberate omission. Celan's inclusion of a foreign idiom serves to facilitate a more demanding form of reading, inquiry and critique. Foregoing a simple understanding of the literary text demands a greater understanding on the part of the reader. Within the conditions of this exercise stands the possibility for a new form of reception, a new art, a new age or a new modernity.

[809] "Mother Tongue, Holy Tongue: On Translating and Not Translating Paul Celan," p. 120.
[810] "Mother Tongue, Holy Tongue: On Translating and Not Translating Paul Celan," p. 120.
[811] *Paul Celan: Poet, Survivor, Jew*, p. 181.

III.IV.VIII: Conclusion

Over the course of this Chapter, I have illustrated Paul Celan's background before approaching his poignant and defiant inclusion of Tsvetaeva's epigraph in a 1963 poem. Attempting to establish *saudade* as an explanatory model for analysing literary displacement, in Celan's case I have argued that this is manifested in the personal pronouns that frequent his poems with notable indeterminacy. What has been left unsubstantiated so far is the survivalist aspect of Celan's poetics. 'Coming from a homeland that barely existed anymore,' writes his biographer, his 'native tongue itself was the only nation he could claim.'[812] Morris calls Czernowitz a 'non-place': a site whose turbulent history frustrates attempts to 'map the fault lines between literary text, cultural and historical memory, and geographical and textual sites of memory.'[813]

Celan's opinion above that a sense of home or homeland is nothing but an illusion is clearly not motivated by self-mythology or wilful obscurity. In *After Babel*, Steiner asks 'What material reality has history outside language'? He devastatingly concludes that history is 'a speech act', nothing more than 'a selective use of the past-tense.'[814] Celan evidently knew this first-hand. That is why, I assert, he accumulated so many languages while still inherently distrusting their referential and rhetorical reach. Language offered him the ability to rebuild with words what has been destroyed with actions. Language provides a means to evade loss by displacing absence. Consequently, Celan's poetry is irrevocably informed and motivated by language's contingent precarity.

[812] *Paul Celan: Poet, Survivor, Jew,* p. 94.
[813] Morris, Leslie. *The Translated Jew: German Jewish Culture Outside the Margins* (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2018), p. 187.
[814] *After Babel*, p. 30.

As a contributor to *The Dictionary of Untranslatables*, Marc Crépon reflects how untranslatability often 'has recourse to the 'survival of oneself' in one's language.' The stakes of singularity, in this analysis, border on the fatalistic: 'Singularity, as it is, because it is absolutely singular, does not survive its disappearance.'[815] In this schema, existence can only be transcended through language. The more languages through which it is extended, the more likely its survival. The Untranslatable Canon arguably attempted in Celan's epigraph of Tsvetaeva is a mode of reading that *uses singularity to provoke comparison*.

Historically, one could well argue that *saudade* denotes equally the 'maritime melancholy'[816] of the Portuguese navy in the 15th century as it does the end of the Second World War, a term that heralded the start of modern European imperialism just as it articulates the wreckage that signalled its end. Theodor Adorno, in the final analysis, may have been more accurate to claim that 'to theorise *about* poetry after Auschwitz will be impossible.' Twentieth-century literary theory, in this light, could be read as an attempt to conceptually fathom a series of events that were historically unprecedented. As the previous three Sections have sought to demonstrate, this does not preclude the impossibility of its evolution along more globally oriented and comparative pathways via the theme of untranslatability.

[815] Crépon, Marc. "The Invention of the Idiom: The Event of the Untranslatable," *Paragraph*, vol. 38, no. 2, 2015, pp. 189-203. p. 195.
[816] *Against World Literature*, p. 155.

Conclusion

At the start of this study, I stated my ambition to enlarge the reader's understanding of literary Modernism in its German, Russian and Brazilian iterations while using the recent work on World Literature, untranslatability and the advances of Translation Studies to achieve this. This produced a literary history that has 'run the experiment of imagining what a Comparative Literature contoured around untranslatability might be,'[817] whereby the topic of untranslatability has been a criterium for historical observation as well as translational analysis. Using *The Dictionary* as my point of departure in each instance, I have sought to detach words from their own context and applied them to the following national context in a triangular resequencing. A brief recapitulation hereby follows.

It began with the German word *Stimmung*, a Philosophical Untranslatable that I applied to the context of the Russian revolution and the Modernism with which it coexisted. Following Spitzer and Heidegger's rethinking of the term, I demonstrated that its ambiguity derives from its etymology and the indeterminacy with which it operates in the German language (that was, specifically, the impossibility of differentiating between subject and object in its nomination). With Mandel'shtam, I recognised how Gumbrecht's formulation of *Stimmung* denotes precisely the qualities of Mandel'shtam's poetry that Joseph Brodsky considered untranslated in his first English translations. Taking a more hermeneutic approach to the word itself in an attempt to see if this led to any further discovery, I unearthed the choir Mandel'shtam attempted to rescue during his poem's composition. From this, I concluded that the poem's key influence and formal features can be traced back to this influence. In respect to Marina Tsvetaeva, her own prose offered a plausible methodology for identifying untranslatability. Her poetry, meanwhile, challenged the conditions of refuting untranslatability due to its phonetic qualities.

[817] *Against World Literature*, p. 47.

I next took up the Russian word *Pravda*, a Political Untranslatable I used to probe the epistemological absurdity of early Soviet society and the post-colonial status of Brazil alike. Following Sigov's sources but departing from his chosen points of emphasis in *The Dictionary*, I explained how the word has been irrevocably damaged by context and thus points to an epistemic situation in which its translation to simply 'truth' is inherently problematic. Murilo Mendes's poem allowed me to reformulate this word as a three-stage process or explanatory model applicable to the either Soviet or Brazilian (and, by extension, post-Soviet or post-colonial) context. With Clarice Lispector, I referred to French author Cixous's (mis)reading of Lispector to gesture to Brazil's enduring post-colonial relations with Europe while exploring how Lispector, herself, depicted the scene of untranslatability in fiction.

Finally, the Portuguese word *saudade*, an Emotional Untranslatable, opened up a discussion on the ability to express emotions as well as translate them. Historicising the term as inseparable from the displacement in which it originated (a displacement inclusive of both Portuguese monarchs and African slaves, just as the word itself has been deemed integral to both Portuguese and Brazilian cultures), I suggested that its most consistently traced qualities are linguistic exile, a sense of synchronic and diachronic deferral, and an uncertain audience. As I sought to prove, this idiom articulates much of the displacement, exile and longing of the post-war German situation.

Turning to two exilic authors to confirm this thesis, I began with Mascha Kaléko, whose geographical distance from Germany did little to assuage her affection for her first language. Lastly, turning to Paul Celan, I suggested that the personal pronouns littered throughout his corpus are addressed to his past self in a series of past locations. Drawing on their commonalities, this final Section concluded by suggesting that *saudade* be used to map literary displacement and longing.

Over the course of these inquiries, it becomes clear that untranslatability exists essentially between two poles. On the one hand, there is the scene of the literary text, or the act of translation. Then, on the other hand, is the untranslatable testimony, or the 'claim' of untranslatability levelled at the text. Both of these events are historically contingent, sometimes in ways that cohere but more often in ways that contradict each other. By way of overview, untranslatability was written into Russian Modernism via the problematic inheritance and imposition of Western traditions and concepts. In the Brazilian context, untranslatability was realised through a conscious rejection of colonial models and impositions from without; and in German exilic Modernism through the estrangement from that language, spanning the ethical, geographical and linguistic.

I will now end by revisiting the inquiries with which this project opened. Each will be answered in accordance with the disciplinary fields to which this project is directed, with privileged reference to the three figures I have identified throughout as their leading proponents (Apter in the case of Comparative Literature, Damrosch in the case of World Literature, and Venuti in the case of Translation Studies).

1) Can the Untranslatable, as conceptualised by Apter and Cassin, be used as literary theory when reading a foreign literary text?

2) How does one verify the claim of these author's untranslatability?

3) What does the engagement of the Untranslatable and the foreign text produce?

1) Can the Untranslatable (as conceptualised by Apter and Cassin) be used as literary theory when reading a foreign literary text?

First, the grounds of this claim must be outlined. For if theory continues to be understood as a holistic point of recourse for literary research and as a broadly accepted pedagogical mandate, then as I have suggested it is long overdue some form of innovation.[818] *The Dictionary*, as I have sought to show throughout these pages, provides a dynamic template for reinterpreting this area by extending it toward a more linguistically comparative framework. Apter and Cassin's work on *The Dictionary* and adjacent publications have initiated a stunning range of ideas to be further explored, challenged and substantiated. As a new approach to theory, untranslatability holds open the possibility of a potential break with the Franco-Anglo myopias of the past in favour of a global critical dialogue better adjusted to contemporaneity and less rigid in the geographical origin of its theoretical models.

Yes, the Untranslatable can be used similarly to a literary theory. However, this rests upon a condition. Exploring claims of untranslatability with the authority of translation scholarship (something amiss from many of its accounts, as Venuti is right to discern) allows for a synthesising of approaches toward a wholly new model of inquiry. If one hopes for this exercise to exceed the complaints of presentism and sophistry long aimed at Literary Theory, I have suggested it cannot do so without recourse to Lawrence Venuti's simple and convincing paradigm. Namely, his distinction between hermeneutic and instrumental translation.[819] If the Untranslatable is approached with a hermeneuticist understanding of translation – more simply, with attention paid to its semantic and contextual origin and development - then the critic, reader, translator or student is able to move toward the Untranslatable as well as toward the text (to borrow Schleiermacher's phrase).

[818] I explore this argument at greater length elsewhere: Taylor, Byron. "Untranslatability: The Rebirth of Theory?" *Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics* 45.1 (2022): pp. 25-39.
[819] *Contra Instrumentalism*, pp. 1-4.

By opting for a hermeneutic approach to the Untranslatable on each occasion, I have positioned the Untranslatable as less a source of exotic mystique, and more as a concept in need of hermeneutic interpretation and contextual exposition. The force of that interpretation (as detailed, severally, in each Section) need not restrict itself to the contemporary channels of Continental Philosophy on which *The Dictionary* is largely premised. Revealing the complicated histories of *Stimmung*, *Pravda* and *saudade*, I have shown how a hermeneutic understanding of the Untranslatable harnesses a disciplined mode of inquiry that cannot settle for unchecked formulations or abstract injunctions. In each case, I have attempted to depart from *The Dictionary* to reveal the respective intellectual archaeologies of these words in each Section. In this sense, I find myself in agreement with Natalia Avtonomova that *The Dictionary* 'is not a final point but an ongoing process': its possibilities are far from exhausted.[820]

My chief principle of selection and inclusion was to find words whose meanings have not been sufficiently interrogated or reformulated within their own context. My approach to these Untranslatable words bears some resemblance to the historical semantics of Leo Spitzer.[821] As I hope my histories of each Untranslatable have demonstrated, such a methodology must concentrate on the historicity contained within language itself, and the importance of its acknowledgement in regard to its use in transnational discursive territories or communications. So, in response to this first inquiry, the answer is yes, contingent upon approaching the Untranslatable hermeneutically as Venuti advocates. As I have sought to confirm at length, these projects are not necessarily as incompatible or incommensurable as Venuti may like them to appear. Reading literary texts through new sociolinguistic contexts leads new meanings to appear.

---

[820] Avtonomova, Natalia & Gukasyan, Tatevik. "Philosophy, translation, "untranslatability": cultural and conceptual aspects," in: Spitzer, D. M. (ed.) Philosophy's Treason (Delaware: Vernon Press, 2020), pp. 87-110, p. 99.

[821] Spitzer, Leo, "Milieu and ambiance: an essay in historical semantics." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 3.2 (1942): pp. 169-218; Spitzer, Leo, & Granville Hatcher, Anna. *Essays in Historical Semantics* (Germany: S.F. Vanni, 1948).

2) How does one verify the claim of these author's untranslatability?

This preceding project has not been led by a search for a universal explanatory model of untranslatability. My approach to the authors and their translations is rather historicist, philological and translational. The purpose of this is to demonstrate that untranslatability, in the literary context, is always inherently restricted to two discrete historical scenes. First, there is the authorship and composition of the literary text itself. Then, there is the untranslatable testimony, or 'claim of untranslatability' made toward the literary text. In Section I, this caused the historical leap toward Brodsky and Bonnefoy's debate. In Section II, to the Paris lectures of the 1980s. In Section III, to both Kaleko and Celan's translators. In each case, the claim of untranslatability, like the text to which it applies or ascribes itself, are enunciated in specific and distinct configurations of language, culture and historical immediacy.

True to Lezra's maxim,[822] the untranslatability of these authors took a different form on each occasion, with my analysis of each author reaching differing conclusions accordingly. In the case of Mandel'shtam I argued that the source of his untranslatability lies primarily in its formal features. In the case of Tsvetaeva, I argued that her untranslatability stems from the phonetic complexity of her work. In the case of Mendes, I argued that he remains untranslated rather than untranslatable, throwing light on the global translational inequalities persistent up to the time of writing. In the case of Lispector, I argued her untranslatability was one more suited to Cassin's definition: that of an endlessly reinterpretable text. In the case of Kaléko, her own thoughts provided an account of untranslatability from the perspective of linguistic exile. Finally, in the case of Celan, I claimed that his personal pronouns mark a crucial and deliberate layer of ambivalence, and that his incorporation of Tsvetaeva's Cyrillic was possibly an attempt to map, initiate or inhabit an Untranslatable Canon.

[822] Lezra, Jacques. "This untranslatability which is not one," in: Syrotinski, Michael (ed.) Special issue: Translation and the Untranslatable, *Paragraph*, Vol. 38, No. 2. July 2015, Edinburgh University Press, p. 176.

So, considered in this sense, my approach to untranslatability has manifestly not been to cultivate the same sense of abstraction that runs from German Romanticism and its obsession with the *Absolut* all the way to Cassin's self-conscious provocation for a return to sophistry.[823] No, in my account, it has operated according to two goals. This is because it has attempted to advance a methodology through which untranslatability can be recognised, contextualised and verified. The claim of untranslatability is one thing; verifying it through recourse to translation scholarship and translation analysis is another. My point is one can only understand these statements within the greater constellation of collective and linguistic issues and contextual pressures in which they are imbedded.

With that in mind, it has been seen throughout the course of this work that the claim of untranslatability can befall or conceal a wide variety of other explanations and phenomena. A claim made in response to the loss of original poetic form; a claim made in response to rhythmic and phonetic ambiguities; a claim made in response to the lack of translation; a claim made for an author whose work inspires multiple interpretations; a claim made in response to radically different contexts; toward a singularity of style or personal experience – or, more often and more readily, through the 'straw-man argument' of appealing to the equivalence model of translation. This last one is the most deceptively argued and probably the most commonly used; though, as Kurt Beals pointed out, carries no great consensus among translators or scholars of translation themselves.[824]

From my own perspective, literary untranslatability is not a crime. Yet it is a moment where cultures encounter one another in ways that demand greater inquiry and often reveal fascinating tautologies buried within that culture's epistemology. It is also a claim in need of clarification, exploration and evaluation, as I have attempted throughout.

---

[823] Cassin, Barbara. *Sophistical Practice: Toward a consistent relativism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014).

[824] Beals, Kurt. 'Alternatives to Impossibility: Translation as Dialogue in the Works of Paul Celan', *Translation Studies*, 7.3 (2014), pp. 284–99, p. 284.

3) What does the engagement of the Untranslatable and the foreign text produce?

I intend to approach this final question with recourse to the three disciplines to whom this project is addressed, while engaging with the three leading proponents I deemed representative of each. Damrosch's notion of World Literature holds great promise for broadening the literary canon as it is presently taught.[825] For Damrosch, though, its progress is not only a matter of enlarging the canon of literary texts but also the theories used to read them. 'If we work against the great-power dynamics still prevalent in much theoretical discussion, we can mitigate the hegemonic tendencies long baked into comparative studies.'[826] Having detached words from their various, distant cultures and measuring their applicability to the issues of other cultures, I hope to have a made a provisional step in this direction.

However, perhaps another of Damrosch's statement bears attention here. 'Both in theory and in practice,' he writes, 'we have a long way to go if we want to have a world literary theory worth the name.'[827] Damrosch here expresses a frustration and impatience with the project of World Literature, insofar as he thinks its present theoretical models hope to foster or sustain its enlargement.

If translation was already seen by German Romantics like Schlegel and Novalis as the means to transcend oneself in the texts of another culture, and if the transcendence of literary Modernists was the realisation of the global breadth of one's potential readership, then the methodology hereby proposed seeks to go one step further.

---

[825] Suzanne Jill Levine makes the observation that World Literature 'is part of Modernity. Like World Literature, Modernity is a system in the making, a process, not a product: because they have been contrived to name what, by definition, eludes conceptual certainties, Modernity and World Literature are malleable, but vague, terms that account for a counterpoint of ever-changing synthesis and exclusions, consecration of classic and great books, openness to the absorption of literature in translation, and the consumption of literature that exposes the reader to different worldviews.' See: Jill Levine, Suzanne. "Preface" in: Jill Levine et al (eds.) *Untranslatability Goes Global* (London & New York: Routledge, 2017), p. 2.

[826] *Comparing the Literatures*, p. 163.

[827] *Comparing the Literatures*, p. 163

That is, it seeks to establish a framework whereby the reader, the text and the act of interpretation is resituated into another context; but seeks or attempts to *interpret that context through the eyes of the foreign gaze*. Should this not have been Comparative Literature's primary aim to begin with? Early institutional architects like René Wellek - particularly from his complaints of comparatist's inability to define their subject matter or methodology - would probably not have disagreed.[828] Engaging the Untranslatable with a foreign literary text produces an intellectual and cultural transcendence long the reserve of translators themselves. The manifest possibilities that stem from this are virtually infinite. It is on the basis of this discovery that I stake the value of the present work. Judging from Key's address to the discipline, it may have arrived just in time:

> the problem that comparativists usually face in the European and Anglophone academy is that our conversations stall on the thinness of our knowledge of each other's traditions outside Europe. Absent a sense of how a language culture's conceptual vocabulary works and has developed, absent an orientation to the genres and disciplinary conventions of that language culture […] comparative conversations tend to stumble.[829]

What I have provided here may not singlehandedly solve this issue; but it has offered an experimental direction in which to overcome it. I hope this study to have presented a sustained argument for a world literary theory premised on using untranslatability hermeneutically, to re-interpret literary texts through the foreign gaze of the Untranslatable. While I consider this a first attempt, and thus one to be surpassed, this indeed mitigates the hegemonic sway of a largely European body of theory, making theory travel to unfamiliar landscapes by displacing and globally resituating the act of interpretation itself.

---

[828] See: Wellek, René. "17 The Crisis of Comparative Literature (1959)." *The Princeton Sourcebook in Comparative Literature*. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2021). pp. 161-172.
[829] Key, Alexander. "Kavya: Prospects for a Comparative Poetics." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 38.1 (2018): pp. 163-170. p. 163.

As a proposed model for world literary theory, the methodology I have established here uses untranslatability as a central concept guided by a hermeneutic depth of analysis, to be able to read World Literature as a foreign text that can be (re)interpreted *through* foreign thinking. This altogether forms a coherent literary history of discrete Modernisms conditioned by untranslatable tendencies, translational realities, and the continual assertion that Modernism was characterised (among other things) by the desire for a global audience and the corresponding obfuscations this paradoxically involved. Integrating the virtues of Damrosch, Apter and Venuti's various approaches is of significant benefit to the fields of Comparative Literature, Translation Studies, World Literature when realised through the prism of untranslatability.

Works Cited:

1. Action, Edward. *Russia* (New York: Longman, 1986).
2. Adorno, Theodor. *Prismen. Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft* (Berlin &Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1955).
3. Agamben, Giorgio. *Potentialities: Collected essays in philosophy* (Paolo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1999).
4. Agamben, Giorgio. *The Open* (Paolo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2000).
5. Aguilar, Gonzalo. "Clarice Lispector in the Foreign Legion". *Journal of World Literature* 2.1 (2017): pp. 80-91.
6. Allen, Sharon Lubkemann. *eccentriCities: Writing in the margins of Modernism: St. Petersburg to Rio de janeiro* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015).
7. Almada, Márcia, and Rodrigo Bentes Monteiro. "O Discurso e a Noticia: manuscritos sobre a revolta de 1720 atribuídos a Pedro Miguel de Almeida, 3 o conde de Assumar." *Tempo* 25 (2019), 1-25.
8. Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities* (London & New York: Verso Books, 2013).
9. Andrade, Mário de. *Macunaíma: o herói sem nenhum caráter.* (Brazil: Universidade Federal da Fronteira Sul, 2019).
10. Andrade, Oswald de & Bary, Leslie. ``Cannibalist Manifesto." *Latin American Literary Review*, Vol. 19, No. 38 (Jul – Dec 1991), 38-47.
11. Andreas-Friedrich, Ruth. *Battleground Berlin: Diaries, 1945-1948* (United States: Paragon House, 1990).
12. Any, Carol Joyce. *Boris Eikhenbaum: Voices of a Russian Formalist* (Paolo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1994).
13. Apter et al, *Dictionary of Untranslatables* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2014).
14. Apter, Emily. "What is Yours, Ours and Mine: On the Limits of Ownership and the Creative Commons." *Angelaki: Journal of Theoretical Humanities* 14.1 (2009): 87-100.
15. Apter, Emily. *Against World Literature* (London & New York: Verso Books, 2013).
16. Apter, Emily. *The Translation Zone* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2011).
17. Auerbach, Eric & Said, Edward & Maire. "Philology and 'Weltliteratur'," *The Centennial Review*, vol. 13, no. 1, Michigan State University Press (1969) 1–17.
18. Badiou, Alain, et al. *Heidegger: His Life and His Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016).
19. Baer, Brian James, and براين جيمس باير. "From Cultural Translation to Untranslatability - من الترجمة الثقافية إلى استحالة الترجمة: Theorizing Translation Outside Translation Studies." *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, no. 40 (2020), 139–63.
20. Baer, Brian James. "Untranslatability and the Cold War: Theory in Context," *Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics*, Vol. 44, No. 4, Winter 2021, 8-15.
21. Baer, Brian, "It's Only the End of the World". *boundary 2* 1st May 2014; 41 (2), 213–225.
22. Baer, James Brian & Natalia Olshanskaya. *Russian Writers on Translation* (Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 2013).
23. Ballard, Bruce W. *The Role of Mood in Heidegger's Ontology.* (Boston: University Press of America, 1991.).
24. Bandeira, Manuel «Murilo Mendes», in *Apresentação da Poesia Brasileira*, in *Poesia Completa e Prosa* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Nova Aguilar, 1990).
25. Bandeira, Manuel. *Itinerário de pasárgada.* (Global Editora e Distribuidora Ltda, 2019).
26. Barman, Roderick J. *Citizen Emperor: Pedro II and the Making of Brazil, 1825-91* (Paolo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1999).
27. Bassnett, Susan (ed.) *Translation and world literature* (London & New York: Routledge, 2018).
28. Bassnett, Susan et al. (eds.) *Postcolonial Translation: Theory and Practice* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2012).
29. Bassow, Whitman. "The Pre-Revolutionary Pravda and Tsarist Censorship." *American Slavic and East*
30. Beals, Kurt. 'Alternatives to Impossibility: Translation as Dialogue in the Works of Paul Celan', *Translation Studies*, 7.3 (2014), 284–99.
31. Becker, Howard S., and Antonio Candido. *Antonio Candido: On Literature and Society.* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2014).
32. Benteler, Anne. *Sprache im Exil: Mehrsprachigkeit und Übersetzung als literarische Verfahren bei Hilde Domin, Mascha Kaléko und Werner Lansburgh* (Vol 2. Springer Verlag, 2019).
33. Bergelson, Lev. *Memories of My Father: The Early Years (1918-1934)* (London: Routledge, 2007).
34. Berman, Antoine & S. Heyvaert, *The Experience of the Foreign: Culture and Translation in Romantic Germany* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992).
35. Bernstein, J. M. (ed.) *Classic and Romantic German Aesthet*ics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)

36. Beskin, Osip, *Formalizm v zhivopisi* (Moscow, 1933).
37. Bhabha, Homi K. *The location of culture*. (London: Routledge, 2012), 2ND edition.
38. Biebuyck, Benjamin, and Nel Grillaert. "Between God and *Ubermensch*: Viacheslav Ivanovich Ivanov and his vacillating struggle with Nietzsche." *Germano-Slavica*, vol. 14 (2003), 55-73.
39. Bird, Robert. "Martin Heidegger and Russian Symbolist Philosophy." *Studies in East European Thought*, vol. 51, no. 2 (1999), 85–108.
40. Bishop, Elizabeth. (ed.) *An Anthology of 20th Century Brazilian Poetry* (New England: Wesleyan University Press, 1972).
41. Bittencourt, Renato Nunes. *A saudade, a nostalgia e o inefável* (São Paulo: Escala, 2016).
42. Blanton, C. D., and Blanton, Charles Daniel. *Epic Negation: The Dialectical Poetics of Late Modernism* (United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2015).
43. Blasing. Molly Thomasy, "Through the Lens of Loss: Marina Tsvetaeva's Elegiac-Poetics." *Slavic Review*, vol. 73, no. 1 (2014) 1–35.
44. Bloch, Ernst. *Zerstörte Sprache, zerstörte Kultur*. in: Winkler, Michael. (ed.) *Deutsche Literatur im Exil 1933-1945. Texte und Dokumente*. (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1977).
45. Boeschenstein, Hermann. *A history of modern German literature*. Vol. 40. (Oftringen: Herbert Lang et Company Ag, 1990).
46. Boletsi, Maria. "Barbaric encounters: Rethinking barbarism in CP Cavafy's and JM Coetzee's Waiting for the barbarians." *Comparative Literature Studies* 44.1/2 (2007), 67-96.
47. Bower, Kathrin. "Searching for the (M) Other: The Rhetoric of Longing in Post-Holocaust Poems by Nelly Sachs and Rose Ausländer." *Women in German Yearbook: Feminist Studies in German Literature & Culture* 12.1 (1996), 123-147.
48. Bowie, Andrew & Clarke, Desmond (eds.). *Schleiermacher: Hermeneutics and Criticism* (Kiribati: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
49. Bowie, Andrew. *From Romanticism to Critical Theory* (London: Routledge, 1997).
50. Boyd, Julia. *Travels in the Third Reich* (London: Elliott & Thompson, 2017).
51. Boym, Svetlana. *The Future of Nostalgia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).
52. Briffard, Colette. *Entretien avec Barbara Cassin, philosophe et philologue, directeure de recherche au CNRS, réalisé par Colette Briffard*. Available via: http://www.revue-texto.net/Dialogues/Cassin_interview.html.
53. Brodsky, Joseph. *Less Than One: Selected Essays* (United Kingdom, Penguin, 2011).
54. Brown, Clarence & Mandelshtam, Osip. "Mandelshtam's Acmeist Manifesto." *The Russian Review*, vol. 24, no. 1 (1965) 46–51.
55. Brown, Theodore E. (ed.) *Major Soviet writers: essays in criticism*. Vol. 371 (London & New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).
56. Bubner, Rudiger. *German Idealist Philosophy* (London: Penguin Books, 1997), p. ix.
57. Buenescu, Helena. "Comparativism as Wounds of Possibility," in: Ipsen, Gesche, Matthews, Tim & Obradović, Dragana. (eds.) *Provocations and Negotiation* (Amsterdam: Rodolpi, 2013), pp. 5-19. p.7.
58. Bullock, Philip Ross. "Untranslated and Untranslatable? Pushkin's Poetry in English, 1892-1931." *Translation and Literature*, vol. 20, no. 3, Edinburgh University Press, 2011, pp. 348–72.
59. Bunin, Ivan Alekseevich. *Cursed Days: Diary of a Revolution* (United States: Ivan R. Dee Publisher, 1998).
60. Buruma, Ian. *Year zero: A history of 1945*. (Amsterdam: Penguin, 2014.).
61. Butterfield, Ardis. "Medieval Lyric: A Translatable or Untranslatable Zone?" *University of Toronto Quarterly*, vol. 88 no. 2 (2019), 142-159.
62. Campbell, Roy. "The Poetry of Luiz de Camões", *London Magazine* 4 (August 1957), 23-33.
63. Cândido, Antônio & Becker, Howard S. *On Literature and Society* (New Jersey: Princeton Univerity Press, 1990).
64. Candido, Antonio. *Formação da Literatura Brasileira* (Sao Paulo: Ouro Sobre Azul, 2014), 4th ed.
65. Cândido, Antônio. *Vários escritos* (Sáo Paulo: Livaria Duas Cidades, 1977).
66. Cardenas et al. (eds.) *An economic history of twentieth-century Latin America* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000).
67. Cardoso, Rodrigo Octávio. "Indigestão colonial em alguns poemas da Revista de Antropofagia." *Scripta 25.55* (2021), 122-150.
68. Cardoso, Rodrigo Octávio. "Indigestão colonial em alguns poemas da Revista de Antropofagia." *Scripta 25.55* (2021), 122-150.
69. Carrera, Elena. "The reception of Clarice Lispector via Hélène Cixous: reading from the whale's belly." *Brazilian Feminisms* (1999), 85-100.
70. Carvalho, Ricardo Souza de. *Comigo e contigo a Espanha: um estudo sobre João Cabral de Melo Neto e Murilo Mendes*. Diss. Universidade de São Paulo, 2006.
71. Cassin, Barbara & Michel Syrotinski, *Jacques the Sophist: Lacan, Logos, and Psychoanalysis* (United Kingdom: Fordham University Press, 2019).

72. Cassin, Barbara et al, *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies: dictionnaire des intraduisibles* (France: Le Robert, 2004).
73. Cassin, Barbara. "Philosophising in Languages." *Nottingham French Studies* 49.2 (2010), 17-28.
74. Cassin, Barbara. *Sophistical Practice: Toward a consistent relativism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014).
75. Castro Rocha, João Cezar. *Brazil 2001: A Revisionary History of Brazilian Literature and Culture* (United States, Tagus Press, 2000).
76. Catford, John, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation (Oxford:* Oxford University Press, 1965).
77. Cavanagh, Clare. *Osip Mandelstam and the Modernist Creation of Tradition* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994).
78. Celan, Paul & Böschenstein, Bernhard and Schmull, Heino (eds.) *Meridian: Drafts – Complete – Materials.* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2011).
79. Celan, Paul & Hamburger, Michael. *Selected Poems* (London: Penguin Books, 1972).
80. Celan, Paul & Pierre Joris. *Selections* (California: University of California Press, 2005).
81. Celan, Paul & Waldrop, Rosemary. "Bremen Speech" in: *Collected Prose* (London: Routledge, 2003).
82. Celan, Paul. *Die Niemandsrose* (S. Fischer: Frankfurt am Main, 1963).
83. Chaudhuri, Supriya, "Which World, Whose Literature?" *Thesis Eleven*, Vol. 162 (1), Sage Publishing, 75-93.
84. Chukovskaya, Lydia (ed.) *The Deserted House* (Belmont: Norland, 1978), p. x.
85. Cixous, Hélène & Andermatt Conley, Verena. *Reading with Clarice Lispector* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1991).
86. Cixous, Hélène & Andermatt Conley, Verena. *Readings: The Poetics of Blanchot, Joyce, Kafka, Leist, Lispector, and Tsvetayeva* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1991).
87. Cixous, Hélène & Cohen, Keith & Paula. "The Laugh of the Medusa." *Signs*, vol. 1, no. 4 (1976), 875–893.
88. Cixous, Hélène. 'L'approche de Clarice Lispector: Se Laisser ire Clarice Lispector. A Paixao segundo C. L', in *Poétique: revue de théorie er d'analyse littéraires*, Vol. 40 (1979), 408-19.
89. Clark, Katerina & Dobrenko, Evgeniĭ Aleksandrovich. *Soviet Culture and Power: a history in documents, 1917-1953.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).
90. Cláudia Suriana da Silva, Ana & Guardini, Vasconcelos (eds.) *Books and Periodicals in Brazil 1968-1930* (London: Legenda, 2014).
91. Cohen, Theodore. *Remaking Japan: The American occupation as new deal.* (New York: Free Press, 1987).
92. Conniff, Michael. *Urban Politics in Brazil: The Rise of Populism, 1925-1945* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1981).
93. Corney, Frederick. "Trotskii and the Vienna Pravda, 1908-1912." *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 27.3 (1985), 248-268.
94. Crépon, Marc. "The Invention of the Idiom: The Event of the Untranslatable," *Paragraph*, vol. 38, no. 2 (2015), 189-203.
95. Cui, Jingjing. "Untranslatability and the Method of Compensation." *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 2.4 (2012).
96. D'haen, Theo, César Domínguez, and Mads Thomsen. *World literature: a reader.* (London: Routledge, 2013).
97. D'haen, Theo, Damrosch, David & Kadir, Djelal (eds.) *The Routledge Companion to World Literature.* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013).
98. Daive, Jean & Rosemarie Waldrop. *Under the Dome: Walks with Paul Celan* (San Francisco: City Lights Publishers, 2020).
99. Damrosch et al. (eds.) *The Routledge Companion to World Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2012).
100. Damrosch, David, *Comparing the Literatures* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020).
101. Damrosch, David, *How to Teach World Literature* (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2018), 2nd ed.
102. Damrosch, David. Review of *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability*, by Emily Apter. *Comparative Literature Studies*, vol. 51 no. 3 (2014), 504–508.
103. Davies, Peter. "Testimony and Translation." *Translation and Literature*, vol. 23, no. 2, Edinburgh University Press (2014) 170–84.
104. Davies, Peter. *Witness between languages: The translation of Holocaust testimonies in context.* Vol. 4. Boydell & Brewer, 2018.
105. De Léry, Jean. *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil.* (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2018).
106. Dekker et al (eds.) *Roots and Rituals. The Construction of Ethnic Identities* (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 2000).
107. DeLay, Steven. "Disclosing Worldhood or Expressing Life? Heidegger and Henry on the Origin of the Work of Art." *Journal of aesthetics and Phenomenology* 4.2 (2017), 155-171.
108. Denis, Ferdinand-Jean. *Résumé de l'histoire littéraire du Portugal: suivi du Résumé de l'histoire littéraire du Brésil* (Paris: Lecointe et Durey, 1832).
109. Deschartes, Olga. *Vyacheslav Ivanov* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954).

110. Di Cesare, Donatella. *Heidegger and the Jews: The Black Notebooks* (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2018).
111. Dias, Cláudia, Jarek, Márcio & Debona, Vilmar, "Brief observations on the notion of *saudade*: cultural symbol and paradox," *Hermes Journal of Communication* Vol. 8 (2016), 7-18.
112. Dias, Cristina de Jesus Espiguinha. "Habemus Natália Correia: a unidade espiritual, num mundo em demanda." *Forma Breve* 15 (2018), 199-205.
113. Dias, Márcio & Debona: "Brief Observations on the notion of *saudade*" *Hermes Journal of Commmunication* 8 (2016), 7-18.
114. Dirk Wiemann, Shaswati Mazumdar & Ira Raja, "Postcolonial world literature: Narration, translation, imagination," *Thesis Eleven*, 2021, Vol. 162 (1), 3-17.
115. Dobrenko, Evegeny & Balina, Marina (eds.). *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth Century Russian Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 21-40.
116. Downes, Leonard. *An Introduction to Modern Brazilian Poetry* (São Paulo: Clube de Poesia do Brasil, 1954), p. 9.
117. Duarte, Dom. *O Leal Conselheiro* (Sydney, Wentworth Press, 2019), 151-6.
118. Dukes, Paul. *October and the World* (Oxford: Macmillan, 1975).
119. Eckermann, Johann Peter. *Conversations with Goethe in the Last Years of His Life* (United States: Hilliard, Gray, 1839).
120. Eisenstein, Sergei. *October: 10 Days That Shook the World: A Film* (Chatsworth California: Image Entertainment, 1998).
121. Eliot, T. S., *The Wasteland* (London: Random House, 1922).
122. Eliot, Thomas Stearns. "Tradition and the individual talent." *Perspecta* 19 (1982), 36-42.
123. Elkholy, Sharin. *Heidegger and a Metaphysics of Feeling* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2011).
124. Erlich, Victor. *Modernism and revolution: Russian literature in transition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994).
125. Erlich, Victor. *Russian formalism: History-doctrine.* (Amsterdam: Walter de Gruyter, 2012).
126. Etkind, Alexander, *Internal Colonization* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011).
127. Etkind, Alexandr, *Eros of the Impossible: The History of Psychoanalysis in Russia* (Oxford and Boulder: Oxford University Press, 1996).
128. Even-Zohar, Itamar. "Polysystem theory." *Poetics today* 1.1/2 (1979), 287-310.
129. Fairclough, Pauline (ed.), *Shostakovich Studies 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
130. Farnsworth, Beatrice Brodsky. "Bolshevism, the woman question, and Aleksandra Kollontai." *The American Historical Review* 81.2 (1976), 292-316.
131. Fascina, Diego Miiler, and Alice Áurea Penteado Martha. "A recepção crítica de Clarice Lispector: momentos decisivos." *Revista Desenredo* 11.1 (2015).
132. Fátima Silva, Maria, Lorna Hardwick, and Susana Marques Pereira, eds. *The Classical Tradition in Portuguese and Brazilian Poetry.* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2022).
133. Feldbrugge, F. J. M. "The Russkaia Pravda." *Law in Medieval Russia.* Nijhoff: Brill (2009), 33-58.
134. Felski, Rita, *The Limitations of Critique* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).
135. Felstiner, John. "Mother Tongue, Holy Tongue: On Translating and Not Translating Paul Celan," *Comparative Literature*, Spring, 1986, Vol. 38, No. 2 (Spring, 1986), 113-136.
136. Ferrua, Pietro. "Futurism in Brazil." *Neohelicon* 5.2 (1977), 185-194.
137. Figes, Orlando, *A People's Tragedy* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1996).
138. Filipová, Marta..*Cultures of International Exhibitions 1840-1940: Great Exhibitions in the Margins* (London: Routledge, 2015).
139. Fitz, Earl E. *Sexuality and Being in the Post-Structuralist Universe of Clarice Lispector* (Texas: University of Texas Press, 1994).
140. Fitzpatrick, Sheila. *The Russian Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).
141. Forrester, Sibelan E. S., *A Companion to Marina Cvetaeva: Approaches to a Major Russian Poet* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2016).
142. Freidin, Gregory. *A Coat of Many Colors: Osip Mandelstam and His Mythologies of Self-Presentation.* United Kingdom: University of California Press, 2010).
143. Freud, Sigmund. " Das unheimliche [1919]," *Sigmund Freud Studienausgabe Bd* 4 (1919).
144. Frias, Joana Matos. "A poética essencialista de Murilo Mendes." *Revista da Faculdade de Letras: Línguas e Literaturas*, 17, 2000, 287-306 (2000).
145. Frühwald, Wolfgang. "Die „gekannt sein wollen ". Prolegomena zu einer Theorie des Exils." *Haarmann, Hermann (Hg.): Innen-Leben. Ansichten aus dem Exil. Ein Berliner Symposium. Berlin.* 1995.
146. Gadamer, Hans-Georg & Heinemann, Richard, Krajewsji, Bruce (eds.) *Gadamer on Celan: 'Who Am I and Who Are You?' and Other Essays* (New York: SUNY Press, 1997).
147. Galvão, Patrícia & Elizabeth and David. K. Jackson. *Industrial Park: A Proletarian Novel* (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1993).

148. Ganguly, Debjani (ed.) *The Cambridge History of World Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).
149. Gary Harris, Jane (ed.) *The Collected Critical Prose and Letters* (London: Harper Collins, 1991).
150. Gasparov, Boris. "Between Methodological Strictness and Moral Appeal: Questions of Language and Cultural Theory in Russia." *History of Humanities* 1.2 (2016), 303-326.
151. Gebhardt, Miriam. *Crimes Unspoken: The Rape of German Women at the End of the Second World War* (Frankfurt: Wiley, 2016).
152. Gimbel, John. "The American Exploitation of German Technical Know-How after World War II." *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 105, no. 2 (1990), 295–309.
153. Ginzburg, Carlo, 'Ethnophilology: Two Case Studies,' Global Intellectual History 2:1 (2017), 3-17.
154. Giorgi, Kyra. *Emotions, Language and Identity on the Margins of Europe* (London: Palgrave Books, 2014).
155. Giusti, Francesco & Lewis Robinson, Benjamin (eds.) The Work of World Literature, *Cultural Inquiry*, 19 (Berlin: ICI Berlin Press, 2021).
156. Glatzer Rosenthal, Bernice (ed.) *Nietzsche in Russia* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986).
157. Glazer, Amelia and Lee, Steven (eds.). *Comintern Aesthetics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020).
158. Goffey, Andrew. "Guattari, Transversality and the Experimental Semiotics of Untranslatability." *Paragraph*, vol. 38, no. 2, Edinburgh University Press (2015), 231–44.
159. Gottlieb, Moshe. "The Berlin Riots of 1935 and Their Repercussions in America." *American Jewish Historical Quarterly*, vol. 59, no. 3 (1970), 302–28.
160. Gouveia, Saulo. *The Triumph of Brazilian Modernism: The Metanarrative of Emancipation & Counter-Narratives* (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2013).
161. Greenleaf, Monika. "Laughter, Music, and Memory at the Moment of Danger: Tsvetaeva's 'Mother and Music' in Light of Modernist Memory Practices." *Slavic Review*, vol. 68, no. 4 (2009), 825–847.
162. Grenier, Catherine., ed. 2013. *Modernités plurielles 1905–1970: dans les collections du Musée national d'art moderne*. Paris: Centre Pompidou.
163. Grillaert, Nel. *What the God-seekers Found in Nietzsche: The Reception of Neitzche's Übermensch by the Philosophers of the Russian Religious Renaissance* (Netherlands: Rodopi, 2008).
164. Guillén, Claudio. "Weltliterature." *World Literature: A Reader* (2013): 142-49.
165. Gumbrecht, Hans & Butler, Erik. *Atmosphere, mood, Stimmung: on a hidden potential of literature.* (Paolo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2012).
166. Gumbrecht, Hans Ulrich. *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey* (Paolo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2004).
167. Hamacher, Werner. "The Second of Inversion: Movements of a Figure through Celan's Poetry," *Yale French Studies* Vol. 69 (1985), 276-314.
168. Haring, Lee. "Against Untranslatability." *Narrative Culture*, vol. 1, no. 2 (2014), 145–74.
169. Harris, Marvin. "History and significance of the emic/etic distinction." *Annual review of anthropology* 5 (1976), 329-350.
170. Harris, Roy, *Saussure and His Interpreters* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), 2nd ed.
171. Harris, Roy. *Saussure and Wittgenstein* (London: Routledge, 1988).
172. Haslam, Sara. *Fragmenting Modernism: Ford Madox Ford, the novel and the great war.* Manchester University Press, 2008.
173. Hasty, Olga Peters, *How Women Must Write: Inventing the Russian Woman Poet* (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2019).
174. Heidegger, Martin & Albert Hofstadter. *Poetry, Language, Thought* (USA: Harper & Rowe, 1971).
175. Heidegger, Martin & Stambaugh, Joan. *Being and Time* (New York: SUNY Press, 2010).
176. Heidegger, Martin & Walker, Nicholas. *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1995).
177. Hodgson, Katharine, et al (eds.) *Twentieth-Century Russian Poetry: Reinventing the Canon.* 1st ed., (Open Book Publishers, 2017).
178. *Holanda*, Sérgio Buarque de. *Visão do Paraíso*: *Os motivos edênicos no descobrimento e na colonização do Brasil* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2010).
179. Holanda, Sergio Buarques de & Summ, Harvey. *Roots of Brazil* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012).
180. Holmes, Christopher, "The Limits of World Literature", *Literary Compass* Vol. 13 Issue 9 (2016), 572-584.
181. Houaiss, Antônio. *Gramatica Houaiss da Lingua Portuguesa* (Sao Paolo: Publifoa, 1986).
182. Hutton, Christopher M. *Race and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005).
183. Ings, Simon. *Stalin & The Scientists* (London & New York: Faber & Faber, 2016).
184. Inshakov, Oleg V., and Redkina, Olga Yu. "Interdisciplinary Approach in Modern Historical, Sociocultural, and Economic Studies: On the Scientific Conference "The 1000th Anniversary of Russkaya Pravda–Finding New Meanings" Volgograd, April 21-22, 2016." *Vestnik Volgogradskogo*

Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta. Seriя a 4, Istoriя a, Regionovedenie, Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniя a 21.3 (2016).
185. Ivanov, Viacheslav. *Sobranie sochinenii* (Brussels: Foyer Chrétien Oriental, 1971).
186. Jackson, David K. "A vanguarda literária no Brasil: bibliografia e antologia crítica." *A vanguarda literária no Brasil* (1998).
187. Jakobson, Roman & Rueben Brower, Arthur. *On translation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013).
188. Jakobson, Roman, Jangfeldt, B. and Rudy, S. *My Futurist Years (New York: Marsilio*, 1997).
189. Jameson, Fredric, *The Ancients and the Postmoderns: on the Historicity of Forms* (London & New York: Verso Books, 2015).
190. Jameson, Fredric, *The Prisonhouse of Language* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1972).
191. Jansson, Oscar & LaRocca, David (eds.) *The Geschlecht Complex: Addressing Untranslatable Aspects of Gender, Genre, and Ontology* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022).
192. Jill Levine et al (eds.) *Untranslatability Goes Global* (London & New York: Routledge, 2017).
193. Joyce, James, *Finnegan's Wake* (London: Faber & Faber, 1939).
194. Joyce, James, *Ulysses* (Paris: Shakespeare & Co., 1922).
195. Kaléko, Mascha, Diary Entry, 20th June 1941. Available via: https://en.we-refugees-archive.org/archive/mascha-kaleko-about-her-first-impressions-from-new-york/
196. Kaléko, Mascha. *"No Matter where I Travel, I Come to Nowhereland": The Poetry of Mascha Kaléko* (United States: Department of German and Russian, University of Vermont, 2010).
197. Kaléko, Mascha. *Das Lyrische Stenogrammheft* (German: Rowohlt, 1956).
198. Kämper, Heidrun. *The United States and Germany in the era of the Cold War, 1945-1990: a handbook. Volume 2: 1968-1990.* (German Historical Institute, 2015).
199. Karlinsky, Simon, *Marina Tsvetaeva: The Woman, Her World, and Her Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
200. Kater, Michael H. *Culture in Nazi Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019).
201. Kettler, David & Garz, Detlef (eds.) *First Letters After Exile by Thomas Mann, Hannah Arendt, Ernst Bloch, and Others.* (Blackfriars: Anthem Press, 2021).
202. Kettler, David. *The Liquidation of Exile* (London & New York: Anthem Press, 2011).
203. Key, Alexander. "Kavya: Prospects for a Comparative Poetics." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 38.1 (2018), 163-170.
204. Kirilcuk, Alexandra. "Moving Mountains: The Spiritual Topography of Prague in Marina Tsvetaeva's 'Poema Kontsa.'" *The Russian Review*, vol. 65, no. 2, 2006, pp. 194–207.
205. Kissinger, Henry. *Diplomacy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994).
206. Klemperer, Victor & Brady, Martin. *Language of the Third Reich: LTI: Lingua Tertii Imperii* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2006).
207. Kliegerman, Eric. *Sites of the Uncanny* (Berlin: DeGruyter, 2012).
208. Klobucka, Anna, "Hélène Cixous and the Hour of Clarice Lispector." *SubStance*, vol. 23, no. 1, (1994), 41–62.
209. Kluge, Friedrich & Davis, John Francis. *An etymological dictionary of the German language* (London: G. Bell, 1891).
210. Kochan, Lionel. *Russia in Revolution* (London: Granada, 1970).
211. Kołakowski, Leslek. *Is God Happy? Selected Essays* (London & New York: Penguin Books, 2012).
212. Konzett, Matthias. *Hermann Broch, Visionary in Exile: The 2001 Yale Symposium.* (Rochester: Camden House, 2003).
213. Korfmann, Michael, and Marcelo Noguiera. "Avant-Garde in Brazil." *Dialectical Anthropology*, vol. 28, no. 2, 2004, pp. 125–145.
214. Kossman, Nina. *In the Inmost Hour of the Soul* (Germany: Humana Press, 1997).
215. Kottman, Karl A., *António Vieira's Preliminary Book to the History of the Future: Original Reading* (United Kingdom, Lulu Publishing Services, 2018).
216. Kriger, Murray, *The New Apologists for Poetry* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1956).
217. Kucinski, Bernardo. *Brazil: State and Struggle* (London: Latin American Bureau, 1982).
218. Kuße, Holger, and Nikolaj Plotnikov, eds. *Pravda. Diskurse der Gerechtigkeit in der russischen Ideengeschichte: Beiträge der Tagung der Forschungsgruppe" Russische Philosophie" und des Verbundprojekts" Kulturen der Gerechtigkeit". Bochum 29.-30. Oktober 2009.* Peter Lang GmbH, Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften, 2011.
219. Lacan, J., and X. V. I. I. Séminaire. "L'envers de la psychanalyse, publication interne à l'Association Lacanienne Internationale." (1969).
220. Lacoue-Labarthe, Phillippe & Tarnowski, Andrea. *Poetry as Experience* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2005).
221. Lang, Jessica. *Textual Silence* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2017).
222. Langer, Nils, et al (eds.) *Landmarks in the History of the German Language* (Austria, Peter Lang, 2009).

223. Langfeldt, Marcia Caetano. "Um turista bem moderno: a expressão amazônica de Mário de Andrade na literatura e na fotografia." *Bergen Language and Linguistics Studies* 10.1 (2019): 16-16.
224. Laqueur, Walter. *The Fate of the Revolution: Interpretations of Soviet History from 1917 to the Present* (United Kingdom: Collier Books, 1987).
225. Large, Duncan et al (eds.) *Untranslatability: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2018).
226. Lashley, Conrad. *Slavery and Liberation in Hotels, Restaurants and Bars* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2020).
227. Latham, Sean & Rogers, Gayle, 'Modernism: The Evolution of an Idea' (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).
228. Lawtoo, Nidesh. *The Phantom of the Ego: Modernism and the Mimetic Unconscious.* (Michigan: MSU Press, 2013).
229. Leitch, Vincent B. et al (eds.) *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001).
230. Leite, Eldo Lima, et al. "Nacionalismo, patriotismo e essencialismo na construção da identidade nacional brasileira." *Trends in Psychology* 26 (2018), 2063-2075.
231. Lemlin, Christopher W. "The Poet Is a between: Time-Space Structures in Tsvetaeva's "*Poema Gory*" and "*Poema Kontsa*", *The Slavic and Eastern European Journal*, Vol. 51. No. 3. (Winter, 2007), 474-490.
232. Lemon, Lee T., and Marion J. Reis, *Russian formalist criticism: Four essays.* Vol. 405. (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1965).
233. Lessa, Origenes. *Getulio Vargas na literature de cordel* (Rio: Editoria Documentario, 1973).
234. Levine, Susanne Jill & Katie Lateef-Jan (ed.) *Untranslatability Goes Global* (United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis, 2017).
235. Ley, Charles David. (ed.) *Port Voyages 1498-1663* (London & New York: 1947).
236. Lianeri, Alexandra, "A Regime of Untranslatables: Temporalities of Translation and Conceptual History." *History and Theory*, vol. 53, no. 4 (2014), 473–97.
237. Lima Martinez, Lis Yana, and Lucia Sá Rebello. "Murilo Mendes: Memória e Vida Cultural." *Caderno de Letras 33* (2019): 233-249.
238. Liner, Deborah. "Mass Trauma and Cultural Amnesia: A Case Study of a Society's Untranslatable Excess." *Studies in Gender and Sexuality* 23.1 (2022): 65-77.
239. Lispector, Clarice & Ponteiro, Giovanni, *Near to the Wild Heart* (London: New Directions, 1990).
240. Lispector, Clarice. *Um sopro de vida: pulsações* (Brazil: Editora Nova Fronteira, 1978).
241. Livak, Leonid. *Russian Émigrés in the Intellectual and Literary Life of Interwar France: A Bibliographical Essay* (Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010).
242. Lomas, Tim. "Experiential cartography and the significance of "untranslatable" words," *Theory & Psychology* 2018, Vol. 28 (4), 476-495.
243. López, Kimberly S. "*Modernismo* and the Ambivalence of the Postcolonial Experience: Cannibalism, Primitivism, and Exoticism in Mário De Andrade's '*Macunaíma*.'" *Luso-Brazilian Review*, vol. 35, no. 1, (1998), 25–38.
244. Lotufo, Marcelo. "How Brazilians became Frenchmen; or, Ferdinand Denis and 'Coloniality of Power'." *Latin American Literary Review*, vol. 43, no. 86 (2016), 117–135.
245. Lygo, Emily. "Review: Marina Tsvetaeva: *'Phaedra' with 'New Year's Letter' and Other Long Poems.* Translated by Angela Livingstone," *Translation and Literature*, vol. 24, no. 3, (2015), 376-382.
246. Machova, Mariana. *Elizabeth Bishop and Translation* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).
247. MacKay, John. "Vertov and the Line: Art, Socialization, Collaboration." *Film, Art, New Media.* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 81-96.
248. Makin, Michael, *Marina Tsvetaeva : Poetics of Appropriation* (United Kingdom, Clarendon Press, 1993).
249. Mammì, Lorenzo. "Murilo Mendes, crítico de arte." *Remate de Males* 32.1 (2012): 81-93.
250. Mandel'shtam, Osip & Meares, Bernard. *50 Poems* (United States: Persea Books, 1977).
251. Mandel'shtam, Osip & Nikolayev, Philip, *Liberty's Twilight*, available via: https://ruverses.com/osip-mandelshtam/the-twilight-of-freedom/3874/
252. Mandel'shtam, Osip & Nikolayev, Philip, *Liberty's Twilight*, available via: https://ruverses.com/osip-mandelshtam/the-twilight-of-freedom/3874/
253. Mandel'shtam, Osip & Shambat, Ilya, Tristia, *The Dusk of Liberty*, available via: http://lib.ru/POEZIQ/MANDELSHTAM/tristia_engl.txt
254. Mandel'shtam, Osip & Wade, Jenny, *The Twilight of Freedom*, available via: https://sensitiveskinmagazine.com/twilight-of-freedom-osip-mandelstam/
255. Mandel′shtam, Osip, Brown, Clarence & Merwin, W.S. *Selected poems* (United States: Atheneum, 1974).
256. Mandelstam, Nadezhda & Hayward, Max. *Hope against hope: a memoir.* (New York: Atheneum, 1983).
257. Mao, Douglas, ed. *The New Modernist Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).
258. Marcus, Sharon & Caitlin Zaloom (ed.) *Think in Public: A Public Books Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019).
259. Mariña, Jacqueline (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Friedrich Schleiermacher.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

260. Martin, Susan. "A Paixão Segundo Peixoto: Uma Leitura Da Violência Em Clarice Lispector." *Revista De Crítica Literaria Latino americana*, vol. 21, no. 42 (1995), 241–246.
261. Marx, Karl & Levitsky, Serge L. *Das Kapital: A Critique of Political Economy.* (United States: Regnery Publishing, 2012.)
262. Mayakovksy, Vladimir & Hyde, G. M. *How Are Verses Made?* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1971).
263. McCracken, Scott. "Imagining the Modernist City" in: *The Oxford Handbook of Modernisms.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
264. McDuff, David, and Tsvetaeva, Marina. *Selected Poems* (United Kingdom: Bloodaxe Books, 1987).
265. McNee, Malcolm K. "Chronicles, Ethnographies, and the tension between nostalgia and destruction in Brazilian Modernism." *Romance Notes*, vol. 41, no. 2, (2001), 199–208.
266. Meer, Zubin, ed. *Individualism: The cultural logic of modernity* (New York: Lexington Books, 2011).
267. Meillassoux, Quentin. *After finitude: An essay on the necessity of contingency.* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2010).
268. Mendes, Erasmo Garcia. "Paulo Duarte." *Estudos Avançados* 8.22 (1994), 189-193.
269. Mendes, Moema Rodrigues Brandão. "Memória Cultural do Museu de Arte Murilo Mendes: Acervos sobre papel." *Manuscrítica. Revista de Crítica Genética* 35 (2018), 102-117.
270. Mendes, Murilo. "Noturno Resumido," in: Mendes, Murilo. *O visionario: poemas (1930/33) (*Brazil: Olympio, 1941).
271. Mendes, Murilo. *O visionario: poemas (1930/33)* (Brazil: Olympio, 1941).
272. Mendes, Murilo. *Poesias* (1925-1955) (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria José Olympio Editora, 1959).
273. Mendes, Murilo. *Recordações de Ismael Nery.* Vol. 4. (São Paulo: Edusp, 1996).
274. Merezhkovsky, Dmitry. "O prichinakh upadka i o novykh techeniyakh sovre- mennoy russkoy literatury," *Polnoe sobrante sochineniy*, vol. XV, Petersburg- Moscow (1912), 222-236.
275. Merleau-Ponty, Maurice & John O'Neill, *Humanism and terror: an essay on the communist problem* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1969).
276. Meylakh, Michel. "A Propos des anagrammes." *L'Homme* 16 (1976): 105-115.
277. Meylakh, Mikhail. "Ob imenakh Akhmatovoi. I: Anna." *Russian Literature* 10 (1975), 33.
278. Michels, Eckard. "Deutsch als Weltsprache? Franz Thierfelder, the Deutsche Akademie in Munich and the promotion of the German language abroad, 1923–1945." *German History* 22.2 (2004), 206-228.
279. Mickiewicz, Denis. *Toward a Definition of Acmeism* (United States: Michigan State University, 1975).
280. Mignolo, Walter & Pintos, Júlio Roberto de Souza, "A modernidade é de fato universal?: reemergência, desocidentalização e opção decolonial" in: *Revista Civitas*, Porto Alegre, v. 15, no. 3, 381-402.
281. Milliet, Sérgio. *Diário crítico de Sérgiå Milliet (1940-1943).* Vol. 6. (Brazil: Editora Brasiliense Ltd., 1940).
282. Mondry, Henrietta & Taylor, John R. "On lying in Russian." *Language & Communication* 12 (1992), 133-143.
283. Monteiro, George. "Natalia Correia on Portuguese Surrealism: A Lecture in the United States" *Portuguese Studies*, Vol 31, No. 1 (2015), 124-131.
284. Monteiro, George. *Elizabeth Bishop in Brazil and After: a poetic career transformed* (North Carolina: McFarland, 2012).
285. Moore, David Chioni. "Is the post-in postcolonial the post-in post-Soviet? Toward a global postcolonial critique." *PMLA/Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 116.1 (2001), 111-128.
286. Moretti, Franco, *The Modern Epic* (Verso Books, 1996).
287. Morris, Leslie. *The Translated Jew: German Jewish Culture Outside the Margins* (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2018).
288. Moser, Benjamin. *Why This World?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
289. Nabokov, Vladimir. *Think, Write, Speak: Uncollected Essays, Reviews, Interviews and Letters to the Editor.* (London: Penguin Books, 2019).
290. Naimark, Norman M. *The Russians in Germany: a history of the Soviet zone of occupation, 1945-1949.* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).
291. Nassar, Dalia, *The Romantic Absolute: Being and Knowing in Early German Romantic Philosophy, 1795-1804* (United Kingdom: University of Chicago Press, 2013).
292. Newitt, M. D. D, *Portugal in Africa* (New York: Longman, 1981).
293. Nicholls, Peter. *Modernisms* (California: University of California Press, 1995).
294. Nilsson, Nils Åke. "Mandel'štam's Sumerki Poems" *Russian Literature* 30.4 (1991), 467-479.
295. Nolte, Andreas. *The Poems of Mascha Kaléko* (Burlington: Fomite, 2017).
296. Norrie Macqueen, *The Decolonisation of Portuguese Africa* (London: Longman, 1997).
297. Nutkiewicz, Michael. "Shame, Guilt, and Anguish in Holocaust Survivor Testimony." *The Oral History Review*, vol. 30, no. 1, [Oxford University Press, Oral History Association] (2003), 1–22.

298. Oliveira, Vera Lucia de. *Poesia, mito e história no Modernismo brasileiro* (São Paulo: Editora UNESP, 2001).
299. Oliveira, Vera Lucia de. *Poesia, mito e história no Modernismo brasileiro* (São Paulo: Editora UNESP, 2001).
300. Orico, Osvaldo. *A saudade brasileira* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora S/A Noite, 1948).
301. Overy, Richard. *The Two Dictators* (London: Penguin Books, 2004).
302. Panou, Despoina. "Equivalence in translation theories: A critical evaluation." *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 3.1 (2013), 1-6.
303. Paperno, Irina & Delaney Grossman, Joan. (eds.) *Creating Life: The Aesthetic Utopia of Russian Modernism* (Paolo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1994).
304. Pascoaes, Teixeira de. "A saudade e o saudosismo." *Lisboa: Assírio & Alvim* (1988), p. 108. Translation mine.
305. Pasternak, Boris & David Magarshack. *I Remember: A Sketch for an Autobiography* (Milan and New York: Pantheon, 1959).
306. Pasternak, Yevgeny, et al. *Lettes, Summer 1926.* (United Kingdom: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985).
307. Pederosa, Celia & Treece, David. "Antonio Candido: Keeping Criticism Alive." Portuguese Studies, vol. 10 (1994), 215–239.
308. Pegelow Kaplan, Thomas. *The Language of Nazi Genocide: Linguistic Violence and the Struggle of Germans of Jewish Ancestry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
309. Peixoto, Marta. "The Nurturing Text in Hélène Cixous and Clarice Lispector." In: *Passionate Fictions: Gender, Narrative, and Violence in Clarice Lispector* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 39–59.
310. Pennington, Evan. "Upheaval and the Unutterable: A Comparative Analysis of Post-Exilic and Post-Holocaust Jewish Poetry." *LOGOS: A Journal of Undergraduate Research* 4 (2011).
311. Petersen, Julius and Fricke, Gerhard (eds.) *Schillers Werke* (Weinlar: Bohlaus, 1868).
312. Peterson, Ronald. *A History of Russian Symbolism* (Amsterdam: John Benjamin, 1993).
313. Pillen, Alex. "Language, translation, trauma." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 45 (2016), 95-111.
314. Pizarro, Ana. *América Latina: palavra, literatura e cultura.* (São Paulo: Memorial, 1995).
315. Pontiero, Giovanni. *An Anthology of Brazilian Modernist Poetry* (London: Pergamon Press, 1969).
316. Pound, Ezra. "The Tradition." *Poetry*, vol. 3, no. 4, (1914), 137–41.
317. Pouzet-Duzer, Virginie. "Dada, Surrealism, Antropofagia: The Consuming Process of the Avant-gardes." *L'Esprit créateur* 53.3 (2013), 79-90.
318. Prestage, Edgar. *The Portuguese Pioneers* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1933/1966), 2nd ed.
319. Propp, Vladimir Yakovlevich. *The Russian Folktale by Vladimir Yakovlevich Propp.* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2012).
320. Pyam, April. *A History of Russian Symbolism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
321. Pym, Anthony. "Text and risk in translation." *Choice and Difference in Translation. The Specifics of Transfer. Athens: University of Athens* (2004): 27-42.
322. Rabaté, Jean-Michel, *1913: The Cradle of Modernism* (London: Blackwell, 2007).
323. Ramizov, Alexei. *Russia in a Whirlwind* (1927, rare).
324. Reeve, F. D. "Recent Soviet Studies in Russian Classical Literature." *Slavic Review* 22.1 (1963), 126-134.
325. Rego, Marcos Lopez, and Hélio Reis Arthur Irigaray. "Administration in the twilight of the kingdom: Saint-Hilaire's records." *Revista de Administração Pública* 55 (2022), 1149-1164.
326. Rego, Stella. "Pau-Brasil Poetry." *Latin American Literary Review*, vol. XIV, no. 27, Jan – June 1986, 184-87.
327. Ribeiro, Guilherme Trielli. " O ouvido e a cidade: Murilo Mendes e a paisagem sonora do Rio de Janeiro." *Revista Laboratorio* 9 (2020).
328. Ribeiro, Guilherme Trielli. "O ouvido e a cidade: Murilo Mendes e a paisagem sonora do Rio de Janeiro." *Revista Laboratorio* 9 (2020).
329. Riha, T. "Russian Émigré Scholars in Prague after World War I." *The Slavic and East European Journal*, vol. 2, no. 1 (1958), 22–26.
330. Robertson, Ritchie. (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Mann* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
331. Robinson, Douglas (ed.) *Western Translation Theory from Herodotus to Nietzsche* (London: Routledge, 2014).
332. Rockmore, Tom. *On Heidegger's Nazism and philosophy* (California: University of California Press, 1997).
333. Rolleston, James. "After Zero Hour: The Visual Texts of Post-War Germany." *South Atlantic Review*, vol. 64, no. 2 (1999), 1–19.
334. Rose, Gillian. *Mourning becomes the law: Philosophy and representation.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
335. Rosenkranz, Jutta von. (ed.) *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe.* (München: Verlag, 2012).

336. Rosenthal, Bernice Glatzer. *Dmitri Sergeevich Merezhkovsky and the Silver Age: The Development of a revolutionary Mentality* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975).
337. Ross, Stephen & Lindgreen, Allana (eds.) *The Modernist World* (London & New York: Routledge Books, 2015).
338. Rossellini, Roberto. *Ano Zero* (Produzione Savlo D'Angelo & Tevere Film, 1948).
339. Rubins, Maria. (ed.) *Redefining Russian Literary Diaspora. 1920-2020.* (London: UCL Press, 2021).
340. Rudich, Vasily. "The Tower Builder: The Works and Days of Vyacheslav Ivanov." *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics*, vol. 5, no. 3 (1998), 48–68.
341. Safranski, Rüdiger. *Martin Heidegger* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991).
342. Said, Edward. "Orientalism: Western concepts of the Orient." (New York: Pantheon, 1978).
343. Sapir, Edward. "The Status of Linguistics as a Science", *Language*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (Dec. 1929).
344. Schleiermacher, Friedrich, A*kademievorträge. Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (Berlin & New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2002).
345. Schmidt, Rita Terezinha. "Crossing Borders: Clarice Lispector and the Scene of Transnational Feminist Criticism." *Brazilian Literature as World Literature* (2018), 243-263.
346. Schnaiderman, Boris. "Bakhtin e a literatura brasileira. Abordando a obra de Murilo Mendes." *Literatura e sociedade* 23.26 (2018), 167-172.
347. Schott, Ben. *Schottenfreude: German Words for the Human Condition* (Australia: Text Publishing Company, 2013).
348. Schultz, Kirsten. "Royal Authority, Empire and the Critique of Colonialism: Political Discourse in Rio de Janeiro (1808-1821)." *Luso-Brazilian Review*, vol. 37, no. 2 (2000), 7–31.
349. Schwarz, Roberto. "Competing Readings." *New Left Review* 48 (2007): 85.
350. Schwarz, Roberto. *Ao vencedor as batatas: forma literária e processo social nos inícios do romance brasileiro* (São Paulo: Editora 34, 2000).
351. Scliar, Moacyr. *Saturno nos trópicos: a melancholia europeia chega ao Brasil* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2003).
352. Shaobo, Xie, "World literature, translation, untranslatability," *Asia Pacific Translation and Intercultural Studies*, 7:2 (2020), 151-163.
353. Sharpe, Matthew. "On reading Heidegger—after the "Heidegger case?" *Critical Horizons* 19.4 (2018), 334-360.
354. Shiach, Morag. *Hélène Cixous, A Politics of Writing* (London: Routledge, 1991).
355. Shklovsky, Victor & Sheldon, Richard. *A Sentimental Journey: Memoirs 1917-1922* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970).
356. Shklovsky, Viktor. "Theory of Prose, trans." B. Sher. (Illinois: Dalkey Archive, 1990).
357. Shleyfer Lavine, Ludmila. ""*Poema*" of Lieutenant Schmidt's End: Pasternak's Dialogue with Tsvetaeva through the Prism of Genre," *The Russian Review*, Vol. 70. No. 3 (July 2011), 485-503.
358. Shukla, Viraj (ed.) Special Issue: Untranslatability: Problem or Practice? *Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics*, Vol. 45, No. 1, Spring 2022.
359. Silina, Maria. "The Struggle Against Naturalism: Soviet Art from the 1920s to the 1950s." *RACAR: Revue d'art Canadienne / Canadian Art Review*, vol. 41, no. 2, (2016), 91–104.
360. Silva, Ana Claudia Suriani Da. *Books and Periodicals in Brazil 1768-1930.* Routledge, 2017. *Books and Periodicals in Brazil 1768–1930.* (London: Routledge, 2017), 35-51.
361. Simic, Charles, *The Life of Images* (New York: Harper Collins, 2015).
362. Skidmore, Thomas E. "Culture War in Brazil with the Opening of the Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo and the Official Arrival of Abstraction." *Simposio 3: Arte y Política en América Latina durante y después de la Guerra Fría.* Vol. 24. No. 26. 2019.
363. Slonin, Mark, Soviet Russian Literature: Writers and Problems (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967).
364. Smith, Alexandra. "Constructing the modernist vision of time: Tsvetaeva's rendering of Bely's dynamic worldview in 'A Captive Spirit.'" *Australian Slavonic & East European Studies.* (2017) Vol. 31, No. 1-2. 7-47.
365. Smith, Peter H., et al. *Modern Latin America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
366. Snyder, Timothy. *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010).
367. Soares, Luiz Eduardo. *Rio: Extreme City* (London & New York: Penguin Books, 2016).
368. Sotirova, Violeta. *Consciousness in modernist fiction: A stylistic study.* (USA: Springer, 2013).
369. Spitzer, D. M. (ed.) *Philosophy's Treason* (Delaware: Vernon Press, 2020).
370. Spitzer, Leo & Granville Hatcher, Anna. *Classical and Christian Ideas of World Harmony: Prolegomena to an Interpretation of the Word 'Stimmung'* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1963).
371. Spitzer, Leo & Granville Hatcher, Anna. *Classical and Christian Ideas of World Harmony: Prolegomena to an Interpretation of the Word 'Stimmung'* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1963).
372. Spitzer, Leo, "Milieu and ambiance: an essay in historical semantics." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 3.2 (1942), 169-218.

373. Spitzer, Leo, & Granville Hatcher, Anna. *Essays in Historical Semantics* (Germany: S.F. Vanni, 1948).
374. Staden, Hans. "Hans Staden [1557]" (*Rio de Janeiro: Dantes*, 1998).
375. Stamp, Robert. *The Russian Revolution 1900-1927* (London: Macmillan, 1986).
376. Stanford Friedman, Susan, *Planetary Modernisms* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).
377. Steiner, George, *After Babel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975).
378. Steiner, George, *Language and Silence* (London: Atheneum, 1967)
379. Steinweis, Alan. *Kristallnacht 1938* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2009).
380. Stenbock-Fermor, Elisabeth. "Russian Literature from 1890 to 1917." *Katkov et al., eds., Russia Enters the Twentieth Century* 1917 (1894), 263-286.
381. Struve, Gleb. *Russian Literature under Lenin and Stalin 1917-1953* (Oklahoma: Oklahoma University Press, 1971).
382. *Studies on Russian Economic Development Vol. 9* (Russia: Interperiodica Publishers, 1998).
383. Syronitski, Michael (ed.) Special issue: Translating the Untranslatable, *Paragraph* Vol. 38, No. 2, July 2015.
384. Tait, Peta. *Performing Emotions: gender, bodies, spaces, in Chekhov's drama and Stanislavski's theatre* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2017).
385. Tashinskiy, Aleksey, Julija Boguna, and Tomasz Rozmysłowicz, eds. *Translation und Exil (1933–1945) I: Namen und Orte. Recherchen zur Geschichte des Übersetzens.* Vol. 53. Frank & Timme GmbH, 2022.
386. Taylor, Byron, "Untranslatability: The Rebirth of Theory?" Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics, Vol. 44, No. 4, Winter 2021, pp. 16-30.
387. Teletin, Andreea, and Veronica Manole. "Expressing cultural Identity through saudade and dor: A Portuguese-Romanian comparative study." *Identity, Concepts, History, and Present Realities (A European View)* (2015), 155-171.
388. Thomas, Lawrence (ed.) *The History of the Russian Literary Language from the Seventeenth Century to the Nineteenth* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969).
389. Tihanov, Galin. "The politics of estrangement: The case of the early Shklovsky." *Poetics Today* 26.4 (2005), 665-696.
390. Tihanov, Galin. *The Birth and Death of Literary Theory* (Paolo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2019).
391. Tolczyk, Dariusz, *See No Evil* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1999).
392. Tolstoy, Helen. *Akim Volynsky: A Hidden Russian-Jewish Prophet.* (Lieden: Brill, 2016).
393. Treadgold, Donald. *Twentieth Century Russia* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987).
394. Tsvetaeva, Marina & Elena Feinstein. *Collected Poems* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973).
395. Tsvetaeva, Marina & Feinstein, Elaine. *Selected Poems* (London: Penguin, 1974).
396. Tsvetaeva, Marina & Feinstein, Elaine. *Selected Poems* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972).
397. Tsvetaeva, Marina & Gambrell, Jamey. *Earthly Signs: Moscow Diaries, 1917-1922* (New York: New York Review of Books, 2017).
398. Tsvetaeva, Marina & Jane White, Mary. "Poem of the End." *The Hudson Review*, vol. 61, no. 4 (2009), 695–715.
399. Tsvetaeva, Marina & Kossman, Nina. *Poem of the End: Selected Narrative and Lyrical Poems* (United States, Harry N. Abrams, 2009).
400. Tsvetaeva, Marina & Livingstone, Angela. *Art in the Light of Conscience* (London: Bloodaxe Books, 1992).
401. Tsvetaeva, Marina & Mary Jane White. "Poem of the End." *The Hudson Review*, vol. 61, no. 4 (2009), 695–715.
402. Tsvetaeva, Marina & McDuff, David. *Selected Poems* (United Kingdom: Bloodaxe Books, 1987).
403. Tsvetaeva, Marina and White, Mary Jane. "Poem of the End." *The Hudson Review*, vol. 61, no. 4 (2009), 695-715.
404. Tsvetaeva, Marina, "*Neskolko pisem Rainera Mariya Rilke*" [Several Letters from Rainer Maria Rilke], Volya Rossii (Paris), no. 2 (1929), 26-27.
405. Tsvetayeva, Marina & Kossman, Nina. *In the Inmost Hour of the Soul* (Germany, Humana Press, 2012). Kossman, Nina. *Other Shepherds: Poems with Translations from Marina Tsvetaeva* (New York: Poets and Traitors Incorporated, 2020).
406. Tynianov, Yuri. *Permanent Evolution: Selected essays on literature, theory and film.* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2019).
407. Vaz, Katherine. *Saudade: A Novel* (New York: St. Martin Press, 1996).
408. Venuti, Lawrence & Baker, Mona (eds.) *The Translation Studies Reader* (London: Routledge, 2000).
409. Venuti, Lawrence, *Contra Instrumentalism* (Nebraska: Nebraska University Press, 2019).
410. Venuti, Lawrence, *The Scandals of Translation* (London & New York: Routledge, 1998).
411. Venuti, Lawrence, *The Translator's Invisibility* (London & New York: Routledge Books, 1995).
412. Venuti, Lawrence. *Contra Instrumentalism* (Nebraska: Nebraska University Press, 2019).

413. Venuti, Lawrence. *Theses On Translation: An Organon for the Current Moment.* Available via: https://flugschriften.com/2019/09/15/thesis-on-translation/.
414. Vertov, Dziga, Mikhail A. Kaufman & E I. Vertova-Svilova. *Dziga Vertov: The Man with a Movie Camera, Enthusiasm, 3 Songs About Lenin, Kino Eye, Kino Pravda.* (2015).
415. Vieira, Else Ribeiro Pires. "Liberating Calibans: Readings of Antropofagia and Haroldo de Campos' poetics of transcreation." *Postcolonial Translation.* (London: Routledge, 2012).
416. Vlakhov, Sergei and Florin, Sider. *Непереводимое в переводе [The Untranslatable in Translation].* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 1980).
417. Vlies, Andrew van der, "World Literature, the opaque archive, and the untranslatable: J. M. Coetzee and some others," *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* (2021), 1-18.
418. Volpe, Michael, "Nikolai Gumilyov's Ethiopian tour as reflected in his diary," *Rassegna Di Studi Etiopici,* vol. 31, Istituto per l'Oriente C. A. Nallino (1987), 237–45.
419. Walkowitz, Rebecca & Hayot, Eric (ed.), *A New Vocabulary for Global Modernism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).
420. Walkowitz, Rebecca, *Born Translated* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).
421. Wang, Jianjun. "An Analysis of Untranslatability between English and Chinese from Intercultural Perspective." *English Language Teaching* 7.4 (2014), 119-125.
422. Wat, Aleksander & Lourie, Richard, My Century: The Oddyssey of a Polish Intellectual (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 173-174.
423. Weberman, David. "Heidegger and the Disclosive Nature of Emotions," The Southern Journal of Philosophy, Vol. XXXIV (1996) 387-410.
424. Wehler, Hans-Ulrich. *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte* (Germany: Verlag nicht ermittelbar, 1987).
425. Wellbery, David & Pohl, Rebecca. "Stimmung." *New Formations*, no. 93 (2018), 6-45.
426. Westwood, J. N. *Endurance and Endeavour* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973).
427. White, Erdmute Wenzel. "Cultural Memory and Decolonization: Brazil 1924–1928." *Colonizer and Colonized.* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 235-249.
428. White, James D. "The first Pravda and the Russian Marxist tradition." *Soviet Studies* 26.2 (1974): pp.181-204.
429. Wierzbicka, Anna. *Semantics, Culture, and Cognition: Universal human concepts in culture-specific configurations.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).
430. Williams, Bery. *The Russian Revolution 1917-1921* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987).
431. Williams, Bruce. "I Am the Eye That Penetrates: Cinema and the Nostalgic Gaze of Murilo Mendes's" Poemas"." *Chasqui* 30.2 (2001), 35-45.
432. Williams, Claire. *Encounter Between Opposites in the Works of Clarice Lispector* (Bristol: University of Bristol, 2006).
433. Wunberg, Gotthard. (ed.) *Die literarische Moderne: Dokumente zum Selbstverstaïndnis der Literatur um die Jahrhundertwende.* (Frankfurt am Main: Athenaeum Verlag, 1971).
434. Xie, Ming, *Conditions of Comparison* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2011).
435. Young, John Wesley. *Totalitarian Language: Orwell's Newspeak and Its Nazi and Communist Predecessors.* (Virginia: University of Virginia, 1987).
436. Young, Jordan. "Military aspects of the 1930 Brazilian revolution." *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 44.2 (1964), 180-196.
437. Zlateva, Palma, *Translation as Social Action: Russian and Bulgarian Perspectives* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2018).
438. Zvereva, Svetlana. "Alexander Kastal'sky: A Russian Requiem", *The Choral Journal,* 42 (2017), 27-35.
439. Zweig, Stefan & Anthea Bell. *The World of Yesterday* (London: Pushkin Press, 2008).