Translating Home in the Global South

Migration, Belonging, and Language Justice

Edited by Isabel C. Gómez and Marlene Hansen Esplin

Introduction

Home as a Translingual Practice

Isabel C. Gómez and Marlene Hansen Esplin

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
NEW YORK AND LONDON

Introduction

Home as a Translingual Practice

Isabel C. Gómez and Marlene Hansen Esplin

In late 2019 and early 2020, our global home felt at once smaller, more circumscribed, yet vaster and more unpredictable than ever. Nations and other institutions we belong to formulated responses to the pandemic emergency presented by Covid-19, and to varying degrees we found ourselves largely confined to our homes for an undetermined time. Euphemisms such as "shelter in place" or "work from home" collapsed opposing discourses around the private sphere, as the public health emergency permeated and transformed all aspects of everyday life. Home as a space transformed put into stark relief preexisting ruptures in social fabrics holding together practices of home-building: from migration and mobility responding to war, climate disaster, and economic inequality, to heightened social unrest around forms of belonging as articulated through categories of race, gender, language, nationality, or ability. As Catherine S. Ramírez, Sylvanna M. Falcón, and Juan Poblete, et al. argue, "[t]he pandemic has exposed not only disparities, contradictions, and hypocrisies but also connections between citizens and noncitizens, workers and employers, workers and consumers, and, indeed, all nations and peoples. […] It has exposed some people's immobility and inability to self-isolate—for example, in a prison, detention facility, or slaughter-house. And it underscores the outsized role the precariat, the group of people for whom precarity is a driving force, plays in our world." (2) As we came to rely upon first responders and other essential workers, citizens and denizens alike, translators and interpreters emerged as vital figures who negotiate and enable the translingual practice of becoming at home while also remaining in flux, (re)constructing our lives within precarity and uncertainty.

Translation studies has long served as a methodology to approach liminal spaces, zones of contact, and experiences of indeterminacy. While the authors gathered in this edited volume do not overtly address the pandemic as context, we do focus on twenty-first-century cultural representations of translation acts taking place in zones of movement,

DOI: 10.4324/9781003378150-1

transition, and precarity. This volume indexes a variety of ways our global languages and our practices around translingual meaning-making have changed through modern and contemporary experiences of migration, in which the translator figures not as an outside resource but as a wholly imbricated actor in constructing home in a translingual world. If translanguaging refers to the act of drawing on the knowledge funds of multiple language systems at once to navigate and produce new cultural forms (see GarcíaandWei), then translating home is the same linguistic practice set into motion, drawing on the embodied knowledge of multiple geo-linguistic standpoints and experiences at once. By using literary works as source material to examine migrating practices of translation, the nine chapters in our volume contend with creative and linguistic valences of making, unmaking, and remaking homes in the specific geopolitical context of what has come to be understood as the Global South.

The Global South as a Critical Translation Zone

Rising in currency alongside the category of world literature, the Global South represents a much contested and slippery framework which nevertheless promises that different speculative futures can be wrested out of colonial, exploitative pasts. Jaspal Naveel Singh contends that "instead of a Euclidian geography, the Global South is a postcolonial imagined and imaginative community that bears the potential to imagine powerful south-south solidarity between the struggles for decoloniality of diverse populations around the world" (209). In his introduction to *The Global South and Literature*, Russell West-Pavlov assesses both critiques of and aspirations for the term. The category may be at best a less-than-useful update to what was once known as the Third World or at worst an erasure of the specific experiences in formerly colonized spaces. On the other hand, the term still offers promise in many critical contexts to productively function "like a deictic marker, linking discourses, places, and speakers in such a way as to generate new subject positions, fields of agency, and possibilities of action" (West-Pavlov 1–2). *Translating Home in the Global South* occurs in the wake of a history of colonial linguistic epistemicide alongside contemporary material displacements characteristic of the postcolonial experience. Joining the diverse spaces represented here under the rubric of the "Global South" links translation discourses occurring in geographic and linguistic zones including the Caribbean, Central America, South America, Bosnia, Syria, South Asia, and China, as well as practical or discursive points of enunciation, including detention centers, climate emergency response hubs, mental health providers, social media self-fashioning, poetic imaginaries, and exile.

Scholarship interrogating the interrelationship between translation and migration often focuses on receiving nations and their necessity to make room for migrants in hegemonic language cultures. Instead, the essays in *Translating Home in the Global South* center writers, translators, and interpreters who are migrants themselves. Contributors investigate how migrant translators challenge paradigms of national literatures to expose conditions of statelessness, to highlight the creative fertility of migrant writing, and to challenge norms of translation and publication that may reproduce national border policing on the level of the symbolic. Unfolding in three parts and organized thematically rather than geographically, our volume tracks the roles played by a variety of translation practices in both home-building and the un-homing of communities.

In **Part I: Self-Translation, Collaboration, and Co-Creation in Migrant Writing**, our contributors feature writers and translators who take up new translational practices in response to migration, displacement, or exile. To understand the new modes of expression and publication emerging in migrant writing, the authors theorize self-translation, collaboration, and co-creation. Marlene Hansen Esplin traces metaphors connecting migration with contagion and invasion in "A Pandemic View of Translation: Novels of Catastrophe and Our Hemispheric Home," ultimately demonstrating how contemporary writers between Mexico and the US collaborate with their translators to redress xenophobia and reimagine hemispheric collective responsibilities. In "Post-National Refugee Writing on Social Media: Translation as a Strategy of Survival," Tatjana Soldat-Jaffe examines self-publication on Facebook by Syrian and other Arabic-speaking refugees in Germany, where the "instant translation" function available to content creators and users alike allows for a translation of the self into a liquid identity capable of voicing displacement and belonging simultaneously, negotiating material challenges while also creating new fluid selves. Lastly, Sergio Waisman draws from his life experience as a son of Argentine exiles and translator of a major Argentine novelist in "An Almost Invisible Scene: Collaboration and Co-Creation in the Task of Translating Ricardo Piglia." His literary co-creation with Piglia often involves uncanny moments of translating from Spanish into English eerily familiar fictions wherein the narrators or protagonists are already translated or only nominally at home in the original language. In each of these chapters, new terms begin to emerge for translation practices that cannot be fully addressed by conventional binaries between source and target text.

The chapters in **Part II: Detention, Denial of Home, and Border Policing** examine both the threat and opportunity presented by acts of translation, underlining translation's urgency and errancy in situations of detention, deterrence, discrimination, and asylum. When can acts of translation and

interpretation present radical resistance to practices of confinement or border policing—and when might translations contribute linguistically to these real-world injustices? In "Dwelling in Indeterminacy: Interpreting the Migrant Poet in Detention," Alexandra Maria Lossada takes as case study a collaborative project, *Dreaming America,* which provides a bilingual snapshot of Central American undocumented youth in a US maximum-security detention facility. From the different geo-linguistic standpoint of Bosnian and former Yugoslav experiences—in fact, the one country in Eastern Europe categorized as belonging to the "Global South" according to the UN-supported Finance Center for South-South Cooperation (website)—Višnja Jovanović and Filip Jovanović draw from the medical humanities in "Interpreting for Asylum-Seekers by a Former Refugee: Professionalism and Mental Health in Bekim Sejranović's *Transfiction.*" Their analysis advocates using diagnostic criteria alongside auto-fictional narratives to better understand the experience of inter-preters working in the aftermath of the Bosnian war. While providing justice for displaced asylum seekers, interpreters themselves experience PTSD-like symptoms or other forms of secondary traumatic stress due to the repetitive and intimate nature of asylum interviews. Janet Hendrickson interrogates a radical translation practice in "'A Big, Beautiful Wall': Experimental Translation and Decolonial Practice in Mónica de la Torre's *Repetition Nineteen.*" Working with the discursive policing of the US/ Mexico border, where politicians articulate the maintenance of so-called Homeland Security as under threat from the Global South at the southern frontier, Hendrickson illuminates a strategy of radical disappropriation, deploying the language of anti-immigrant sentiment against itself.

The final section, **Part III: Stateless Translation and Planetary Ecologies**, addresses the utility of translation in creating collective spaces of mourning and memory and facilitating paths toward healing and decolonization after climate disaster and political turmoil. In "Fluid Voices: Translating Language and Place in Novels of Migration," Yan Wu draws on theories of planetarity to interrogate the knowledge flows addressing climate change in environmental fictions based in China and India. Wafa Hamid studies the poetic "wake work" of translations that refuse to offer closure, catharsis, or forgetting around the histories of contested or stateless cultural homelands of Kashmir and Palestine in "Specters of Home in Agha Shahid Ali's Translations of Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Mahmoud Darwish." Ending the collection in a part of the Global South administered and colonized by the US, Isabel C. Gómez's "A Puerto Rican Poetics of Disaster Relief and Cuir Eco-Translation" studies a literary representation of Hurricane Maria's aftermath, where refusals to translate allow for a more complete picture of the complex discourses of care, visibility, and repair for Puerto Ricans on and off the island. This section of the collection also emphasizes

how translation serves as a vital heuristic for approaching a non-anthropocentric understanding of a changing planet.

Translating Home at the Intersections of World Literature and Migration Studies

A decade ago, Loredana Polezzi placed translation and migration in a critical intersection and charged the field of translation studies with asking: "who translates, for whom, when and where, [… and what are] the mechanisms which legitimize or de-legitimize forms of translation (and more generally of language behavior)" ("Migration and Translation" 105). Building on the work of scholars of translation studies, migration studies, and world literature, our chapters attend to the situated nature of translation acts occurring in the wake of migration, exile, displacement, and detention—and to questions of how the cultural legitimation of language behavior often maps on to the degree of societal legitimation of a migrant group's presence in a space, a public sphere, and a creative culture.

One of the major avenues of studying the intersections of migration and translation has been the body of scholarship on "linguistic landscapes" or the study of the manifestations of multilingual lives as represented in public space. In her chapter titled "Signs of Transnationalism from Above and Below" in *Translation and Migration*, Moira Inghilleri writes about the role migrants play in building cosmopolitan cities:

> All categories of migration and all types of migrants contribute to the redistribution of sensibilities necessary for a cosmopolitan vision that is oriented not only toward those who migrate, but all individuals within diverse societies. The formation of a critical cosmopolitanism—that is, one aimed at reformulating global and local sensibilities to include ideas and perceptions not already privileged in the global order—is central to this project.
>
> (172)

While a few of our chapters touch on manifestations of translingualism in public spaces, rather than directly working through the linguistic landscape framework, the presence of these "signs" tends to be incorporated within a larger critical translation project. For example, the complex functions of specific signs of transnationalism are questioned in Gómez's examination of Puerto Rican poetic appropriation of mass media, in Hendrickson's exploration of the radical translation poetics of taking xenophobic public discourse at face value, and in Soldat-Jaffe's placement of migrant writing on Facebook in a strategic role of both private and public survival tactics.

Reviewing the relationship between translation studies, comparative literature, and world literature, Susan Bassnett productively traces the way all three have contended with the long-standing bias placing language study beneath and in service of literary studies (1–7). The authors in her edited volume *Translation and World Literature* elevate translation and therefore language in the study of literature—not merely as instrumental, but also in relation to ethics, aesthetics, politics, and all other lenses through which we examine culture. The writers all center around a "prioritization of translation as both the instrument and the precondition for the spatial and temporal movement of texts" (Bassnett 13), a tendency in the field also pursued by Edwin Gentzler in *Translation and Rewriting in the Age of Post-Translation Studies* (2017) and Lawrence Venuti in *Contra Instrumentalism: A Translation Polemic* (2019). Sharing these concerns, and some even engaging with world literature frameworks, the authors collected in *Translating Home in the Global South* place less emphasis on the movement of texts than on the movement of people and communities, and the unique qualities, possibilities, and challenges occasioned by texts produced under conditions of precarity and flux and by literary representations of these lives in motion.

Recent scholarship at the intersection of translation studies and migration studies tends to emphasize the dual nature of translation as a double-edged sword in the lives of migrants: one they might use to carve out new space, resources, and communities—and one that might cut against their self-determination. Siri Nergaard's *Translation and Transmigration* (2021) articulates the dualities of the "condition of translation" in the lives of migrants, where translingual experiences index "hostility as well as hospitality, rejection as well as assimilation, loss as well as gain" (2). The chapters collected in *Translating Worlds: Migration, Memory, and Culture* (2021) share with our volume an interrogation of the mixed blessings implied by translation as a manner of creating continuity with memories of the past. As editors Susannah Radstone and Rita Wilson put it, "memories of lost homes act as aids or hindrances to homemaking in new worlds" (1–2). Where their focus on memory studies contends with a diverse field of cultural objects connected with a past that remains imbricated with and incorporated into the present, the literary works studied in *Translating Home* tend to adopt a more speculative, imaginary, and future-oriented view of the opportunities and challenges of home-building.

The essays in this volume each illustrate how "translating home" is a relational and a performative act, the act of translation implying a receiver of a time-stamped performance of belonging and a projected identity that is necessarily different and distant from a yet-to-be articulated or translated notion of home that precedes translation. Our contributors approach

"translating home" not just as a one-way act of communication but as a makeshift and multidirectional feedback loop dictated by situations of precarity, placelessness, and readjustment following forced relocations, global upheavals, life changes, and opportunities for creative and social collaboration. In their examination of Bekim Sejranović's novel *From Nowhere to Nowhere*, Jovanović and Jovanović underline the performative contours of the asylum-seeking interview: "the asylum officer *performs* the role of gatekeeper, catching certain specificities in the testimony that ought to function as an entryway to the safety of Norwegian society. With these assumed expectations in mind, the asylum-seeker *performs* to earn the status of a refugee, structuring and presenting their narrative in such a way to maximize the chance of having their asylum granted." Likewise, in her discussion of the collaborative and bilingual poetry created by detained minors, US university students, and their professor, Lossada reads between the Spanish and English versions to cast light on these highly mediative poetic transcriptions and translations as "sites of indeterminacy" that "speak back not only to the translator, but also to the larger literary system and global society that determines which people can have homes." "Home" is revealed as a shifting signifier, relative to the positionality and attachments of the speaker/writer/translator/subject at hand. Starting but not ending with various processes of migration and resettlement, homes are continually made and unmade through official documents and forms (or the lack thereof); through cultural, political, and religious affiliations; through economic, curricular, and other institutional stratifications; and by language markers such as accents, turns of phrase, code-switching, and other manifestations of linguistic belonging.

Translators and interpreters wield the crucial capacity to expose the constructedness and ambivalences of home and mediate the complexities of migration in the contemporary era. The translator's embeddedness in constructing home helps to challenge both binaries that persist in discussions of migration—e.g., citizen/noncitizen, documented/undocumented, legal/illegal, insider/outsider, forced/voluntary—and reductive descriptions of origins and destinations. As Tamar Mayer and Trinh Tran indicate in their *Displacement, Belonging, and Migrant Agency in the Face of Power*, "places of origin may not be all bad and places of destination are never all good. In fact, because there are multiple places of destination/arrival, we know that some such places are not as safe as the migrants expect, otherwise they would not embark on further travel. This binary, then, is not useful, and also simply wrong" (6). The translators and interpreters across this volume, whether real or fictional, counter analogous binaries in translation studies: original/translation, source/target, author/translator, and domestication/foreignization. Our collection resists a binary-driven treatment of both migration and translation by

emphasizing the double-edged, multivalent, and often unhomely task of translating home.

The "uncanny" or *unheimlich* nature of translation evokes the fundamentally troubling, paradoxical, and fertile mode of creation that indexes both the possibility and impossibility of mapping one text through another, one language into another, oneself onto or for another. The *unheimlich* is that which is not home-like and not secret, both unfamiliar and already known in an unsettling way. In 1919, Sigmund Freud writes that by examining the complex linguistic polysemy of the word *unheimlich* and by studying aesthetic depictions of the *unheimlich* effect, the same conclusion arises: "that the uncanny is that species of the frightening that goes back to what was once well known and had long been familiar" (124). While conceptual deployment of the uncanny became foundational within both psychoanalysis and comparative literature, it maintained the slipperiness of describing what is at once already known and persistently surprising, the unsettling gesture central to deconstruction (see AnneleenMasschelein's introduction to *The Unconcept*). A translation studies approach to the uncanny delves into several additional opposed meanings: something which is familiar and yet should not be; something totally foreign which nevertheless finds a way to become home; or, something familiar and home-like which becomes stranger-like through the procedure of translation, revealing its already existing estrangement.

The *unheimlich* as a conceptual category, for contributors Waisman and Wu, connects overtly to their understanding of translating home in the Global South. Waisman reflects on his own life experience as translator and the uncanny creative and linguistic relationship he has as an exile from Argentina to the US who finds himself translating the Argentine Ricardo Piglia's writing, wherein there is an already troubled, unsettled relationship to Spanish. Wu draws on the category of "the environmental uncanny" from Amitav Ghosh in which nonhuman forces elicit uncanny feelings in displaced characters and readers alike. Other chapters also dwell in the space of an uncanny valley, casting light on situations in which there is an unsettling collapse of boundaries. Jovanović and Jovanović explore how interpreters might reproduce and re-experience the traumatic ordeals of Bosnian war refugees through the process of asylum-seeking interviews and hearings, producing secondary PTSD. Esplin illuminates the intertwining writerly activity between authors and translators who intermingle roles, positions, and languages alike, resulting in contamination of identity positions which ultimately explodes the metaphor of immigrant as invading contagion from within by inhabiting it too fully. A refusal to translate can also produce experiences of uncanny estrangement or uncomfortable belonging, as when Gómez highlights the outsider-inside position of Puerto Rican Americans through the work of poet

Roque Raquel Salas Rivera. When he writes "they say that Puerto Ricans speak Spanish in English" (Salas Rivera 71), this tautological quip dwells on the uncomfortable truth that within the doubly colonized space of the US Commonwealth, both languages have been denied full ownership, full proprietary "at-home-ness" of linguistic property as aligned with national belonging or citizenship. For her part, Hamid delineates a poetic process of "unhoming" through the work of Agha Shahid Ali, an Indian-born immigrant to the US of Afghan and Kashmiri ancestry, who writes and translates from a reclaimed poetic homeplace in which one might be both at home and in perpetual exile. Taken together, these chapters explore the uncanniness of unhoming, translating or interpreting home, or translating another who feels like another self.

Translingual Approaches to Migration, Belonging, and Language Justice

Translingual writing rejects or explodes the paradigm of monolingualism in a more active and mutually co-constitutive way than multilingual writing. As Sarah Dowling states, "while the term *multilingual* is typically positioned as the alternative to monolingual, it is increasingly critiqued because it simply describes the coexistence of languages in space and time and is generally silent about the relationships between them" (4). Our volume draws from translingual experiences and articulates "the capacity of languages to interact, influence, and transform one another"; "unlike the term *multilingual*, which is often associated with dominant multiculturalisms, the term *translingual* typically describes critical, oppositional, and survival practices" (Dowling 5). While not every chapter positions the same valence of these terms, as a whole the volume weighs more heavily on the side of relational and co-constitutive translingual practices.

Much in the same vein, our chapters use the vocabulary of "migration" in a way that incorporates and acknowledges the complexities of "mobility" in the contemporary era. We recur to migration as an encompassing concept that includes various and multidirectional forms of mobility, whether across national and linguistic borders or through social and economic strata, and we skirt some negative valences of the term "migrant" (criticized for denying migrant subjects the ontological stability of, say, immigrants, residents, expats, or naturalized citizens) by emphasizing the productively unsettling character of texts and translations and versions of a text. Following Polezzi:

> Migration, if we consider it from the perspective of translation, reminds us that it is not only texts that travel, but also people. […] Once we consider the mobility of people as well as that of texts, the linear notion

of translation as something that happens to an original […] as it moves across national, cultural and linguistic boundaries becomes largely insufficient.

("Translation and Migration" 347–48)

Essays in our collection view the insufficiency and instability occasioned by the movement of texts and peoples as largely constructive in challenging pervasive national, cultural, and linguistic imaginaries which define and categorize as much as they provide stability and security. As Nergaard describes, focusing on the movement of migrants and translations highlights the untenable "unity of language, religion, and social order" which are all "threatened by mobility" (3). Nergaard maintains that by "[b]reaking up the identity between the individual as citizen, between nativity and nationality, the migrant throws into crisis the original fiction of sovereignty" (3). Our contributors approach migration and translation in the context of the globalized twenty-first century, as comprising more comings and goings, more connectedness to home via social media or other modes of digital connection, and a more fluid sense of home and identity that is less bound to a physical place, unitary social group, or national language tradition.

The chapters in our volume also acknowledge the varied demographics and choices of migrants, who leave and return and sometimes embrace itinerancy for reasons of necessity, happenstance, and measured calculus in response to political, economic, cultural, and ecological upheavals. Our collection is less interested in elucidating the who and why of migration than it is in examining consequences following the fact of migration: for people, for texts, and for seemingly settled notions of home or belonging. As Ricarda Vidal and Manuela Perteghella indicate, "[i]t is exactly in the in-between places that exciting movements take place. Between 'there-ness' and 'here-ness'—a movement or tension between past and present, between the place of origin and the place of residence—new stories, new ideas are born and shared" (600). The double-edged role of translation in liminal situations invites new practices and modes of examining translation amid a shifting sense of home, origin, and destination. Musing on the risks and rewards of his own unbounded translation projects, Waisman indicates: "[t]he scene of translation is a sort of third space, in between languages and texts. Something happens in that almost invisible scene, there is a potential in the scene of translation that deserves to be unveiled." Migrant writers, interpreters, and translators witness many almost invisible scenes in our volume, and the contributors illuminate the urgency of rendering them more visible.

Just as the intersection of migration and translation emphasizes the movement of people and not merely texts, questions of belonging operate on individuals, communities, and their textual productions. Notions of

belonging and unbelonging intersect with designations of citizenship or residential status, but they also span and disregard official and legal certifications of who can live where. Belonging can be constituted through linguistic ties that cut across relations to languages that have official or privileged status, and it can also be fostered through cultural and religious bonds that transcend and sometimes run contrary to national and regional imaginaries. Moreover, as Mayer and Tran indicate, "forces like globalization are quickly eroding the nation-state as the primary basis of belonging. During an era of intense global movement driven by economic disparities, climate change, and regional conflicts, belonging is an increasingly a-spatial phenomenon that requires de-territorialized ways of understanding" (7). Varieties of unbelonging are similarly a-spatial and persist despite national, linguistic, cultural, socioeconomic, or religious status; they can be both a source of devastating precarity, in cases of discrimination, dehumanization, or statelessness, and, in some cases, a source of productive alterity. In her *On Belonging and Not Belonging*, Mary Jacobus examines the cases of individual translators, poets, and artists for whom "*not* belonging" is a crucial constitutive identity (1). In the same vein, the essays in *Translating Home* delve into the fluid contours and ambivalences of belonging and underline translation's role in both assuaging losses and building communities and in lending ontological stability to exclusive categories of home, nation, and identity. Hendrickson explores experimental translation practices that counter "the power of English by creating, simultaneously, absence and excess" and by adding "possibilities of iteration too widespread to pinpoint, too numerous to control." Hamid describes how Agha Shahid Ali's poetic translations invite "new forms of community and belonging where one is at home and yet in perpetual exile." In her investigations of Facebook posts by Arabic-speaking migrant writers, Soldat-Jaffe provides a window into the new systems and networks of belonging facilitated by "instant translation," and Lossada, as well as Jovanović and Jovanović, examine possibilities of belonging/unbelonging in situations of detention and asylum-seeking. Wu highlights how Amitav Ghosh and Chen Qiufan utilize translatorial protagonists "to work with the untranslatability of 'native' tongues and challenge the power of global major languages in the local systems," and Esplin explores how the translator protagonists of Mexican/Latinx writers advance collective responsibility toward global problems such as disease, a changing climate, and the legacies of colonialism. The acts of translating home described herein point toward an effort to locate a belonging not contingent on citizenship, linguistic dominance, or nationalistic claims. Instead, forms of belonging outside state sponsored categories might be articulated through acts of language justice, or translingual acts redressing language injustices.

One working definition of language justice comes from the realm of activist interpretation and translation practice, as articulated by the Antena Aire collective: "When we refer to language justice, we mean the right everyone has to communicate in the language in which we feel most comfortable" (Hofer and Pluecker 2). The authors, practicing interpreters, poets, and community organizers, expand this straightforward if utopian ideal, asserting that "[l]anguage justice is one of the key components of both racial and social justice […] central to manifesting the respect and mutual consideration that are the foundation of any truly cross-cultural or cross-racial work" (2). A grassroots approach to building language justice one multilingual space, conversation, or political action at a time might be supported or undermined by state-sponsored language policies and public sentiment, such as the availability of culturally responsive multilingual education, resources for minority language access in public institutions, and social attitudes and practices around language diversity in public spaces. These realms of research are addressed through the emerging field of raciolinguistics, which interrogates how language use and racial identity formation intersect, as in *Raciolinguistics*, edited by H. Samy Alim, John R. Rickford, and Arnetha F. Ball (2016) and *Looking Like a Language, Sounding Like a Race* by Jonathan Rosa (2018). In an earlier interrogation of the intersections of language and racialized experiences structured by colonialism, Rey Chow calls for greater attention to the role language plays in "a postcolonial, postracial prosthetics […] where the complexity of languaging is compounded by the classic, existential, and political confrontation between colonizer and colonized [… and] the lingering work of language in the form of skin tones and sound effects as well as mute inscriptions demands a revamped order of conceptualization" (14). Focusing on the role played by national language policies, Stephen May's work on *Language and Minority Rights* (2012) articulates an important critique of discourses of support for minority languages based merely on cultural curation of social or private spaces, positioned primarily as benefiting the speakers of minority languages or contributing to "language ecology." Instead, he promotes integrating minority languages into the creation and not just the distribution of public policies (May 10–11).

Two recent works connecting translation, migration, and language justice place a focus on accent, a phenomenon located in natural speech, embodied practices, written texts, and creative forms of all varieties. In *The Relocation of Culture: Translations, Migrations, Borders* (2021), Simona Bertacco and Nicoletta Vallorani focus on the spaces of the Mediterranean and the Caribbean to understand the role played by affective and pre-linguistic reactions to the other, provoking both anxiety

and responsibility in the process of translating a broadly defined set of languages which in their approach includes words, images, sounds, and bodies. Sound and listening play an especially important role in the edited volume *Thinking with an Accent: Toward a New Object, Method, and Practice* (Rangan et al. 2023), which theorizes various ways accent is encoded, in media, algorithms, corporate branding, or poetics of migration. By paying greater attention to the affective forms of discrimination and desire provoked through accent, these authors all envision transformed modes of care and language justice. The chapters by Lossada and Soldat-Jaffe operate particularly in this context, where ideas about language justice stem from spaces of activism, community care, and mass media.

Yet most of the contributors to *Translating Home in the Global South* draw from literary translation studies, where a theoretical intersection between creative representation, language sovereignty, and the legal architectures of national language policies is at play. This comparative literature approach to language justice has been central to the work of Emily Apter, most recently in her ongoing investigations into "reparative translation" as a form of "creative labor" that "seeks to redress modes of social harming in speech" ("Towards a Theory of Reparative Translation" 226). In the related article "What is Just Translation?," she seeks to identify where translation studies can intervene into occurrences of linguistic injustice and articulates "the critical faculty of translation" as one "which trains the ear to hear injustice" and "has a role to play in the politics of reparations" (Apter 104). Concrete forms of just translation might include visibilizing forms of linguistic passporting and checkpointing; reconsidering naming practices for individuals, such as the label given legally or socially to the "migrant" in different languages, places, nations, or time periods; or updating the language constituting discourses of sex, sexual encounter, violation, or gender. To answer these questions, and to offer reparative options in the wake of linguistic injustice, would participate in the creation of language justice or reparative translation. Apter suggests a series of concrete tactics of "translational justicing," which might be accomplished by: "indigenizing the basic terms (weights, measures, gold standards) of general equivalence; by nullifying the logics of finance capitalism (debt, profit, derivatives) that underwrite systems of compensation for social suffering; by filling voids in the vocabulary of local and international law dealing with purloined patrimony, pilfered remains, desecrated lands, slave labor, expulsive policy; and by translating, or choosing not to translate, keywords and texts that serve as testaments to epistemic violence" (108). Chapters in *Translating Home* address language justice and its role in translating home both obliquely and directly, addressing

the complex ethical challenges of contributing to social justice through translingual strategies.

Creative Practices of Translating Home

One of the major questions across all the essays in our collection is how does the nexus of migration, belonging, and language justice (or the lack thereof) prompt a set of new interlingual practices? In trying to describe the messy cultural and linguistic attachments across the literary and border-crossing texts at stake in our volume, our contributors both propose new terms and concepts that better approximate their relocations and circumlocutions, and they add dimension to and provide concrete instances of longstanding terms that move away from delimiting and territorial notions of authorship and translation.

One such term is that of **collaborative translation**. While arguably every instance of writing and translating is collaborative, several essays in this collection examine and endorse an openly social and cooperative approach to translation and rewriting. They portray a generous and infectious process of meaning-making in which authors are self-effacing and translators are visible and assertive, a form of rewriting akin to what Karen Emmerich describes as "trasnslingual editing" (9). Esplin discusses the literary projects of US-based Mexican authors Valeria Luiselli, Cristina Rivera, and Yuri Herrera who each give license to and work closely with their individual translators to give rise to new resonances in the translations or versions of their texts across different language traditions. Lossada describes the ostensibly collaborative transcription process of *Dreaming America*, since nearly a third of the detained writers and minors included in the poetry collection were illiterate and had to rely on Michelson or a peer to transcribe their poems. Her essay prompts the question of to what extent reciprocal collaboration is possible given the unequal footing of the detainees and their intermediaries. Gómez and Hendrickson each discuss an ethos of translation or self-translation that is ostensibly solitary but also wholly engaged with the collaborative and socially engaged projects of conceptual poetry movements and translation collectives such as the Mongrel Coalition Against Gringpo or Antena Aire. Waisman describes the always collaborative character of his co-creative project with Argentine author Ricardo Piglia, notwithstanding the fact that Piglia died in the middle of their process. Reflecting on the task of having to complete the project without the possibility of Piglia's synchronous input, Waisman asks, "[i]s it possible to finish a collaboration, a co-creation even, when there is only one collaborator, when there is only one co-creator?" He settles on the realization that perhaps "Piglia's '*encargo*' to [him], in a sense, was representative of what

translation, and what the project of translating home, has always been." Following Waisman, we might settle on collaborative translation being a more visible, generative, and less boundary-driven enactment of translation generally.

Soldat-Jaffe takes up the related and undertheorized case of **instant translation** in her examination of Facebook posts by Syrian and other Arabic-speaking refugees in Germany. She describes how in the event of instant translation on Facebook, language identity is seemingly "unmarked" and "writing becomes sharing a local experience through a globalized medium." She indicates how the very possibility of instant translation prompts the impression that "translation is seemingly always available, and language ability and identity become secondary factors." In this consummately global scenario, human mediators and machine translation editors are obscured, and instant translation supplies the virtual reality of an unmediated global lingua franca and a universal forum. Soldat-Jaffe builds on John Tomlinson's claims that instant translation creates "a culture of instantaneity" as well as a sense of proximity and connectedness amid social and political upheavals. She optimistically maintains that in the case of the refugees who have resettled in Germany "instant translation facilitates social change" by creating networks and "relations between diverse people who are unaware of the underlying multilingualism and multiculturalism." Her examination of instant translation also plays out the possibility of the untraceable transmission of content in a digital space, a possibility explored by both Waisman and Esplin in their discussions of collaborative translation and the contagious spread of ideas across a literary corpus.

Another recurrent concept and tension across our volume is **affective translation** or **translation and affect**. A number of our contributors emphasize and examine the affective experience of translating generally and the range of emotions dredged up in specific projects of translating home. We use affective translation as an umbrella term that includes modes of translating and criticism attuned to how translators and interpreters are impacted by their work and how they bear the social and psychological toll of mediating amid situations of trauma, grief, disaster, insecurity, and injustice. Jovanović and Jovanović utilize a fictional interpreter's case to examine the risks of post-traumatic or secondary-traumatic stress associated with interpreting in the context of asylum-seeking interviews and to point to how both translation studies and psychiatric research have overlooked possible mental health conditions for interpreters. Likewise, Lossada underlines the perils of allyship for translators and interpreters working with detained children, for the translators and interpreters and, certainly, for the migrant subjects whose personal traumas become fodder for public opinion. Hamid puts Agha Shahid Ali's poetry in conversation

with Christina Sharpe's notion of "wake-work" to show how poetry and translation can work together to create spaces of mourning and witnessing and to help negotiate the specters of home amid the threats of violence, conflict, and unhoming. In each of these instances, the translators and interpreters are inescapably moved, impacted, and involved; translation is revealed as a social process that often intersects with advocacy work and forms of allyship.

We might think of **hospitable translation** as a particular manifestation of affective translation that takes place in situations where translators and interpreters are in a position to receive and facilitate the entry of migrant others into social spaces. It is a social mode of translation akin to Paul Ricoeur's description of "linguistic hospitality" as an "ethical problem" or posture that entails "[b]ringing the reader to the author, bringing the author to the reader, at the risk of serving and of betraying two masters" (23). While Ricoeur approximates the balancing act that is translation generally, weighing when to bend to the reader and when to bend to the writer, Moira Inghilleri examines the valences of the term or "principle" of hospitality (30) in various contexts associated with modern migration, including: "'linguistic translation' as practiced by translators for the benefit of migrant communities, 'cultural' translation as migrants translate themselves into the local terrain through a variety of means, and finally translation in the 'social' sense, in the frequent acts of translation embedded in ongoing systems of social relations performed by all members of society as they go about their daily lives, moving, perceiving, and attempting to understand the diversity of the social and physical environments of which they are a part" (34). Inghilleri adds the important caveat that "translators often act only as ethically as the systems they work within or the individuals they work for encourage or permit" (57). In our volume, Lossada builds on Inghilleri's notion of linguistic hospitality by examining how the concept illustrates the exchanges between detained children and their various interlocutors and by reading the poems in *Dreaming America* "not just for their narrative but also as the children's responses to translation." Likewise, Soldat-Jaffe interrogates Facebook as a hosting platform for migrant voice and stories, and Esplin discusses the hospitable and transfictional protagonists of Cristina Rivera Garza, Valeria Luiselli, and Yuri Herrera who "wield for good and, sometimes, for naught their relative power to mediate between others and shape their circumstances." Hamid explores how poet Agha Shahid Ali's provides "a sort of homecoming" and Kashmiri reception for Pakistani writer Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Palestinian writer Mahmoud Darwish by translating and adapting their poems into a hybridized English. Hospitable translation emerges as a relational and allied practice of receiving and

rewriting texts, authors, and subjects into a distinct context, always conditional to the constraints of the systems and networks in which translators operate.

A transplant from Latin into English, the word "radical" carries connotations of roots, foundations, and origins, as well as associations with "independence" and a "departure from what is usual or traditional" (OED online). The word inhabits the contradictions of home across our volume, conveying both origin and departure, rootedness and uprootedness, the familiar and the unsettling. Unsurprisingly, several of our contributors examine modes of **radical** or **experimental translation** and how these strategies inform and upend notions of home. In her discussion of Mónica de la Torre's playful but also purposeful translations in *Repetition Nineteen*, Hendrickson indexes various methods of radical or experimental translation, including, for starters, "homophonic translations, technologically assisted translations, visual translations [...], interpolated translations, and translations based on constraints," and various modes associated with particular writers, including Haroldo de Campos's "transcreation," Rivera Garza's "desapropiación," and the Antena Aire collective's "ultratranslation." Hendrickson indicates how de la Torre's experimental translations "bring tropes of translation theory into dialogue with avant-garde poetics of citation" associated with conceptual poetry movements and extends the scope of these movements by asking how experimental practices can "meaningfully protest, evade, or even dismantle English." In a similar vein, Gómez highlights how Roque Raquel Salas Rivera divests himself of "the singularity, boundedness, and easy iterability of English" through his poetics of citation, remixing, "picking-up," and untranslation, among other strategies of translingual address. Drawing from different contested regions, Hamid demonstrates how Agha Shahid Ali's poetry, "through its poetics of relation, its orality, its musicality, heterolingual address, and its ability to transcend one culture or one language gives rise to a comparative literature within itself" and refuses reductive narratives of Kashmir or Palestine. Likewise, Waisman explores the expanded sense of translation that evolved from his collaborations with Ricardo Piglia and is better termed co-creation. If we attempt to synthesize all these approaches, common denominators include an openly collaborative or loose citational praxis; resistance to expectations of fluent or domesticating translations; attention to the constraints of language and monolingualism; playful and performative approaches; and a willful intertwining of aesthetic and political concerns—all practices that prompt questions about the possibilities and limits of translation and its complicated entanglements with questions of home and belonging.

While originally coined in the realm of conceptual poetics, Cristina Rivera Garza's concept of **"desapropiación"** proves central to radical, interventionist translation practices explored in chapters by Hendrickson and Gómez. Defined as taking language back on behalf of one's community, or "desposeerse del dominio sobre lo propio" ("to dispossess oneself of the ownership of what is ours") (91), Rivera Garza presents collaborative writing as a critical reprisal in the face of contemporary violence and state failure. Translated by Gómez as **"divestment"** in the sense of taking material resources back from an entity that is now deploying them against the will of the collective, **"disappropriation"** as a practice of translation might involve practical actions such as distributing necessary translated material with disregard for copyright laws, or creative practices such as citing from and translating legal or mass media discourses within literary works in such a way that emphasizes their upholding of state-sponsored violence.

Modes of **eco-translation** or **translation ecologies** could certainly be considered forms of radical translation in that they entail aesthetic and ethical approaches to translation that call for rethinking human relations to each other, to non-humans, and to our planetary home. As Michael Cronin argues in his field-defining *Eco-Translation*, "translation as a body of ideas and a set of practices is central to any serious or sustained attempt to think about this interconnectedness and vulnerability in the age of human-induced climate change" (1). Eco-translation projects are both autochthonous and interventionist and invoke local sites and vernaculars as catalysts for planetary thinking about ecological problems. In our volume, Wu illustrates how Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* and Chen Qiufan's *Waste Tide* each approach issues of climate change and waste pollution from specific localities in India and China and deploy interpreter and migrant protagonists to emphasize the unsettled and "shifting landscapes" in which humans move. Wu maintains that "[t]hrough eco-translational thinking and practice, languages and places emerge and multiply, situated in shifting landscapes, memories, and identities, thus marking a starting point for more collaborative efforts in addressing planetary issues in their connectedness with local conditions." Likewise, Esplin and Jovanović and Jovanović examine narratives that enlist translatorial protagonists as crucial mediators in moments of catastrophe or displacement and call for "pandemic" approaches to these borderless crises. Hamid emphasizes how Agha Shahid Ali creates a community for silenced voices and "builds a web of connections between various locations, contexts, and temporalities" through his poetic and hybridized translations of poems by Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Mahmoud Darwish. Additionally, Gómez examines how the "cuir eco-translations" of Puerto Rican poet and activist Salas

Rivera—"mirrored bilingual poems that cannot be consumed as 'straight translations'"—invite a more expansive notion of home and "produce polyvocal, embodied approaches to the inapprehensible, vast challenges of climate change in the Caribbean." Each of these contributors underline translation's vital role in attempting a communal and non-anthropocentric understanding of our changing planet and its unscalable problems.

* * *

Through the creative practices outlined above, the translators attended to in *Translating Home in the Global South* take back agency and claim space by witnessing and documenting the complex experiences of migration, the constructed and contested nature of national, social, and cultural belonging, and the possibilities and obstacles to building language justice. Emerging as both a space of refuge and of friction and indeterminacy, translation attests to the shades of belonging and unbelonging that create and challenge constructions of home.

Works Cited

Alim, Samy H., John R. Rickford, and Arnetha F. Ball, editors. *Raciolinguistics*. Oxford University Press, 2016.

Apter, Emily. "Afterword: Towards a Theory of Reparative Translation." In *The Work of World Literature*, edited by Francesco Giusti and Benjamin Lewis Robinson. Cultural Inquiry 19. ICI Berlin Press, 2021. pp. 209–28.

Apter, Emily. "What Is Just Translation?" *Public Culture*, vol. 33, no. 1, 2021, pp. 89–111.

Bassnett, Susan. *Translation and World Literature*. Routledge, 2019.

Bertacco, Simona and Nicoletta Vallorani, editors. *The Relocation of Culture*. Bloomsbury, April 2021.

Chow, Rey. *Not Like a Native Speaker: On Languaging as a Postcolonial Experience*. Columbia University Press, 2017.

Cronin, Michael. *Eco-Translation: Translation and Ecology in the Age of the Anthropocene*. Routledge, 2017.

Dowling, Sarah. *Translingual Poetics: Writing Personhood Under Settler Colonialism*. University of Iowa Press, 2018.

Emmerich, Karen. *Literary Translation and the Making of Originals*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2017.

Finance Center for South-South Cooperation. http://www.fc-ssc.org/en/partnership_program/south_south_countries

Freud, Sigmund. *The Uncanny*. Translated by David McClintock. Introduction by Hugh Haughton. Penguin Books, 2003.

García, Ofelia and Li Wei. *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and Education*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Gentzler, Edwin. *Translation and Rewriting in the Age of Post-Translation Studies*. Routledge, 2017.

Hofer, Jen and JD Pluecker. *How to Build Language Justice*. Antena Books/Libros Antena, 2013. http://antenaantena.org/libros-antena-books/

Inghilleri, Moira. *Translation and Migration*. Routledge, 2017.

Jacobus, Mary. *On Belonging and Not Belonging: Translation, Migration, Displacement*. Princeton University Press, 2022.

Masschelein, Anneleen. *The Unconcept: The Freudian Uncanny in Late-Twentieth-Century Theory*. SUNY University Press, 2011.

May, Stephen. *Language and Minority Rights: Ethnicity, Nationalism and the Politics of Language*. 2nd edition. Routledge, 2012.

Mayer, Tamar and Trinh Tran, editors. *Displacement, Belonging, and Migrant Agency in the Face of Power*. Routledge, 2022.

Nergaard, Siri. *Translation and Transmigration*. Routledge, 2021.

OED. Entry for "Radical." 2023. https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/157251?isAdvanced=false&result=1&rskey=rHruk9&

Polezzi, Loredana. "Migration and Translation." In *Handbook of Translation Studies. Vol. 3*, edited by Yves Gambier and Luc van Doorslaer. John Benjamins, 2012, pp. 102–07.

Polezzi, Loredana. "Translation and Migration." *Translation Studies*, vol. 5, no. 3, 2012, pp. 345–68.

Radstone, Susannah and Rita Wilson, editors. *Translating Worlds: Migration, Memory, and Culture*. Routledge, 2021.

Ramírez, Catherine S., Sylvanna M. Falcón, Juan Poblete, Steven C. McKay, and Felicity Amaya Schaeffer, editors. *Precarity and Belonging: Labor, Migration, and Non-Citizenship*. Rutgers University Press, 2021.

Rangan, Pooja, Akshya Saxena, Ragini Tharoor Srinivasan, and Pavitra Sundar, editors. *Thinking with an Accent: Toward a New Object, Method, and Practice*. University of California Press, 2023.

Ricoeur, Paul. *On Translation*. Translated by Eileen Brennan. Routledge, 2006.

Rivera Garza, Cristina. *Los muertos indóciles: Necroescrituras y desapropiación*. Tusquets, 2013.

Rosa, Jonathan. *Looking Like a Language, Sounding Like a Race*. Oxford University Press, 2018.

Salas Rivera, Roque Raquel. *while they sleep (under the bed is another country)*. Birds, LLC, 2019.

Singh, Jaspal Naveel. "Language, Gender, and Sexuality in 2020: Forward Global South." *Gender & Language* vol. 15, no. 2, 2021, pp. 207–30.

Venuti, Lawrence. *Contra Instrumentalism: A Translation Polemic*. University of Nebraska Press, 2019.

Vidal, Ricarda and Manuela Perteghella. "Translation as Movement: Migration and Notions of 'Home.'" *Open Cultural Studies*, vol. 2, 2018, pp. 598–610.

West-Pavlov, Russell. "Toward the Global South: Concept or Chimera, Paradigm or Panacea?" In *The Global South and Literature*, edited by Russell West-Pavlov. Cambridge University Press, 2018.