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## Inhospitable Conditions: Hospitality, Kinship and Complaint in Maureen Freely's *Angry in Piraeus* and Mireille Gansel's *Translation as Transhumance* (tr. Ros Schwartz)

Jen Calleja

School of Literature, Drama and Creative Writing, University of East Anglia, UK

### ABSTRACT

This article examines hybrid life writing by literary translators that focuses on the interpersonal relationships between translators and other agents including authors and collaborators. Through a comparative study of Maureen Freely's pamphlet essay *Angry in Piraeus* (The Cahiers Series, Syph Editions, 2014), described in its blurb as 'the story of the creation of a translator', and Mireille Gansel's 'half memoir, half philosophical treatise' *Traduire comme transhumer* (Edition Calligrammes, 2012), translated by Ros Schwartz as *Translation as Transhumance* (Les Fugitives, 2017) I explore the ways Freely and Gansel present their respective translation philosophies. In the first section, 'Hospitality', I set out how their writing welcomes in the reader and sets out various barriers to their task. In 'Kinship', the second section, I look at the translators' stories of their families and how they use séance and music metaphors to show how they conceptualise collaboration with others and the text itself. In the final section, 'Complaint', I propose viewing Freely's and Gansel's books as personal and political complaints respectively, drawing on the work on institutional complaint by Sara Ahmed. Taking a lead from contemporary women's writing scholarship, I make an early intervention in the burgeoning field of Literary Translator Studies.

### KEYWORDS

Literary translation; translation; literary translator; life writing

Orhan said it was a shame that translators had to be human – Maureen Freely, Edinburgh International Book Festival event, 2019

One doesn't translate the words but life and human beings – Mireille Gansel tr. Olivia Snaije, Bookwitty interview, 2017

## Introduction

As a literary translator of over 15 works of German-language fiction and literary non-fiction, as well as being an author of hybrid writing on translation myself, I have long been fascinated by literary translators writing in an embodied way about their work.

**CONTACT** Jen Calleja  [jennifer.calleja@uea.ac.uk](mailto:jennifer.calleja@uea.ac.uk)

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My long-term research embraces hybrid writing on translation by literary translators, with a particular focus on translators who are women or non-binary. I am interested in what hybridity allows these *writing-translators* to do when writing about their craft and the ways they present their practice and ‘translator-being’ / ‘translator-becoming’ through form, metaphor, and subject-matter. I believe that this mode of writing has the potential to expand traditional notions of translator subjectivity and creativity and I fundamentally understand these texts as sites of underexplored and undervalued knowledge on literary translation. In this comparative essay, I study two such hybrid texts to illustrate these claims: Maureen Freely’s pamphlet essay *Angry in Piraeus* (The Cahiers Series, Syph Editions, 2014), described in its blurb as ‘the story of the creation of a translator’ (Cahier #24 webpage)<sup>1</sup>, and Mireille Gansel’s ‘half memoir, half philosophical treatise’ (inside cover) *Traduire comme transhumer* (Edition Calligrammes, 2012), translated by Ros Schwartz as *Translation as Transhumance* (Les Fugitives, 2017).

*Angry in Piraeus* (published UK 2014, US 2015) is the twenty-fourth pamphlet in The Cahiers Series, a series publishing ‘new explorations in writing, in translating, and in the areas linking these two activities’<sup>2</sup> by writers, translators and artists. *Angry in Piraeus* was preceded by No. 5, Lydia Davis’ *Proust, Blanchot and a Woman in Red*, No. 21, Anne Carson’s *Nay Rather*, and No. 23, Idra Novey’s *Clarice: The Visitor*; all hybrid and embodied texts on their respective translation practices. Freely is an author and translator born in the United States who grew up in Turkey and Greece. The pamphlet is a memoir-essay that charts her childhood and working life as an author and translator. In my initial reading of the Cahiers that seemed most relevant to my project, Freely’s pamphlet gave me the impression of being the most engaged with the life and lived experience of the literary translator in its exploration of author-translator dynamics, working constraints and the politics of translation while avoiding the formal essay form. It was also one of the most available of the Cahiers, which sell out quickly and are notoriously difficult to attain<sup>3</sup> due to the prominence of the authors; a facet of Freely’s status as author-translator I will also include in my discussion.

Gansel’s memoir-treatise frames translation as ‘transhumance’: ‘It is the opposite of settling and farming: it is a form of nomadism, a search for richer grass, and it provides an apt image for her own trajectory as a translator’ (Elkin in Gansel and Schwartz 2017, vii). Gansel goes where she is most needed, most fulfilled. Gansel is a French translator of many notable authors into French, and in recent years has become an author in her own right. Her Jewish family were from Eastern Europe and had to leave everything behind when evading the Nazis. She lived in Hanoi during the seventies and published the first volume of classical Vietnamese poetry translated into French. When I am quoting from the text, I am quoting from Ros Schwartz’s translation, and credit her as the *book-in-translation*’s co-author in my referencing.

*Translation as Transhumance* is described as ‘a humanist meditation on the art of translation that also serves as a fascinating account of wartime danger, hospitality and human kinship’ (Gansel and Schwartz 2017, inside cover), and I have taken inspiration from this characterisation for this essay. Adapting these descriptors, I have structured this essay around hospitality, kinship, and complaint. I take in the hospitality or lack thereof the translators experience in various spaces, and the ways this helps or hinders them in their roles. Here, kinship envelopes and encompasses a spectrum of connection, from familial relationships and heritage to author-translator relationships, to the ways

Freely and Gansel write about their relationships with the texts they translate, including in their different roles as a *writing*-translator and *writer*-translator respectively. Finally, the third section on complaint includes the dangers experienced by translators and whether they choose to discuss unpleasant or possibly fatal aspects of their roles in spite of the dangerous predicaments of their authors.

## Hospitality

### *Please, come in: reading as a translator, researching as a translator*

The opening of Freely's *Angry in Piraeus* acts as a recreation of the experience of reading, both as a reader and as a translator, generously showing the similarities and differences between these two types of reading and welcoming the reader into her process. The first paragraph reads like the opening of a piece of fiction, describing the actions of a man boarding a bus and thinking about writing a poem called 'The Silence of Snow'. The second paragraph jumps to another character in another story standing in the courtyard of a mosque with the body of her grandmother about to be buried. In this paragraph, a voice we assume to be Freely's enters to say:

Everything is as it should be, but to me, everything is strange, because somehow, in all my years in Turkey, I never once attended a funeral. So I keep my distance as the scene unfolds [...]. (Freely 2014, 5)

The funeral story continues for a few lines, and a man asks for the names of the deceased grandmother's parents. Freely's voice interjects once more to query why he would need to know, before stating 'I make a note to check – but not just yet' (Freely 2014, 5). This is where Freely is transitioning from being a reader to being a translator, one who must make notes to research something in the text, but also as someone who *holds off* doing so in order to continue as a reader rather than a translator. The third paragraph introduces another character sitting in a coffeehouse in Istanbul while it snows outside. Freely's voice makes an aside, stating 'I think: snow again. What is it with Turkish writers and snow? But never mind' (Freely 2014, 6), once more performing the interruptions and connections that take place in one's mind while reading.

Freely's voice in this opening becomes both the reader's own internalised voice and makes the reader Freely's confidant in her private moment of reading. This unfolding displays a three-step process—reading purely for enjoyment; reading interested in knowing the details of what is being said; reading in the knowledge that you will need to translate it—allowing the reader to experience the mindset of a translator first hand; an experiential approach compared to simply describing the process.

While remarking on how the author Sait Faik Abasıyanık 'has bewitched us' with his description of a coffeehouse in all seasons simultaneously in its first sentence and 'lulled us into thinking that time has stopped', Freely concludes '[a]nd so he must: to write a story about the dangers of seduction, he must first seduce' (Freely 2014, 12). This, too, feels like an apt description of what Freely is doing with the opening of her cahier; in order to write about the hazards of translation, she must translate her experience into a seductive form of essay-memoir for the reader, one where she too controls time to

pause and reflect on her process inconspicuously and conspiratorially, making the reader feel like they have full access to her inner process.<sup>4</sup>

One of the methods devised by Gansel to translate and simultaneously learn Vietnamese is first broken down as a description to give a visual idea of how this would look on the page:

I drew lines on each page, two lines for each line of verse: the top line for the first, elementary reading of the words, the bottom line for getting to the root of the source word by excavating the poems. (Gansel and Schwartz 2017, 51)

Then, using the word ‘duyen’ as a case study, Gansel shows her method in action, with the simple definition of the word followed by the more multi-layered definitions as explained by her collaborator Xuân Dieu:

Top line: duyen – attachment

Bottom line: love desired by the loved one

love sworn for eternity

born of the soul that attaches one to the other

nuptials – karma – fate (Gansel and Schwartz. 2017, 51–52)

After the initial explanation and the above example, there is then an even more detailed breakdown, unpacking the single word ‘duyen’ even further, fanning it out and unboxing it, showing how ‘one word ... contains an entire world of resonances rooted in eighteenth-century feudalism’ (Gansel and Schwartz 2017, 52); a key stage of research which reveals the word and basic definition to be the tip of an iceberg of significance.

This illustrative section uses a patient, hospitable technique, initiating the reader into the art of translation, like Freely’s opening to *Angry in Piraeus*. Show, don’t tell. It helps the reader feel like they are performing the task themselves, playing at being Gansel and Freely. Both writers refrain from holding the reader’s hand, and instead allow them to follow in their footsteps.

In her Introduction to Gansel’s book, Lauren Elkin characterises Gansel as a resistance fighter or a spy, parachuting behind enemy lines to the rescue. ‘Wherever totalitarianism or censorship takes hold, it is the role of the translator to find a way up and over the wall’ and Gansel ‘is not only a shepherd with a flock but a smuggler, slipping language past the guards’ (Elkin in Gansel and Schwartz 2017, viii). Gansel is welcomed into many physical spaces as a guest to poets, teachers, researchers, and scientists, but she also encounters barriers, locked doors, borders, and walls, real, social, and metaphorical. ‘[T]he door of the Berliner Ensemble [...] was locked’ (Gansel and Schwartz 2017, 23) when she arrives to start a placement there, and ‘[t]he magic word that opened the door was Brecht’s *Antigone*’ (Gansel and Schwartz 2017, 23). Once inside, she doesn’t find Brecht’s *Verfremdungseffekt*, or distancing effect, alienating, but quite the opposite. Gansel believes it ‘allows us to find the familiar in the foreign, the foreign in the familiar, and thus to create a sanctuary, where you are no longer foreign but someone who is learning’ (Gansel and Schwartz 2017, 22), and this speaks of the democratising effect found when two cultures meet; not seeing this as a place of anxiety and disorientation, but as a space where everyone is in a

state of learning together. She even creates this space of learning by demonstrating her 'two-line' method as set out above; by breaking down Vietnamese, she is in turn defamiliarising the reader's own language in order to make them think about how their own words are placeholders to deep meaning.

Though the door might have been locked when she arrived, this locked door is metaphorical, symbolising Berlin's closed-off, newly-walled off status and her own feelings of inadequacy and trepidation. Gansel had in fact already been invited in. Though 'aloof', Brecht's wife and partner Helene Weigel welcomed her as a twenty-year-old student not with words but

with a gesture of hospitality. Yes, that is definitely what it was, that is the word that sums up my encounter with Helene Weigel: hospitality' (Gansel and Schwartz 2017, 24).

This early experience of trust and welcome from someone her senior will have been greatly validating, and will have imbued a sense of camaraderie in the project of translation; that if you make the effort and take on the danger to cross borders, there will be someone to welcome you, there will be some kind of reward. This impulse to cross over, we might surmise in our reading, had been with Gansel for years already, but had been deferred.

On trying to speak to a woman begging in post-war Dresden while on a school trip, her teacher stops her. Gansel regrets this thwarted interaction:

Those gagged words haunted me for a long time; I felt a sense of betrayal. The words of the other, words reaching out to the other. Failing to take the step, to cross the border (Gansel and Schwartz 2017, 17).

This is not simply an anecdote from a school trip, but an experience that compels her as a young and older woman to push beyond those social borders for communication and translation. This experience mirrors one that comes later in the book, where, while hiking in Vietnam, she comes across a group of Vietnamese people on an excursion from a sanatorium in Hanoi and she starts a conversation 'against the wishes' of her 'minders' (Gansel and Schwartz 2017, 57). Among them is Cach, a poet she goes on to meet with afterwards and translate. There is a pattern within the text where Gansel breaks conventions, like trying to talk to a woman in the street, and interrupting her father during his reading to the family; all so connection and translation can prevail, but most key is this reaching out across divides, by being open to making contact with strangers.

Gansel goes to visit East German poet Reiner Kunze to get behind the meaning of the word 'sensibel', which could have many different meanings in the context of the poem, 'to meet him, to see his life, his street, his modest home in a drab apartment block under constant surveillance of the Stasi' (Gansel and Schwartz 2017, 31–32). Though they are in his home, they are also being watched, like the people watching Freely and Pamuk in a café while they argue about the translation of his book. It is both a more intimate setting, and also a far more exposed one. The eyes and ears of others could also act here as the over-the-shoulder feeling one has from one's author or even from readers and those who may critique your translation. Visiting him is not only about his physical environment, but also his physical and psychological state she discerns from having him read the work in his 'precarious everyday life' (Gansel and Schwartz 2017, 33), all of

which give her clues for how to interpret it. Thirty years later, she has to reassess her choice when visiting him again when he uses the word ‘sensibel’ in a different context. Their long working relationship, the open door of hospitality, means that a translation is always on provisional terms; translation is something within and without time, as the original text is always open to reinterpretation, the translation may always be subject to change due to remaining linked together.

An author being open to being translated is ‘the essence of hospitality’ (Gansel and Schwartz 2017, 78) Gansel concludes when a French poet accepts an invitation (via her) to be translated by a Vietnamese poet. The moment an invitation to be translated is accepted, the translator is over the threshold and entrusted to be in the author’s territory. It could be seen as a form of vulnerability on the part of the author to allow for someone to handle their precious work or self. This shines a quite damning light on Orhan Pamuk, who seemed completely closed to the very idea of translation as a kind of re-writing, wanting to control every line and word of Freely’s translations. He is, accordingly to Gansel’s definition, inhospitable.

Being shut out or trapped—an absence of hospitality—can, however, also be viewed as a positive, alternative, or even motivating experience in both books. Freely acquired the Turkish language from a kind of persistent, curious listening in from the periphery of things, eavesdropping as mode of autodidacticism. The process of living within the labyrinth of Pamuk’s fictionalised accounts of Istanbul in his memoir encouraged her to find her way out and to find her way back to her own Istanbul through writing her novel *Sailing Through Byzantium*: ‘Little by little, I translated myself out of Orhan’s Istanbul and back into my own’. (Freely 2014, 32). The final line of Freely’s pamphlet is: ‘The gate to literature is never locked’ (Freely 2014, 37); writing and translating can be your sanctuary, even if endangered for a time. It was also the buried and forbidden nature of German which ultimately drew Gansel to it, as well as an urge to explore Vietnamese language and culture due to its international repression.

Some might find a barrier, a wall, a maze, or a door and decide to stay put. Others knock, find a key, or dismantle the whole thing.

## Kinship

### *Father tongue*

The touchstone or keystone of Freely’s and Gansel’s books involve their fathers and are announced right at the commencement of both. Freely picked up languages as the daughter of a lecturer with many positions overseas and would often be called upon to act as translator for her family during their life abroad. She associates translation with fear, danger, and the weight of responsibility because of these early experiences, and the very title of the pamphlet refers to the following anecdote: as a nine-year-old she made a diplomatic decision to not translate her father’s insult to a taxi driver in Greece he accused of ripping him off (‘lying-cheating-bastard-son-of-a-bitch’) and instead paraphrased in translation to ‘My father is very angry’ (Freely 2014, 16).

This anecdote displays many things about the process of translation. It shows that both a word-for-word translation and this paraphrase put across very similar meanings; one directly, offensively and in need of interpretation by the receiver, and one

indirectly, stripped of offensiveness and pre-interpreted by a mediator. They have, in any case, been weighed up by the translator very carefully, because they will have very different consequences, possibly even life or death. Freely feared real violence against her family by the taxi driver and his colleagues, and this association of violence and responsibility with translation is something she has kept with her for life, it has become something recurring:

I have lost count of the number of times I have felt the same way I did that night, caught between two angry parties and two sets of rules: seeing danger closing in on me and searching for the words to diffuse it. (Freely 2014, 17)

In the first chapter of *Translation as Transhumance*, 'Listening to the Silences', Gansel recalls a far less fraught, but nonetheless still tense exchange with her own father; one that, like Freely, she experienced 'viscerally' and that became her foundation of what translation 'would come to mean' not in general but for her explicitly (Gansel and Schwartz 2017, 3)

When letters would arrive from family in Hungary, Gansel's father would announce 'with ritual solemnity' that he would read them to the family, live translating them while a 'reverent silence reigned' (Gansel and Schwartz 2017, 3). Here, Gansel refers to herself in the third person as 'the little girl', something she does only a few times in the otherwise first-person narrative. This extends to '*this* father who was so sparing with his compliments', made to say kind words extended from the family to her and who has been demoted from 'Father'; a subtle but telling change, that compacts the distance between Gansel and him, he is even 'far away' in his 'big armchair' (my emphasis, Gansel and Schwartz 2017, 3).

On this occasion, Gansel 'dared to interrupt' as her father stumbles over his translation to ask why the word 'beloved' was being used so often, only to discover that he was using the same single word in French to translate four terms of endearment in Hungarian. Her transgression breaks open the concept of translation for her (Gansel and Schwartz 2017, 4), and later she would transgress by learning German, a language her father hated due to his persecution by the Nazis as a Jewish boy (Gansel and Schwartz 2017, 5). When Gansel speaks of the aims of Brecht's theatre as being 'to reappropriate their language after fourteen years' exile' and 'to give Germans the possibility of listening to their language again' (Gansel and Schwartz 2017, 23), we cannot help but see her translation work as a process of reappropriation on behalf of her father, and wider family.

### **Collaboration**

Freely and Gansel's collaborations with writers are presented in a way as to join a thread of influence to these early experiences. Pamuk is the first author Freely had worked with, and so their working relationship and collaboration was also without precedent. Her father's anger is seemingly replaced by Pamuk's, with the narrative creating an almost uninterrupted link through time between the argument with the taxi driver and her own arguments with Pamuk. This makes their collaboration almost a Freudian nightmare—rather than mediating an argument between her father and another man, she has become the other arguing party against a domineering man accusing her of 'short-changing' him through her apparently unsatisfactory translation.



That Gansel learned to appreciate the German language from her aunt, whose correspondence she helped with, shows that even at a young age she associated translation as a bridge-building, familial exercise. Gansel translates a number of authors and experiences many different working relationships. She works in theatres, is part of collective and group translation projects, seeks out researchers and advisors. For Gansel, the collaborative approach is an ethical one in two regards. Firstly, she wants to come at Vietnamese in a comprehensive approach to understand its many layers, knowing that without this knowledge she does not really understand the language. Secondly, when translating the unique vernacular of Eugenie Goldstein, who was shut out of her anthropological research by the Nazis, she wants the translation to be ‘cross-pollinated’ with both the various dialects that formed her German but also the many scientific vocabularies that intersect in her research; a fundamentally anti-monolithic, anti-fascist translation approach.

Freely comes late to collaboration, and collaboration is arguably made the epiphany of the pamphlet. It is in the aftermath of her falling out with Pamuk that Freely seeks out others, finding joy once more in translation through a collaborative project with co-translators John Angliss and Alex Dawe:

Translating alone is like being immersed in an isolation tank. But if you’re collaborating with like-minded friends, you have someone to talk to while you are deep inside the book (Freely 2014, 32).

She depicts herself as a somewhat lonely child living abroad between cultures and speaks of her isolation after ‘losing’ her mother and husband to catastrophic illnesses. One can feel the sense of relief she experiences when discovering that one does not have to be translating and bearing the responsibility of translation alone.

Having said that, Freely also shows how, even when working solo on a text, she is never really alone; the ‘voice’ of the text is her companion, or at times, a fugitive she must stalk.

### ***The illusion of collaboration—trances, channelling, possession, intimacy***

As Freely’s pamphlet begins in earnest, her prose becomes heavy with imagery and metaphor. On the Turkish language, Freely creates tension and feelings of elusiveness:

There is just one flowing clause after another, and often these begin with verbal nouns that extract the act from the implied actor. As we travel with the current, we catch glimpses of movements and attitudes that are all the more entrancing for having been freed from the material world. We wonder what these ghosts might signify, and what patterns might emerge from their constant regroupings, while we patiently wait for the verb that might finally unveil the mystery at the tail end of the sentence – unless, after promising enlightenment through a cascade of clauses, it chooses to slip back into the shadows instead. (Freely 2014, 8)

There is a thrilling sense of movement, and of chasing something. The above passage mimics her *impatient* wait for the verb as the translator of the text, revealing at its close a theoretical thwarting and lack of resolution, one, the reader recognises, must be further grappled with.

The image of the current, and of seeing only glimpses with promises of enlightenment, makes one think of a dream-like state or journey, which is also connected to Abasiyanik’s

aforementioned ability to bewitch and lull. She speaks of the mechanism of the text being ‘entrancing’, and a trance-like state appears fundamental to her translation practice in the cahier.

Which brings me to the thing I never quite manage to explain whenever I go to a dinner party or a conference to be judged as the uxorial translator I never aspired to become. When I am questioned about my ‘fidelity’ to the text I live to serve, what I can never quite manage to explain is this: if I am to be faithful to anything in the opening passage of a novel, or a short story, or a memoir, it will be to its mood. (Freely 2014, 14)

Not ‘concrete’ written language, but the ‘abstract’ meaning and significance and resonance (cultural, connoted) behind it. This choosing of the abstract is described by Freely in terms of instinctual sense, an out-of-body experience, a spell: ‘It will be a trance it sets up [...], the magic trick that takes the reader through the page and into the secret realm beyond’ (Freely 2014, 14). If she gets very deep into the translation during its first draft, before her back and forth between the original and her translation, she gets an ‘almost-amnesia’ that is temporary but necessary for ‘that total immersion into the text’ and her ‘best chance of tapping into the mood’ (Freely 2014, 16). It is the point where she is ‘translating from the heart, and not the head’ (16), which is obviously significant to her within the creative process of translating.

Gansel, too, is keen to speak of translating not words, but words within a socio-historical and personally significant context. In an interview with Olivia Snaije, Gansel talks of translating not ‘the words but life and human beings’.<sup>5</sup> On translating Nelly Sachs, who has already passed away, Gansel doesn’t know ‘where to look for inspiration’ and, like a writer who needs to focus on a project, seeks out a residency (Gansel and Schwartz 2017, 79). She needs the intimacy she has experienced with living authors in order to commence, and she ‘suddenly heard the secret murmur’ of Sachs literary voice, ‘her soul’, as if partaking in a kind of séance. (Gansel and Schwartz 2017, 79).

I would argue that this impulse is neither the closest approach nor a disconnection from the text; it is for me closeness as a covert display of fidelity or authenticity, ie the translator is so close to the text they don’t even need to think about it, they simply let it or the author’s voice pass through them. This imbues their translation approach with both a closeness, but also creates a kind of barrier to criticism; it is not me, it is the text or author themselves. The metaphor of the trance, the channelling or possession can be seen to create the illusion of a lack of mediation in the translation process, and I would argue, as others have, that it is important to query this kind of textual intimacy’s illusionary powers.<sup>6</sup>

Though a connection to the living or dead author is vital to Gansel, she also recognises the trap of relying on empathy or pure instinct. She completely dedicates herself to learning Vietnamese as a language, a culture and a literature, and this dedication intersects with and contextualises the notion of focusing on the text as primary—finding a way of being close to the text on the linguistic level and with the writer of the text only allows a certain kind of superficial closeness. It cannot, for Gansel, be in spite of becoming an expert in the language and culture one is translating. Being able to relate to someone and their experience or to empathise is not enough for translation, as shown by the efforts she goes to collaborate with experts at every stage of her language learning and translation research for translating Vietnamese, something that is more instinctual to

her when translating writers who share her heritage (Gansel and Schwartz 2017, 48–49). As we have seen with Freely, even having been friends and living in the same circles as her author growing up does not guarantee a smooth working relationship or smooth translation. Without deep listening and understanding, there is no translation.

Freely makes a connection between the trance-like process as a translator to her process as a writer, saying that they are akin to one another. ‘It may well be that I aspire to this trance because my day job is writing novels’ (Freely 2014, 14). This disclosure would inform or confirm the reader’s own expectation that Freely must be able to translate well because of her own experience as a novelist, though she carefully sets where writing ends and translating begins. Though the first draft process might be similar, with translation

the whole process is more conscious [...] I have to listen to the language of the original and look for the English words that might ride their echo. As important as it is for those words to convey the right meaning, what matters more is how they sound, how they look. I need to know their shape, their weight, their texture and temperature. I need to play them like instruments, until I find the orchestral voice that can tell the story, which, before that point, I more feel than understand. (Freely 2014, 14)

Listening, sound, echo, music, and silence are key metaphors in both works, with Gansel’s use arguably more precise of the two.

### ***Music, listening, silence***

Music and the sound of one’s language or even an accent can be a communal, shared experience that can make one feel connected. To use a certain form of a language can also result in one being exiled, to even hear a language can make one feel a sense of alienation.

Music as a metaphor and as practice to get closer to a text, language and culture are used as helpful ways to get the reader of these two books to gain entry into translation as a practice; both to show a priority to the aural rather than linguistic quality of literature, and as a way of showing how integral a culture’s music can be to understand its literature.

Freely describes listening to Turkish as being similar to closing her eyes and listening to a song she loves, stating that ‘[w]hat matters is the voice, not the message; not the words used but the emotional undercurrents that those words so often conceal’ (Freely 2014, 19), mirroring Gansel’s earlier claim that she translates ‘life and human beings’. In an earlier line Freely uses simile to describe Turkish as sounding like ‘the hushed rush of a mountain brook’ and metaphor for what we envisage is a kind of drag or resonance, ‘its rolling stones’ which ‘trail long tails of moss’ (Freely 2014, 7). Within the hierarchy of importance of what Freely takes from the Turkish text for her translations, sound, for her, is clearly integral to meaning, and she is enraptured by the musicality she finds in Turkish.

Near the end of the essay, she remembers or ‘hears’ the almost hypnotic aural quality of a favoured author, as well as his recreation in writing of a trance-like state in narrative voice:

And I still hear Hasan Ali Toptaş, distant but reassuring, and using the cadences of the epic to lull me into believing that I am in safe hands, even as he spins me into an urban wasteland where the senses bleed into each other. This author ... uses synaesthesia to evoke a Sufi

trance. This, too, is an illusion, because the conjurer is all voice. There are few writers on this earth who can work language like Toptaş, but what he works best is the music of Turkish, so much so that if those without any knowledge of the language could hear him read aloud, the voice alone could take them into the heart of it. (Freely 2014, 37)

Freely could be talking about her own pamphlet here. She, too, recreates the private trance of reading and translating, simply through her writing, as exemplified by the opening passage. She, too, has a synesthetic approach via metaphor and imagery, and through a constant comparison to music to bring Turkish to the non-Turkish speaker; using music as a method of describing how she translates, but also what Turkish is doing, from its poetic possibilities to the important of onomatopoeia in expressions of emotion within the Turkish language (Freely 2014, 11).

Clive Scott, in his Introduction to *Translating the Perception of Text* (2012), invites us to look more closely at Freely's use of metaphor in her article 'How I got lost in translation and found my true calling' in *The Observer*, a proto-text for the Cahier. Scott clarifies, using Freely as a case study, that when translators use music and/or voice<sup>7</sup> metaphorically to explain their connection with the text, they are not referring to, using his term, 'paralinguistic' components of speech from an actual voice recording of the author, one indeed 'felt to be an entirely adequate performance of the text' (if, indeed, such a recording could be deemed to exist) but that the idea of an essential voice of the author in the text, such as an essential interpretation of the text, is a myth:

The voice is, rather, the voice of the reader: one hears one's own voice taking possession of the text. This possession may be achieved as much as in imagination as in actualization, but, whatever the mix of the embodied and the imaginary, or indeed of the physiological and the cultural, a text is as much about what one puts into it as about what one gets out. (Scott 2012, 1)

Does Scott's invitation to reframe the translator's task from interpreting an essential voice of a text to that of the translator's own voice or 'phenomenology of reading' nullify the impact of Freely's use of metaphor? Firstly, metaphor is an integral device in all writing as a vehicle to share experiences and feelings not able to be experienced directly by the reader. In this case, using voice and music in a metaphorical sense helps Freely magnify her preference for reinterpreting sound, which may help a monolingual and/or non-literary translator reader comprehend her ultimate message that her process is creative rather than mechanical. Secondly, if Scott believes that the translator's task is to 'handle language in such a way that the experience of (reading) the source text (ST) can emerge' (Scott 2012, 1), Freely in fact enacts this *listening to herself reading* the text within the site of the cahier; it is worth noting that it is impossible to judge whether Freely achieves this in the translated text itself. We may also link her focus on sound to her informal education in Turkish by listening to her father's students 'whispering, laughing, flirting, arguing' (Freely 2014, 18) and to the matrons next door whose 'voices would rise and fall' while she tried 'to figure out where their words began and ended' (19), along with the beforementioned rhythmic foundation in Turkish specifically. In any case, we may comprehend that sound and voice for Freely aren't simply an over-reliance on translation clichés or necessarily a belief in an essential writerly voice she has unique access to. It ultimately shows that translation doesn't happen in a contextless vacuum, and that a translator has an *approach* influenced by their experiences and their other writerly practices.

Gansel also puts forward the idea that the translator rides the music of language; ‘translation can only retreat to the shore of absent words, then clutch at the shadow carried by the music inherent in those words’ (Gansel and Schwartz 2017, 64), showing a prioritising of the aural quality she finds when translating German. Language and translation become instruments to Gansel with particular qualities and a requirement that they be practised, the German of her family passed down over generations in exile is ‘like a violin whose vibratos have retained the accents and intonations, the words and expressions, or adopted countries and ways of speaking (G&S, p.7), while translation is ‘like practising scales, learning to listen, that never-ending fine-tuning of nuance’ to harness an enduring familiarity (Gansel and Schwartz 2017, 22).

When it comes to translating certain poets, however, music must rise above the metaphorical into the literal. Gansel’s holistic approach to translation includes not only working closely alongside the author but even ‘an entire team of Vietnamese’ people (Gansel and Schwartz 2017, 48) including musicians, linguists, musicologists, and the artist Diem Phung Thi who invented ‘global poetry immersion method’. Music for Gansel is a method of getting closer to the text in different ways. There is a breathlessness in Nelly Sachs’ mimicked in the oboe piece Heinz Holliger composes with Sachs, ‘breath-meaning, breath-breathing’ (Gansel and Schwartz 2017, 91), so the oboe piece becomes a resource so Gansel can triangulate her translation through actual music. She even learns an instrument to be able to translate Vietnamese poetry. ‘In order to experience the mystery of this poetry and its language as closely as possible, I wanted to learn to play the monochord’ (Gansel and Schwartz 2017, 64), Gansel concludes, so she really does build and learn the monochord, which is more than a separate artistic sphere in the culture or a soundtrack for poems, it is the ‘soul’ to all Vietnamese poetry (Gansel and Schwartz 2017, 63). She thought, in her ‘eagerness and ignorance’, that using Western sound-related forms like alliteration and onomatopoeia would suffice. This kind of domestication is a form of ‘non-listening’ (Gansel and Schwartz 2017). As we’ve experienced from Scott, hearing music in texts for translation is arguably a listening to oneself, what we hear within it, rather than understanding in this case how music is the foundation for the language.

Silences and gaps are also fruitful liminal spaces. As much as music can be a key for Gansel, ‘translation came to mean learning to listen to the silences between the lines, to the underground springs of a people’s hinterland’ (Gansel and Schwartz 2017, 52); as Elkin says, translators ‘keep an ear out for what is unspoken, carried through language, smuggled into it’. (Elkin in Gansel and Schwartz 2017, x–xi). The depths of a text are unfathomable, including the paths sprouting from what has been said, but so are all the invisible things that have consciously or unconsciously been left out, calling for a total understanding of a literary and cultural landscape. While sitting with Pamuk going over her translation, Freely points between two paragraphs in his book and tells him that her ‘whole life was hiding inside it’ (Freely 2014, 29) describing the reading of the book as: ‘Yes, I thought. Yes, but’ (29); an affirmation while acknowledging a gap, like her experience of reading about the funeral at the start of the pamphlet that jars with her own experience. She must listen to be a translator, she tells us, but she must also keep listening to herself in order to remain a writer who can see her own enforced silence in the silences of the text.

## Complaint

What is particularly innovative about *Angry in Piraeus* is that Freely shows the ways an uneven author-translator power dynamic can play out both in the process of translating a text and in real life with personal and professional consequences, particularly as a writer who translates other writers, while exploring the many facets of her experience of being Nobel Prize-winning Turkish author Orhan Pamuk's translator. The pamphlet fills the void of silence created by the 'humble translator' trope that silences translator's experiences, good and bad. It is unusual for a translator to, firstly, speak about their private struggle with events connected to but outside of the translation, but also to speak negatively of an experience with an author, especially one who is so well known.<sup>8</sup> In other words, the emotional impact of a translation project on a translator/writer-translator is something still relatively underexplored.

As well as seeing 'gaps' in Pamuk's writing where she sees plots to build her own novel, Freely has a feeling that his writing on Turkey was erasing or demolishing her own. She sets out in the pamphlet how translation impacted her own writing both positively and negatively as a writer-translator, both in terms of process but also as a wiping of self and voice. '...by the time I had translated my way to the end of this sentence ... I could barely see through it. The Istanbul of my own childhood had vanished' (Freely 2014, 29); so describes Freely the feeling that her closeness to Pamuk's style and memories while translating Pamuk's memoir were superseding hers. Freely's need to stand up to Pamuk's writing with her own novel is ultimately an extension of needing to push back against Pamuk and the fall out of translating his work, both encroaching on her territory and overstepping her boundaries.

She recalls that when Orhan Pamuk asked her to translate his book *Snow*, the first book she ever translated, he tells her in an offhand manner 'If you do four pages a day, it will take you just two months' (Freely 2015, 19). The first thing she envisages when considering this prospect is the incident with her father and the taxi drivers in Piraeus. From the start, then, we understand that she is reminded of being forced into a situation that already has unrealistic, inflexible, and externally set expectations of her and her abilities as a translator. She thinks back to the public editing meetings they spent in a café, the 'sea of troubled eyes' of its inhabitants 'staring ... open-mouthed' while they walked a 'fine line between spirited discussion and open warfare' (Freely 2014, 22). From Freely's accounts, Pamuk could be described as controlling, demanding and insensitive. She refers to the time spent working on the fifth and last book they worked on together, *The Museum of Innocence*, as 'that hellish year' (Freely 2014, 31), and describes how he once called her away from Sunday lunch with a friend to tell her 'he could no longer construct a sentence without worrying' how Freely was going to 'ruin it' (30).<sup>9</sup>

Freely understands Pamuk's controlling nature may have been in part due to his loss of control in the rest of his life following persecution and attempted prosecution in Turkey, leaving narrative to be his only realm:

He was not, I think, surprised when I told him he could not exert the same sort of control over a translation. That did not stop him from trying. By that time he had a lot of clout. (Freely 2014, 31)

Freely is very clear here that she will not tolerate his imposing himself on the translation, and yet her attempts to hold onto control of her work seem to have been ignored due to his power with the publisher and/or in the wider literary world.

Freely's comment about being regarded as an uxorial or 'wifely' translator (see above), shows that she also perceives the translator's presumed subordinate role in a gendered way. This is then accentuated and compounded when translating a domineering male author as a female translator. In an interview with Freely in *The Rumpus*, she confirms her sense of wifely subordination, and is grateful it is metaphorical rather than actual in regard to Pamuk:

Taneja: How do we, as women writers, maintain that freedom and keep going?

Freely: Keep talking to each other, keep reading each other and most of all, keep laughing. There are various things we have to keep reminding ourselves of. I remind myself of them often: "Thank God I am not married to him." That one is so good—every time things got bad with Orhan I would think: Thank God I'm not married to him. (*The Rumpus*, 'The Mentor Series Instalment 6: Preti Taneja and Maureen Freely', 1 October 2019)<sup>10</sup>

Freely directly goes on to say that male egos are 'like airbags, they inflate so much they can't get through the door! And they deflate and you can't even fix them—they are very expensive to repair!' and talks of how the men of her generation grew up as 'entitled, precious bastards' (as above). She concludes her answer with the suggestion that 'we as women have been brought up not to put ourselves forward', and we might therefore consider the pamphlet as her way of *putting herself forward* as both a translator and specifically as a translator who is a woman, in this case, while working with a controlling male author. The translation itself is not in question, but rather Freely's working conditions and relationship. What does it mean when it's not the author complaining about the translator, but the translator complaining about the author? It could be considered a flipping of the power hierarchy, using the tools of the trade against those in positions of power. To have not followed this positive narrative completely posed real professional risks to Freely; losing regard through association; future translation work if considered 'difficult'; and the possibility of being an authority on him.

However, we may ascertain that Freely is in a better position than some translators to be open about their working relationship. Freely was already a well-established novelist before her endeavours as a translator, so would have less to lose if she was no longer in a position to translate. Freely's identity as a writer-translator is not only a significant factor in what it allows her to say, but where she is able to say it. Whether as daring in comparison to other translators or those who solely translate, however, her honesty around her working relationship with Pamuk was deemed remarkable. One reviewer of *Angry in Piraeus* said

[p]erhaps the most interesting part of *Angry in Piraeus* (and one I, rather selfishly, would have liked to hear more about) was when Freely discussed the problems arising from her partnership with the Turkish writer. The back-and-forth of the translation process certainly seemed to be a rather arduous process, and there was a sense that both writer and translator were relieved once they had moved on. (Tony's Reading List, 22 February 2015)<sup>11</sup>

which shows that this honesty was appreciated and of interest to readers. They continue:

... this is a short work which is well worth reading (and rereading) and a warning to all who think that translation sounds like a nice, easy way to make a living: whether in the midst of the text or out in the real world, there are more obstacles waiting to trip you up than you might think<sup>12</sup>

In concluding his review of the pamphlet with this line, the reviewer clearly indicates that a general reader would likely be unaware of the complexities of the practice, powerplays and dangers involved in some translations, and will likely gain knowledge and be changed by reading Freely's essay.<sup>13</sup>

When viewing Freely's pamphlet through the writing of theorist Sara Ahmed's work on complaint and university proceedings around complaints of harassment, another facet of her writing is revealed. In her recent lecture 'Complaint as a Queer Method' (Oxford Brookes University, 16 February 2022), Ahmed recalls the anguished noise made by a female academic who had opened yet another harassing email from a male colleague after she had made a formal complaint against him to her boss. The anguished noise couldn't be helped or held back, and was released into a full open-plan office, even reaching higher management in a closed meeting room with glass walls, who come out to ask her what the matter is. Ahmed's work looks at how university proceedings almost always fail after complaints are made, because the institution is designed to uphold the status quo, with complainants regularly being pushed out of their jobs and PhD programmes. What does a literary translator, or any freelance employee do, when there isn't even an institution or boss to complain to about the behaviour of an editor or an author? In a way, this writing is the anguished howl; it releases the pressure, the control exerted over them, and calls attention to the problem to those immediately around them. The unpicking of a fraught author-translator relationship is where Freely has the opportunity to tell her side of the author-translator story, and acts as a moment of guidance and solidarity to emerging and experienced translators. For Freely (and Magdalena Edwards, see Note 13), as Ahmed recommends in her lecture, justice and closure may come not through official channels, but through collective solidarity and acknowledgement.

Conversely, Gansel never speaks ill of the writers she works with. Her tone when discussing them is neutral. The authors' names often simply become stand-ins for the works. We know that she was welcomed into the homes of many of her authors, sometimes over the course of many decades, leading us to understand that she was on very good terms and even close friends with her authors. We know that she spent hours and days, like Freely with Pamuk, going through her translations, yet we are not given specific exchanges that occurred between the collaborating partners. The dynamics between them, whether good or bad are never explicitly explored.

This is potentially noteworthy considering Gansel's primary focus on a humanist approach to translation, the kinship shared, and hospitality extended to her, and that her core message is on travelling to 'the other' and collaborating author to translator or with other agents. Yet this may also reveal why she does not enter into the details of her time with authors either immensely thrilling or fraught. It could be that this may be seen as a distraction or a tainting of the work of displaced, persecuted and violently colonised writers she has translated, and in turn introducing a negative aspect to her work that might potentially be considered overly centring herself in the difficult narratives of others. What would it mean for the presentation and promotion of a humanist



and collaborative mode of translation if at any point she was mistreated? Looking to Freely's pamphlet we can see proof that a translator can talk about the mediation they have endeavoured in translation and in advocacy while working with an exiled and attacked writer, while also talking about the personal difficulties they have encountered in terms of a poor working relationship and verbal and physical harassment.

It appears that Gansel's relationship with her aunt is emblematic of her vision of translation as a kind of caring, calming familial service; to complain of one's family would be unheard of, and this extends to her extended translation family. By doing politically important translation or translation connected to one's heritage, we can see the difficulties it may cause translators wanting to discuss the harder or emotionally difficult parts of their profession in their life writing. There is also a fundamental difference in terms of the dynamic between Gansel and her authors and fellow collaborators. As previously mentioned, Freely is an author in her own right, meaning that she is in a better position to challenge the terms of her translation work, and also, she views Pamuk as her peer. Gansel on the other hand refers to the authors she translates, dead or alive, and her collaborators as her mentors and masters (her musicologist is her 'master', her work with Sachs is a 'mentorship', her work with Goldstein is a 'long apprenticeship learning to listen', Gansel and Schwartz 2017, 49, 101 and 105 respectively) placing them in a dominant position. This also perhaps gives us a clue as to why she brings no judgement on them.

We should not think that Gansel's translation work is free of complaint, however, quite the opposite. Just as Freely's revelations about Pamuk's behaviour and the threats against her by nationalists are a form of 'answering back', Gansel's translations of Vietnamese poetry are an 'answer [to] McNamara's threat [to bomb 'em back to the stone age]', (Gansel and Schwartz 2017, 45). Gansel finds herself in many respects in the dominant position, and wants to challenge it, sharing the relative position of power she holds as well as extending camaraderie to persecuted people, including Vietnamese and other Jewish people. Gansel's dedicated learning of the Vietnamese language and culture and travelling to Vietnam to translate Vietnamese poetry is a show of dissidence and dissatisfaction, a lodging of a complaint; war torn Vietnam is not inhospitable, but rather American international policy.

To dedicate one's time and energies to translate poetry is to aid in the resistance to violent American occupation, it is acting as interpreter in the talking back, the raising of a complaint. Her time translating Jewish people and other dissidents murdered and repressed by the Nazis and exiled by fascist regimes is a wielding of her powers of generating their writing anew to form revisionist bridges through time and place, she picks up their threads cut short and weaves banners from them. It is complaint as art. Freely's pamphlet is also a making into art of a lifetime of unease and ambivalence in translation, of feeling manipulated or wielded as a tool, undermined, insulted. Resistance runs through both their works, be it personal or political. To set out the terms of complaint in this way holds a certain kind of strength: it charts the story of how pushback and defiance and healing happen through personal narrative.

## Conclusion

Within burgeoning Literary Translator Studies, literary translators' memoirs are seen as useful objects for study through a narratological methodology, whereby the memoir is

analysed to discover the ways the translator performs their practice and their subjectivity. I don't want to limit these texts as being simply narratives to study. Harnessing such a methodological approach does not sit well with me. I think it would presume to know what these translators are 'really' saying, or to de facto assess these writings as falsehoods or facades, subjective writings possibly hiding something, while claiming somehow that my own writing and that of academic study is in itself objective. I believe them and their versions of events, I believe that they are experts in their own experiences and that they have chosen to write about their practice in this way with these metaphors, images, and connections because they find them to be the best ways of communicating their experiences. It is also, fundamentally, to say that these texts are not just objects of study, but writing as research—these translators, who are experts in their field, have written these texts to add to the field of research into translation.

Their hybrid nature—as a memoir-treatise and memoir-essay—says as much. These are creative-critical works in themselves, putting forward arguments, intersecting with thinking within socio-cultural, psychological, and literary studies and beyond, where translators use their own life and work, which they know intimately, as case studies to evidence their findings. Why not, then, write a straightforward essay? Reflecting on the idea of translating oneself, we could consider these works as the translation of abstract and diverse experiences that make a translator into a cohesive, very human form while holding onto the emotional and personal resonances of the translators themselves.

Literary translation is a full-body practice; translators don't work in a vacuum but in the world, they travel, they relocate. As these memoir-essays display, translation is less about words on a page, and much more about the dynamics in working and personal relationships, lived experiences directly and indirectly related to the translation project, sound, touch, gesture, translanguaging, being in landscapes and homes, fireside stories, the moment before a fight. A full-body practice calls for embodied writing; without translators' bodies, we don't get the full story of translation. This embodied writing can be seen as a more all-encompassing reflection on the 'story' of literary translation.

A fundamental question in my research of translators' writings is: which translators are invited and commissioned to write personally about translation? Is it because they are established names already in their own right, who can be trusted to write well and will have an audience for anything they wish to discuss in terms of literature? With a turn to viewing the translator memoir as autotheory and autoethnography, I hope that there will continue to be an abundance of these kinds of texts, and that they will be sought out from translators who have never written their own work before, translators from all backgrounds, emerging translators, and established translators.

Ultimately, I hope that this comparative study shows that translation requires courage and risk-taking, both personal and creative. It is a risky business, both in the creation of the translation and in being the translator. The translation is itself a graph of riskiness, 'a delicate seismograph at the heart of time' (Gansel and Schwartz 2017, 36), that would be illegible without the key of these hospitable, shared, honest pieces of writing.

## Notes

1. <http://sylpheditions.com/cahier/C24> (visited 7 April 2020).

2. <http://sylpheditions.com/cahier/C24> (visited 3 March 2023).
3. Freely's pamphlet is incidentally available to read online in *The New York Review of Books* in an adapted and excerpted form.
4. Kelly Washbourne has written on what it means to read as a translator in Washbourne (2013), as has Jean Boase-Beier in her call for a 'cognitive turn' in literary translation in Boase-Beier (2006, viii + 176).
5. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5d0b3b276d608f00012635a9/t/5d5fe0d2578176000166fc9e/1566564567092/MireilleGansel.pdf> (accessed 1 July 2022).
6. Carol Maier has critiqued the problematics of 'gut feeling' as an explanation for a translation approach in her essay Maier, Carol, 'Translating as a Body: meditations on mediation (Excerpts 1994-2004)' in Basnett, Susan and Bush, Peter (eds.) *The Translator as Writer*. London and New York: Continuum, 2016. Other translators have explored the idea of translating being a dissociative state in their own writing and talks. Ilan Stavans in his lecture 'Translation as Hallucination' (Boston University, 14 February 2020) talks of translation being a spiritual, quasi-religious experience; Katrina Dodson, in her essay about translating Clarice Lispector 'Understanding is the Proof of Error (Believer magazine, 11 July 2018) shares a hallucinatory, trance-like state, stating Lispector's 'sentences rose up like feral hallucinations as I groped at their meaning. I didn't exactly pray my way through the translation, but I often spoke to an image of her I'd tacked above my desk.' The latter part of this quote extends this metaphorical trance-like state to where the author becomes an icon of devotion, even to where translators state they are 'channelling' their writers, or being 'possessed' by them, both where the author is dead and when they are still living. In an interview with Katrina Dodson called 'Channelling the Language (and Spirit) of Clarice Lispector', Dodson recalls going to a psychic where Lispector was 'invoked' and warned her off of trying to 'be her', and in an interview with Lauren Elkin in *The Guardian* about her translation of Simone de Beauvoir's novel, she states that she felt she had 'gone into De Beauvoir's body' <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2021/aug/28/lauren-elkin-i-felt-like-i-was-in-de-beauvoirs-body>.
7. Peter Elbow (1994) also analyses the metaphor of voice in his essay 'What Do We Mean When We Talk About Voice in Texts?'. In *Voices on Voice: Perspectives, Definitions, Inquiry*, edited by Kathleen Blake Yancey. North Carolina: University of North Carolina.
8. We are unaccustomed to translators speaking out about unjust working relationships, and expect translators talking with reverence about the authors they translate, especially those who've won major awards like Nobel Prizes (Examples include Gregory Rabassa on Gabriel García Márquez in Rabassa's memoir *If This Be Treason* (2005) and Jennifer Croft on Olga Tokarczuk in the article 'The Nobel Prize was Made For Olga Tokarczuk' in *The Paris Review*, 10 October 2019 (accessed 14 May 2020): <https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2019/10/10/the-nobel-prize-was-made-for-olga-tokarczuk/>). This is due to being seen as co-promoter of the book, and also not wanting to put off prospective future commissions. Olga Tokarczuk's German translator Esther Kinsky recently spoke harshly about Tokarczuk as a writer on a major literary radio segment in Germany, while her other German translator felt compelled to defend the Nobel Prize winner ([https://www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/literaturnobelpreis-fuer-olga-tokarczuk-preiswuerdiger.1270.de.html?dram:article\\_id=465460](https://www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/literaturnobelpreis-fuer-olga-tokarczuk-preiswuerdiger.1270.de.html?dram:article_id=465460) (in German)). That Kinsky is herself a multi-award-winning author, both in the German-speaking world and internationally, who is even published by the same UK publisher as Tokarczuk, once more confirms the theory that writers who are also translators have more freedom to be honest with their opinions and about their experiences because they are viewed as peers who in some instances feel they can do better, say as much, and have less to lose in the process.
9. His wish for control over the translation of his work recalls the behaviour of Czech author Milan Kundera, who infamously complained repeatedly about his translators and their translations, even having his work retranslated within years of the first translations' publications. In her essay 'The Unbearable Torment of Translation: Milan Kundera, Impersonation and The Joke' (Margala, Miriam. 2010. *TransculturAl*, Vol.1,3, 30-42), Miriam

Margala explores the different regard and parameters Kundera has for his translators' work and his own self-translation.

10. *The Rumpus*, 21 August 2019 <https://therumpus.net/2019/10/the-mentor-series-preti-taneja-and-maureen-freely/> (accessed 07 04 2020).
11. <https://tonysreadinglist.wordpress.com/2015/02/22/angry-in-piraeus-by-maureen-freely-review/> (accessed 07 April 2020).
12. <https://tonysreadinglist.wordpress.com/2015/02/22/angry-in-piraeus-by-maureen-freely-review/> (Anonymous 2015).
13. In her personal essay 'Benjamin Moser and the Smallest Woman in the World' (Edwards, Magdalena. 2019. *LA Review of Books*, 16 August 2019), translator Magdalena Edwards writes of her uneven working relationship with translator and editor of New Directions' Clarice Lispector Series, Benjamin Moser, and there is a clear kinship between this essay and Freely's cahier <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/benjamin-moser-and-the-smallest-woman-in-the-world/> (accessed 14 May 2020). Moser told Edwards that he would need to 'rewrite' her whole translation when he accuses her of being incompetent. The article was shared widely online, was called a 'must-read' on The Poetry Foundation's blog Harriet (Staff, Harriet. 2019. *Poetry Foundation*, 16 August 2019: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet-books/2019/08/magdalena-edwardss-experience-with-translator-benjamin-moser>) and gained support from many literary translators, including prominent translators like Idra Novey, who labelled Moser a misogynist in a Tweet (Idra Novey, Twitter page, <https://twitter.com/idranovey/status/1257640466654334976>).

## Notes on contributor

*Jen Calleja* is an author, literary translator, publisher, and PhD candidate at the University of East Anglia. Her creative-critical research project comprises an exploration of hybrid life writing by women literary translators and her own hybrid memoir *Fair: a literary translator memoir*. In 2019 she was shortlisted for the Man Booker International Prize for her translation of Marion Poschmann's *The Pine Islands*. She is currently Translator in Residence at the British Centre for Literary Translation, and was previously the inaugural Translator in Residence at the British Library.

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#### **Lectures**

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