

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD at the University of Warwick**

**Permanent WRAP URL:**

<http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/181359>

**Copyright and reuse:**

This thesis is made available online and is protected by original copyright.

Please scroll down to view the document itself.

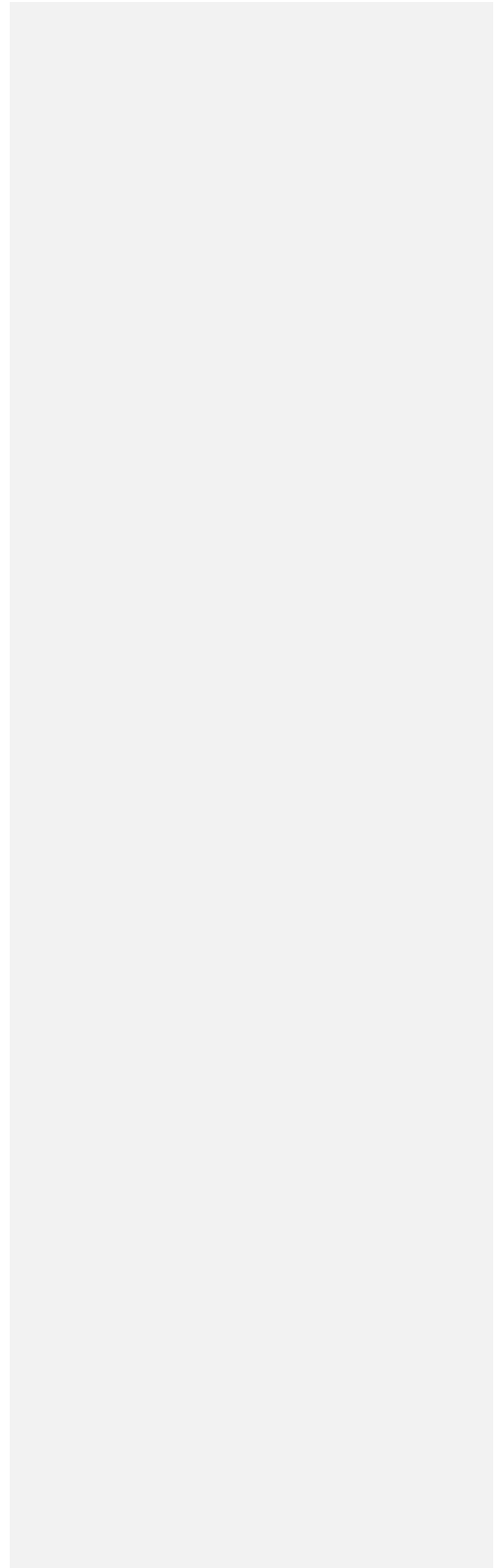
Please refer to the repository record for this item for information to help you to cite it.

Our policy information is available from the repository home page.

For more information, please contact the WRAP Team at: [wrap@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:wrap@warwick.ac.uk)

**Appendix 2**

**Interview with exophonic translators  
Transcriptions**



## InterviewT01.mp4

**T01** [00:00:03] As well, and an extra, a new speaker/editor to see if they read it properly, but the thing about if you're translating L2 your editor is not going to be an L2 editor, I mean, it's not gonna be an L2 editor anyway, so you're gonna get L1 edited anyway. So, yeah, but I have heard the other thing where, like, I've helped L1 translators with their Korean, reading, and checked and compared their translations to the Korean source to see if they misread anything and I've done quite a lot of that for quite famous translators and, you know, they, yeah, some of them seem to, you know, (laughs) so, yeah..

**Interviewer** [00:00:50] Well that's my feeling, I've had that happen to me in which I sent it to a native speaker of English to check for, you know, just to have another reader and they had a lot of things that they said like "oh this sounds weird, this sounds odd, this doesn't sound very fluent" and then I had to say, well, in Portuguese it also sounds very odd to our ears so, sometimes they can't read the first, the first language, that can happen. I like that you commented on that. Thank you for that (laughs). As I said this is gonna be like, I do have questions to ask you, but at any point if you want to add to the questions I've asked, or if you want to comment on specific terminology I've used, just as a disclaimer, I've added, I've used words such as Mother Tongue, First Language, Second Language, and I know these are questionable and some people might not agree with them or might want to use a different word so feel free to use whatever language you wanna use to define or to talk about your many languages.

**T01** [00:02:00] Sure

**Interviewer** [00:02:00] This is just because translators won't necessarily agree with "Second Language", "First Language", "Mother Tongue", so that is why I added a different variety of terms.

**T01** [00:02:12] Got it.

**Interviewer** [00:02:15] So as you see I've started recording, hope you're ok with that

**T01** [00:02:20] yes,.

**Interviewer** [00:02:21] And I can't start, I can ask the questions now.

**T01** [00:02:24] Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:02:24] So, all the questions are a bit clustered, so they are a bit big, but you can just talk about them at length, so the first one will be about approaches to languages..

**T01** [00:02:39] Hello?

**Interviewer** [00:02:39] Hello? Can you hear me?

**T01** [00:02:40] I can, just stopped all of a sudden

**Interviewer** [00:02:43] Can you hear me now? Oh my god [typing sound]

**T01** [00:02:55] Okay. Now I can hear you. [laughs]

**Interviewer** [00:03:02] Ugh, oh, there's something flashing on my Skype.

**T01** [00:03:06] Ok, it's probably on my end

**Interviewer** [00:03:08] I think it's the connection, it can be, uh, anyway, sorry

**T01** [00:03:13] Sure.

**Interviewer** [00:03:14] So I'll ask you the first one, so in Approaches to Languages, the section, Do you consider that you have a mother tongue, a first language, or more than one? If so, which one(s)? If not, why not?

**T01** [00:03:28] Well, I consider my mother tongue to be Korean, and I consider it to be my only mother tongue, my entire family lives in Korea, I am not an Immigrant, my family is not an immigrant family and no part of my family is an immigrant family, like even my uncles and aunts, they all live in Korea, my parents were both raised in Korea, so, and I've spent my entire adulthood in Korea, I went to college here, I went to school here, I spent half of my childhood here, I went to the military here, I went to law school here, so I am like (laughs) very very thoroughly the most Korean person you'll meet. I mean, if you ask me "What is your mother tongue?" Of course it's Korean. English is just this other language I happen to be very good at, because of, by accident, because my father happened to work overseas. And because I just happened to really like English literature so as a child I would read a lot, and you know, the very typical story of, you know, literary translators, they all loved to read as children, they keep reading, are bilingual, and they happen to grow up in some kind of multilingual household or have a multilingual education and then decide to express their appreciation for their language, for their literature, through their language abilities, so that is a very typical story, that's my story.

**Interviewer** [00:05:00] Yeah, thank you, so, I guess the second question is, you kind of already answered it, but it would be what is your language of education or instruction? Is it different from your mother tongue? You already kind of answered that one. Would you say it's Korean, or English, or mixed, for the...

**T01** [00:05:20] You know, it has to be mixed, because, ahm, so the way my childhood was structured was my dad was moved outside of Korea every two or three years, so every two or three years we left Korea and lived in another country for two or three years, in Korea I went to Korean schools where I spoke Korean, of course, but overseas I went to international schools, or their local schools if the country happened to be English-speaking, for example, when we lived in Hong Kong, this was before the handover and Hong Kong used to be part of the UK, and so I went to a British school and when we lived in America for three years I went to an American school there, so aside from those two cases overseas I would go to international schools where the language of instruction was English, though I consider my primary education to be half Korean half English, everything after that, like, my graduate, postgraduate, all of that, has been in Korean,

**Interviewer** [00:06:17] Ok, good to know, thank you. Well, this third question, I know it, I know that it's true for you but I have to ask anyway: Do you translate into a non-mother tongue? If so, what is your experience of it? So feel free to talk about, you know you don't have to talk at length but you can talk about your experience of translating into a second language.

**T01** [00:06:42] Sure, so, ahm, what was this experience like..so, I really love literature, like wherever it's from. I especially love, uhm, literature... because so many people translate into English, so it's such a gateway into another world, not just the UK and America, the English-speaking world so for me it's always been like, oh this is my kind of contribution to English literature Like, my dad grew up basically in the middle of nowhere in Korea, he was a total country bumpkin, but he really loved the English language for some reason, and he had a missionary... he had some kind of access there to the English language, and so he, it was his favourite subject, he majored in it in college and he worked in a trade agency in Korea where he used English all the time, so he loved the English language. I don't love the English language (laughs). I mean, I think English is a great language, but loving a language is a very strange concept for me. I love literature. So, for me it was really about, I want to be a part of this culture that I grew up in and it's just such a big part of my life, because despite moving all the time as a child and you know being in Korea and missing the outside world, like, all I had to do was open a book and I've always carried that literature in English with me. So, I kind of like wanted to be part of that world and I wanted to translate into it, a lot of people have asked me "Why don't you translate into Korean?" And that career actually makes more sense because Korea actually translates more English than the English-speaking world does, the other way around, like, there's more English literature in Korean than Korean literature in English. But, and it's much more easier to create a living in that direction, but for me it's always been about being part of English literature and my belief is that once a literature is translated and it arrives in the target language then it becomes part of the target language's culture, not so much necessarily the source language's culture, I mean, I am sure, everyone believes something different about that aspect, but for me it's always been the case. So.. So this is just my way of kind of living in literature? I guess? Because I always feel like I am living in English literature so this my real, kind of, literally AND [X], living in, it's very weird, I don't know if it makes sense

**Interviewer** [00:09:25] Yeah it makes sense, totally, actually there are some other questions that kind of are already in your answer to this one. So, I think this one you also already kind of answered but this one is How would you describe your relationship to the languages you can speak/write/translate from or into? Ahm, but feel free to answer that one...

**T01** [00:09:50] Sure, so, Ahm, so this is so political, because if you look at Korean history at the time when my parents were born, which is post-War Korea, depends which war we are talking about, well my dad was born after WWII and my mom was born after the Korean war, so, although technically the Korean war is still going on, so for them, Korea in that era was very dominated by the American military, and American imperialism was basically very much part of the Korean culture, so to be able to speak English is actually a very politically powerful thing in Korea, it's a huuuge intellectual commodity to be able to speak it, it advances you in your career, exponentially, there's no comparison between someone who is fluent in English and someone who is not, it gives such a leg up. So, with me, my relationship to English is that I always knew that it had this kind of political power, I cared about literature, I did not want to work at Samsung, you know, I did not want to do any of the things that people normally use their English with here in Korea, but I kind of like in the back of my mind I always knew that people would look at me differently the more "accurately" I spoke, although, you know, of course, it's totally bullshit because accuracy is basically how close is it to the imperial masters [ laughs ] is their English, and that is how they judge fluency and accuracy and native speaker-ISH you know and all that kind of bullshit..

{Network problems}

**Interviewer** [00:11:37] Hm, yeah, ah, well, so have you ever, I think you answered this one... can you hear me?

**T01** [00:11:48] ... but for me it was always like my parents and teachers and like everyone would always say "Oh your english is a gift, you know, it's you and it will help you go far" and so they made me very aware  
{Network problems, muted} [00:12:02]problems] I don't know, it was it was always the language that I needed to get to the literature. [15.3s] I didn't really care about the language itself. It was boring. No offense, but like the most boring thing in the world is linguistics.

**Interviewer** [00:12:27] Yeah.

**T01** [00:12:28] It doesn't work. I mean, I love theory [00:12:29]and linguistics obviously is important to give a perspective, [2.2s] but like for me, that's always been kind of like secondary. And it's always been like, this is, I'm going to use this to get to literature. And one of the most thrilling discoveries I've made and I suppose, oh, you could, you know, major in this, you can research this and be a professor in this and you can do this for the rest of your life. Then my parents wanted me to study law instead, that's why I went that way. But I discovered, oh, you know, I could be a translator. There seems to be a way to have literature, and I liked to. So and that's why I ended up not using one of those weird privileges. So for every Korean, English has this very sort of weird political connotation to it. If you noticed, my accent is quite American. Despite the fact that I first learned my English in Hong Kong, in a British school. And it's and it was a very fancy prestigious school. But as soon as I left Hong Kong, my accent, immediately changed to American, as everything in Korea it's just American English, because that's our, we are the vassal state of America.

**Interviewer** [00:13:43] Yeah.

**T01** [00:13:44] So, yeah. So it's it's always been kind of weird. And now it's even more weird because now Korea has risen economically and in its international stature. And so we're not quite the vassal state that we used to be. And I also work in a field where I have to prove my country's, my country's culture and my country's uniqueness or whatnot. And it's like but I have to use the language of the coloniser to do it. It's all very weird. I have to be a proud Korean, but in English, in my colonizer's language. So it's like, there's a lot of, like, weird situations like this. But for me, it makes up for it because I get to meet people like you, for example, like other translators, who are always really interesting to talk to me. And, you know, I love talking to like other literary people. And, you know, and of course, there's also literature. So it's kind of like a weird relationship that I have with my languages. I don't know if I, this is very rambl.. I don't know if I...

**Interviewer** [00:14:44] No, no. It's it's great. It's good. You're already answering most of the questions, I have to ask them anyway. But you already kind of, it's so rich. This is going to be fun to transcribe. Yeah. Sorry, did you say something?

**T01** [00:15:00] Oh no no, I said I'm glad.

**Interviewer** [00:15:02] Thank you. Have you ever been able to express something in a language that is not your first language more satisfactorily? How so?

**T01** [00:15:14] Gosh, I don't know. I don't think so. That's a very good oh, that's so weird. How could that possibly be? I do.

**Interviewer** [00:15:27] Speaking from my own experience, I read so much literature in English that sometimes, much more than I read in Portuguese, right now, obviously, as well. And sometimes I feel like I can express something better in English because it's kind of a, you know, if you're writing in a specific genre more in English than in your other language, you end up feeling more comfortable with that specific, you know, type of writing or that specific type of, you know, literature or something that you can. I added this because I know that a lot of L2 translators feel kind of like that, because it depends on, you know, also your history or like your background. But, you know, as you said, you like literature in English as well. So maybe, that's why I ask, have you have ever been able to express something in English better or you feel more comfortable with that than in Korean? adapting that to your situation.

**T01** [00:16:36] Good question, all I can think of is, like, so, I speak a little bit of French, and when I speak French, like I've become very good at complaining. For English, [inaudible] ..lating. I don't know. I feel like English is a really flexible. It's a very generous language. Yeah. I've never felt, but I've never felt that there's something in English that can't express in Korean. The thing is my spoken Korean is better than my spoken English and I feel more comfortable speaking Korean than English. My husband is American. He doesn't speak Korean. And so he's Thai-American, so he is, like, Asian-American. But like when I talk to him, when we have an argument, it's so frustrating to me because there's so many things that I could say to him in Korean. English is holding me back somehow. I don't know. Maybe it's because it's the language of the master or there is something with English that's like holding me back, whereas in Korean I know that I could like, you know, curse the hell out of him in this moment. So I have those moments, but I don't know if I ever if I ever... no. Korean is also, like, really economical, much more so than English. So tweeting is easier in Korean, writing, speaking. So I don't, I'm not sure if that's, that's been my experience.

**Interviewer** [00:18:10] Well, fair enough. That's it. And so now it's going to be, the questions are going to be more specific to directionality. So I don't know if you've translated into Korean as well, but if that's the case, what is the difference for you between both or more directions of translation? How would you describe your translation process, the types of challenges when you are translating into a mother tongue versus into a foreign language or a non mother tongue?

**T01** [00:18:42] Oh, wow, so many things depend. For example, who is your client? So, most of the time my client is the Korean and I am translating between my client and my client's client who is a foreigner. And when you're when you're translating or interpreting, when you interpret your client's words into English, you have to be very expressive and whatnot. But when your client's client, when you translate your client's clients into Korean, you have to be kind of, like, very dry. And be like, well, these are the facts... And these are the, you know that you're getting, so my experience has been mostly that when it comes to translating into Korean, I've never really had to translate expressively and literarily into Korean. Before I became a literary translator. I guess I have done some English to Korean, but it was mostly very technical stuff. So really the biggest difference is money. It's yeah. They pay you more if you translate from Korean to English because it's still rarer. But in literature there are more books that are published from English to Korean than Korean to English. So you actually end up making more money in the English to Korean direction.

But yeah, but everything else basically Korean to English pays more. So the big part is really money and yeah. Process wise. So written Korean is very different from spoken Korean. It's not like English where written English basically sounds like spoken English.

**Interviewer** [00:20:38] Yeah,.

**T01** [00:20:40] It's fairly, it's a fairly colloquial language compared to, like, you're supposed to read aloud the formal email you send. It is supposed to sound like you're talking to the other person. Whereas in Korean we use a completely different conjugation for written Korean. And so if you are, saying, if you're speaking in Written Korean, it sounds very weird and stilted. It's a much more formal Korean. So there's that extra process, I guess, when you're translating into Korean where you have to, kind of, like, make it more formal because English is a more informal, more colloquial language, whereas written Korean and spoken Korean to an extent, but written Korean definitely is very, very, very formal and kind of have to add that layer of formality and the way things are done. This kind of thing, like while you are translating into Korean, I think that's it.

**Interviewer** [00:21:37] Yeah, well, that's awesome. Thank you. Do you have any, we already talked about your love for literature, but do you have any preferred genres or text types for L2 translation and how do they differ from your L1 translation practice? I think you already said that. But like explain the reasons for this, this difference or if you have it at all.

**T01** [00:22:19] [gap in sound] L2 translations have been, as a Korean talking about creative things and talking it up and hyping it up. I'm sure you noticed on Twitter, like I'm always talking about, oh, this book came out. Go read it. It's about this. So there's more of that kind of energy going on where I feel like I am always trying to sell something [laughs] when I translate from Korean to English. When I'm doing something from English to Korean, it's always like, this is the information from the outside world that many of you Koreans may find interesting, so it's less of a sell and more of like information conduit kind of thing going on. I think that's because of my particular position in the kind of like, spectrum of translators. [00:23:10] **These are horrible things to say** [1.5s] [laughs] in the array of, you know, where I'm in Korea. I am Korean. And so I'm going to understand Korea better, in terms of probability, better than, say, a foreign translator living overseas who is also translating Korean into English. They are going to have their strengths and I'm going to have my strength. And so I'm going to be hired for my strengths, and I am going to play by my strengths. And I think that's what ends up happening. I basically become this purveyor of this [00:23:46] **heightened** [0.0s] Korean culture and a purveyor of information for, yeah... anyone

**Interviewer** [00:23:51] You end up being kind of an ambassador or some sort of let's say.

**T01** [00:23:59] Sorry?

**Interviewer** [00:23:59] You end up being kind of an ambassador, a diplomat. Something of that sort. I don't know.

**T01** [00:24:05] Yes. Could be. So, my dad, he worked for a government agency as a diplomat. But he worked for a trade promotion agency called [00:24:15] **Kuchera** [0.0s] and he didn't have a diplomatic passport, but he had an official passport. And his job was basically to market Korean products made by small and medium-sized businesses overseas to like, you know, we lived in Ethiopia, we lived in Thailand, like, all these



countries that were introducing Korean products. And so I'm basically doing what he's doing except with literature. And he laughed when I mentioned that to him. So, yeah, there's definitely a kind of cultural diplomacy going on. And people do look at you and kind of, like, judge you as a Korean or a foreigner. They don't see you as, you know. They don't see you as American. I mean, they can, it's just. Yeah. There is that kind of dynamic. And I don't quite know if it's a good thing or a bad thing. I think it's mostly bad. But I'm just grateful that I had the kind of childhood that I had that prepared me for certain aspects of it, I guess.

**Interviewer** [00:25:18] Yeah.

**T01** [00:25:19] But yeah, it is kind of weird, I'm sure you feel the same way.

**Interviewer** [00:25:22] Yeah. Well, I think, I contacted Julia Sanches, and she told me to contact you but she didn't know that you had already responded to my call for translators and I had you in my list but she told me "Oh he's a child of the world like me". And I think that's a... But I didn't know about your background. And then that rings true. It's interesting because that's the opposite in my case, because obviously there are a lot of Brazilian, Portuguese, translators everywhere. So it's a different kind of dynamic. But most of the time they want you to translate. When you do it, L2 translation. They wanted to do some more informational kind of translation, and then when it's translated into Portuguese from English and Portuguese. Let's say they're looking more like literary translation or like... And they're focused more on style, which is the opposite of what you just said, but also you have a very specific position in your mind. So that's... Well, thank you for that. That was lovely. Sorry, I actually something happened with the meeting and I think when you just started answering my question, I apparently dropped out of the meeting and then I rejoined it. So I might have missed, like, the first sentence, but I got the gist of everything. So you don't have to answer it again.

**T01** [00:26:49] you can see it with your transcription later and then email me about any holes.

**Interviewer** [00:26:53] Yeah. Well, thank you. Thank you. Because I actually I don't know if the audio is going to... we are testing this anyway. Are there any genres or text types that you prefer not to translate?

**T01** [00:27:08] Oh so I guess I can say this, who cares? So there is a kind of client that I will never accept and that is anyone from the Korean movie industry.

**Interviewer** [00:27:20] OK.

**T01** [00:27:22] So this includes, like, you know, subtitling, this includes directors, this includes film professors who want to use you for a film conference interpreting. This includes film students. This includes film critics. This includes people who organize film festivals and creators of a lot of big film festivals. Some of them quite fantastic. But, yeah, so that's a client that I refuse to work with again, because almost every time that I worked with them, they have a terrible culture, Korean film, like they have a terrible, terrible culture. It's very exploitative. And because they're so used to exploiting each other that they come to me and they expect me to kind of like act the way they do it. And I'm like, I don't need this job.

**Interviewer** [00:28:17] Yeah.

**T01** [00:28:18] Yes. And that's happened so many times that it's just like a client that I will not touch again in terms of a literary genre. There's really nothing that I will not translate. So, otherwise not translate, because my belief is that if you are a translator, you should be able to, I mean, not you should be able to translate, that sounds very judgmental. If you're a translator, you should be able to, like, if you wanted to translate everything, that you should be able to do it. You should be able to take on any clients and study up on it and deliver a good product. I have one of my favorite translator friends. She used to be the French interpreter to the Korean president, to three Korean presidents, in fact and she went to [00:29:16] **Epoch Graduate School** [0.8s] of interpreting and translation full scholarship. And then she went to [00:29:24] **Ecole Superieure des Interpreteurs et Traducteurs** [0.0s] in Paris. And so she would, like, I would watch her prepare for an interpreting gig. And she would just study the hell out of the client for a week. And then she would go there and deliver a great interpretation on the most obscure things like, you know, container box logistics or finance models or that kind of thing, and she would be like "oh, this is how, this is how they teach you [00:29:53] **at the Ecole** [0.1s] You know, you figure out a road plan, a study plan, and then you study it and then you see where the lines of knowledge are going. And then you go in there and then you do your thing. And so I was like, hey, I believe that you should be able to translate or interpret anything that you choose [00:30:08] **to, be.** [0.5s] I think most translators are very curious about the world. And so I've always been like, I would always get these random things from like, oh, this is the Korean ski association. I don't know anything about skiing, but, you know, it's something different, so I went and interpreted for them one time, like, so B there's that and C, like, you know, I love to read anything like, you know, romance novels are great. Historical fiction is great, science fiction, I love it. Books written by women, books written by refugees. Like I love all of that stuff. I love anything that is literature and anything that is, like, a really cool story. So for me, like, there's really nothing that I would say no to. Except Movie people. Oh, my God. They're the worst. [laughs] so bad.

**Interviewer** [00:31:06] Oh, I get that.

**T01** [00:31:09] Do you feel, like, my, my disgust. What do the French say [00:31:16] **degu..** [0.0s] something. [laughs]

**Interviewer** [00:31:18] I have personal experience of that. So I know what you're talking about, they are really hard to work with. Thank you for that. This was lovely. Lovely. I agree with you. I feel like I'm relating to whatever you are saying very strongly. So this next part is more about market and gatekeeping. Has your translation work ever been criticized, rejected or disregarded because you were not a native speaker of the target language?

**Interviewer** [00:32:05] Hello. Hello. [2 mins of silence]

**T01** [00:33:58] Oh, I can hear you. Hello?

**Interviewer** [00:33:59] Oh, I can you hear me?

**T01** [00:34:01] Yeah, I can hear you.

**Interviewer** [00:34:03] Oh, I'm very sorry.

**T01** [00:34:05] No, it's fine.

**Interviewer** [00:34:07] Something's happening with my network. I changed location in my flat. So now I think maybe I'm closer to the router. So maybe that will work now. I hope. Sorry. Can I ask the question, like, can you answer that question again? Because I think I missed part of.

**T01** [00:34:26] Sure, so gatekeeping. Have I ever been discriminated against because I'm an L2 translator. So that's kind of, I think, Mm hmm. It happens all the time, so here in Korea, recruiting literature in translation tends to be funded by Korean institutions. And they have to sort of like... And Koreans are very bureaucratic. And, you know, everything is audited. Everything has to be prepared to be audited, even if it's not audited. So one of the things is that they look at me and they're like, well, you went to a Korean University and graduate school and you have Korean nationality. Your parents are Korean and your family is Korean. So on paper, I'm not. Well, you know, there really isn't anything to suggest that my English is on any kind of level. So... It's better now. I think it really helps to have won PEN Translates and PEN/HEIM, it really helps to have won those, it really helps to have won [00:35:32]JKL, which is a Korean board that doesn't [3.8s] exist anymore. So it helps to win things. But even now, like, for example, I would get passed over for teaching jobs because I'm Korean. And, you know, they would hire... And once they, you know, did not even bother to [00:35:56]fizziness [0.0s] me. And like I found out, like through the Internet. And they hired someone who had a lot less experience than me, but he was a white man. So... I mean, that happens all the time. It happens to women a lot as well. So Yeah. So there have been instances like that. But thankfully there are fewer of them. At the same time. There are sometimes, like, the kind of racism that I see in publishing. I can't tell if it's because I'm Korean or the work that I'm trying to publish is originally Korean. And there are moments when I can't quite tell the difference between those. But then I see people who are basically like Korean funding bodies who will... they especially love white men. So they would give all this funding to these white men who, you know, maybe translate one book and then they're never heard from again, like so many instances of that, that I feel like it's just so, I mean, it's demoralizing. I mean, there's there's nothing that I could... if there was a problem with my English, I could improve my English or whatever that means. But if this is a problem of my race, then there's really nothing that I can do about it. It's been a journey. It's hard. Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:37:30] Well, congrats on the award. By the way, on the many awards. So and I think this relates to the other question. Have you ever been overcorrected on a linguistic choice or a specific form that was consciously made by you? But that was interpreted by the editor or by the person reading as an inadequacy due to not being a native speaker or something like that.

**T01** [00:37:59] So that doesn't happen to me a lot because until fairly recently, I felt a lot of pressure not to foreignise. I think it comes from a combination of, because I'm a foreigner, I don't want to be caught foreignizing. And so there's that kind of, frankly, colonial imperial pressure that I have, which I need to fix. I think that it's like, translated literature sounding like it's translated, whatever that means, is perfectly fine. I think that if something sounds weird in Portuguese, then it should sound weird.

**Interviewer** [00:38:35] Yeah, definitely.

**T01** [00:38:40] Sometimes, some people are like, well, I would love for the work to sound as if it was written originally in English. I'm like, well, it's not written originally in English. And there's something weird about reading translations where it's so flat and, you know, neat and clean. And I find those translations are a little bit disturbing, but I haven't really

been caught in that kind of thing. I have had a white instructor once say that one of the sentences that I wrote was awkward. So I asked them. So what do you mean by awkward? And they're like, I don't know. It's just... Awkward. It's just so bullshit.

**Interviewer** [00:39:26] Give me an explanation to what you mean by that.

**T01** [00:39:31] What exactly does it mean by awkward? Otherwise, how am I going to fix something that I don't know how it's broken. So awkward is a very dangerous expression to use when you're editing, because it just seems like. What does it mean? That I don't sound white? [laughs] What is it?

**Interviewer** [00:39:45] Yeah,.

**T01** [00:39:46] But I guess that's what it means. But that was very early in my career. And since then, it hasn't been so much an issue for me. But that's because I suspect it's because I'm so instinctively kind of careful, well, not careful, meek, let's say, and timid. And if I were a more adventurous translator, like when I see a young Korean translators, like, for example, [00:40:14] **Soh Jen Lee**, [0.4s] who is so fantastic and she doesn't care if you think, you know, what she did was awkward, for example, like she will, if she believes that that is the translation, then she will do it. And she's like, look, it's okay to be a bit rough. Why not? It's okay to be, to kind of go off the rails a little bit sometimes and so, yeah, you do it. And I learned a lot from her and a lot of the other younger translators where I'm like, oh, yeah, why am I so hung up on sounding White or, whatever it is I'm trying to do. Isn't that a form of self-hatred? Doesn't that mean that I've internalized self-hatred and internalized colonialism and Orientalism? And I'm just trying to... and I've been thinking a lot about that. It is kind of fucked up. So [laughs] I am trying to improve. And the other thing is, I haven't really published... I've only published two books. I have five coming up. But I've only published two books. So for me, it's been like I haven't been exposed enough to receive any kind of criticism, like the kind of criticism that Deborah Smith received. It was possible because her book did so well. You know, my work hasn't, as far as I know. I mean, they don't tell me this stuff, hasn't blown up like that. So I'm not as exposed, I guess, to criticism. I think there's that I think also a big part of it is that I'm just a man. I noticed that female translators get criticized a lot more for things like that than men do, like poetic license is given more for male translators and writers, frankly, than for women. And if I as a man, as a cisgender man, see that, then it's probably much worse for actual women who are going through it, even more.

**Interviewer** [00:42:09] Yeah.

**T01** [00:42:10] So I think that is a big, big factor. Like T01 is a very clearly male name. Just the fact that I have a pen name like that, like it's male and white. I don't know, T01. it's very [00:42:22] **interesting**. [0.0s] But, you know, it kind of shows you what kind of translator I am, like a very kind of colonized person, I guess.

**Interviewer** [00:42:31] No, I wouldn't say that. I mean, I ask this because Yoko Tawada, you know, you probably know or heard about her, she has written extensively about, like, she writes in German, has published 20 something, 30 books in German. And she has been corrected by these German gatekeepers, correcting on a grammar, on a linguistic choice that she made that was intentional, she wanted actually to joke, to make a joke with the German grammar. And it was supposed to, like, send a specific message and they corrected her because they assumed, well, she's not a native speaker, she's Japanese. She's a woman, I'm going to correct her. And they felt free to do that. So that's why I

added this question, because it's something that comes up, whether you are just writing in a second language or just translating into a second language, that happens quite often. Obviously, as you said, the gender imbalance is strong. I have experienced that. So that's why I asked. But yeah, it was like.

**T01** [00:43:44] I mean, this is just my instinct. But I feel like if you meet some kind of, just kept it in mind when you did your research, like check to see what men say to this question and what women say to this question. I bet there is a kind of gender divide there. Like if you could find a Japanese man translating into L2 and compare what he says to what Yoko Tawada says, like that would be very interesting.

**Interviewer** [00:44:12] Yeah. Thank you for that. Oh, good. OK. So we are getting to the creative writing fluency and translation section. So I think you also already kind of answered this one, so you don't have to, you know, feel free to just give a short answer if you don't want to talk at length about this. How do you view the relationship between fluency, quote unquote, fluency and creativity in the languages you use?

**T01** [00:44:48] So there's a there's a Chinese writer named [00:44:52] **Yan Ge** [0.3s] who writes in English. So she became a famous writer in China, and then she came to the University of East Anglia for their M.A. in creative writing. And I think she graduated and she's published and she's published stories in English. So. And I've met her and she's really wonderful. And obviously she's writing in L2 and her stories are wonderful and her writing is wonderful. So I feel like fluency and creativity aren't really that related. Because there's so many people who are not necessarily you would call fluent, but they're extremely creative. And there's so many people who are ~fluent but are extremely not creative. And that makes sense because if you think about it, fluency, like we discussed [00:45:54] **long ago** [0.0s] is sometimes a marker of conformism. How well you can conform to some kind of normative ideal of a native speaker or a white person or a white man. So I feel like people who are conformist are not going to be creative. They're going to be very good observers. They're going to be very good scientists, maybe, they're going to be very good people who can kind of like, well, [00:46:24] **create a community** [0.3s] where they can like they understand what the situation is very quickly. And they're very clever, but they're not pretty creative. They're not going to come up with something that is different. And the reason why writers like [00:46:41] **Yan Ge** [0.2s] are so creative is because they don't have fluency in English. So they have more avenues to... They have more places to go off the rails or to go off the beaten path and to explore things that someone who is more conformist and more fluent may not be able to explore. So I feel like the two are, in fact, fluency is the enemy of creativity a lot of times. When I was in graduate school, I had some huge problems in my 18th century seminar. And I did very badly in it and when I did my postmortem with my 18th century professor, she said that, oh, you know, T01, you're a very strange student because your writing is really good, but your reading is terrible. I was like "What do you mean?" She was like, well, when you read something, I feel like you don't really understand it. But you can sort of like compensate for it a lot with your writing. But, you know, when the understanding is that, they will only take you so far. And she was like, I bet you don't remember anything that you read. And I was like, oh, my God. How do you know that? She said, That's because you have really good English. And so when you read something, you can immediately understand it with no effort and because no effort went into it, you don't remember it and you don't get creative with it. You don't worry over it. Puzzle over it. You don't put any effort into it. So to you, it was just a moment and then it's gone. And then you move on to the next sentence and onto the next page. And then you're done reading the book and. And I was like, oh my God, this is so mind- blowing. And because she had basically diagnosed the problem that I had basically gone to

graduate school for because I had been reading books, but I wasn't really enjoyed them as I used to. And I was like going out there reading things wrong. So I went to graduate school, to sort of, like, change that. And this professor is very interesting because she is also perfectly bilingual. So she was the only person who could identify the problem that I had. And I later started calling this on my blog 'the perfect bilingual problem', where you are so good at both languages that you stop thinking and you just, like, become a robot and you just turn one thing to the other. And so the prose that you end up with this very flat, very kind of like stepped up its energy. it's very not interesting. And you read these books and you're like, when I read these books I am like, why do I not remember anything? And it was really interesting when she said, my professor, professor [00:49:32] **Me Nan Yong** [0.1s] of Seoul National University, when she said it's interesting because a lot of the Korean students whose English is not necessarily good actually get very good grades because they have struggled with the text so much that they actually end up with really great ideas. And it affects them profoundly. And so they end up writing these like really amazing papers. And so, yeah, I think this relates to your question and to what I think about when sometimes it seems like, sometimes fluency can be the enemy of creativity, actually.

**Interviewer** [00:50:05] Well, I. I get that 100 percent. And one of the things that I'm trying to talk about in my thesis is that I'm trying to defend the use of the term exophony, at least that was the initial idea. This is changing, you know, throughout the PhD. But the whole thing about exophony would be that it focuses more on creativity rather than fluency. Like I've read many studies about L2 translation that kind of want to prove that it's the same thing and it's as good as and it is as fluent as or that people cannot identify whether the translator is a native speaker or not. But that goes against my idea. You know, I want to talk about creativity in translation and writing. That's why I added this question here. Thank you for that. It was lovely. I do agree with you with the fluency and creativity, kind of the enemies of each other.

**Interviewer** [00:50:59] Yeah. Sorry. Please.

**T01** [00:51:04] Go ahead.

**Interviewer** [00:51:05] Do you also do creative writing outside of your translation practice? If so, is it only in Korean or do you experiment with English? How do you feel your creative writing relates to your translation practice?

**T01** [00:51:20] Oh yeah, I wanted to be a writer before I wanted to be a translator and I still write. And I actually I have written a novel and it's been queried. I had an agent and then I fired him and now I'm looking for another agent. But so. Yeah, definitely writing. Like all readers. Not all readers, but most readers, I feel, like, eventually they kind of like want to do more than just read. So they're kind of, like, writing becomes like a response to all the reading that they've been doing. So, yeah. So the goal is still to to do both, to write and translate. Sorry what was the second part of your question? How does translating inform, how does writing inform translation?

**Interviewer** [00:52:09] Yeah. How does your creative writing relate to your translation practice?

**T01** [00:52:18] I'm not sure if this would be true for everyone, it is definitely true for me, where there is a really great poet named Lee Seong Bok in Korea. And he wrote this book about writing poetry and it's written completely in verse. And one of verses is writing poetry

is about getting out of your own way. And that means that you kind of have to, like, shut up. And it's a weird sensation where you kind of have to be quiet and listen to what this voice is saying what the language inside of you is saying. And then try to write that down and try to get out of your own way and not edit it. And just like try to get it out. And so that's a very mysterious process where I don't know where this writing comes from. It comes from. It's basically automatic writing and at the end, after so many pages, it's a novel. And so that's what happened to me when I wrote this novel. And it's the same with translation. The best moments I have with translation is when I'm completely immersed in it. And that means I kind of disappear and I'm reading the Korean and I can hear the English like I can hear it. And then I'm like frantically writing down the English as it comes. But the moment I try to like, edit it or I, to read over the English once more. I'm like, oh, why did I use that expression and whatnot, then it becomes.. then it kind of like breaks down. So it's a very kind of delicate thing where you are getting out of your own way and listening to the language inside of you. So to me, that's a very creative thing that comes from the subconscious. And I'm a firm believer that a lot of translation is subconscious, although I'm totally, totally fascinated by translation theory and I respect it, and, but for me personally, like my experience of translation, it's always been kind of... It's a very subconscious process and a very creative process. It's just like writing. I can't really quite explain, like, what happens. I just get out of my way and my brain just like produces this language. So it's yeah. It's similar in that sense.

**Interviewer** [00:54:38] I think I agree with you in the sense that I do also. Well obviously I'm doing a PhD in translation, so I do respect and read a lot of translation theory. And when I was in my undergrad in translation as well, I thought, well, when am I ever gonna use any of this theory? Because when I'm practicing translation, I don't. Well, I don't think I have this in mind. Like, at least at the forefront of my mind. But I think it is somewhere deep down there in some kind of sub conscious stage of your mind that you have that in mind somehow. But obviously the creative part is a different... But obviously I think it informs you, informs your practice, even if we don't feel that it is informing. That's my opinion. I don't want to influence you.

**T01** [00:55:34] I totally agree with you. It is. Yeah it is very kind of, it's very creative. And, you know, just, again, my translator friend, So J Lee, she has this magazine called, she publishes this e-zine called CHOGWA. And she basically has like eight people translate the same poem. And then we compare the eight translations, and they are very different and very dramatically different. And they're all very personal. And yet they're the same poem as well as every edition is like a super fascinating look into how creative translation is and what an art it is.

**Interviewer** [00:56:17] That's interesting. That's into Korean or into English.

**T01** [00:56:22] That's into English.

**Interviewer** [00:56:23] Okay.

**T01** [00:56:24] But I think the next edition is going to be guest edited by Norman Erikson Pasaribu. It's going to be one Indonesian poem translated into several versions of English.

**Interviewer** [00:56:35] Oh, nice.

**T01** [00:56:36] It should still be very exciting.

**Interviewer** [00:56:38] Yeah. I'm going to check that out. Thank you for that. So I think that this relates to what we've been talking about. These are the the last questions now. Did you have any... So this is a long question, bear with me. Did you have any formal translation training? If so, did it include different translation directions? If you did receive training in different directions, has there been a change in the direction that you practiced since completing your training? Do you still translate in both directions, in only one or in one much more than another? I think the last part you already answered. But the first part is focused on the translation training.

**T01** [00:57:21] Sure. So I have been formally trained. I majored in... So, I was not formally trained in college. I was formally trained at the literary translation institute of Korea. Because they have a translation academy. And so for a year, I took their full time course translating Korean into English under a Professor [00:57:46] **Hyun Jong**, [0.4s] who is currently at the Ewha University Graduate School of Interpretation and translation. I'm sorry, graduate school of Translation and Interpretation. Translation comes first. As it should. And then I took four years of part time course, part time translation workshop with Sora Kim Russell, who's a very prominent Korean translator. So yeah, I actually had quite a lot of formal training. But it was mostly workshops. We learned almost, well, we learned pretty much zero theory, although I went out and read books on theory, I read Umberto Eco's really great book. And otherwise, like, you know, I was a law major. I double majored in psychology. And then I have an open university degree in French where I did not take a translation course. And I went to graduate school for English literature, where I did poetry. I was not doing any translation. But like many children, like I'm sure you were as well. I was interpreting for my parents as a child.

**Interviewer** [00:58:59] Yeah.

**T01** [00:59:00] A lot of us get our start like that, right?

**Interviewer** [00:59:03] Yes. That was my case. And I still do that. My dad, when he comes visit me here, he knows English. That's the thing. But he's just lazy and he wants me to do it for him. And I'm like, oh, yeah, I'm a full time interpreter now whenever I'm with him.

**T01** [00:59:22] Yeah. Exactly.

**Interviewer** [00:59:24] So you did have translation training and did it... was it in both directions or more into English or more into Korean...

**T01** [00:59:32] So the training that I had was into English. But like all the work that I did, because all of my professional life has been in translation since graduating college. Like all of the professional work has been, it has been basically Korean- English, English-Korean, like fairly even split.

**Interviewer** [00:59:48] Okay, good. So this is just for statistical purposes. Are you a member of a professional association? And if so, which one?

**T01** [01:00:00] Oh, yes, several. Actually three. So ALTA. And Translators Association, which is part of the Society of Authors in the U.K. and Authors Guild.

**Interviewer** [01:00:15] Ok, ok, good. Thank you. Well, I think we reached the end of the prepared questions. But if you want to add anything to what you've said so far, comment on any of the questions that, you know, feel free to do that.



**T01** [01:00:32] No, it's a very thorough interview.

**Interviewer** [01:00:36] Thank you.

**T01** [01:00:37] Very good questions. So you're getting your PhD there. And so I assume your goal is to become, to be an academic.

**Interviewer** [01:00:50] Well, that's the thing. I've trained my whole life to be an academic. My mom was a professor. I come from a very overachieving family in which all you...

**T01** [01:01:03] Good for you guys.

**Interviewer** [01:01:04] Yeah. Well, it's very rare in Brazil, obviously, and for many people in my generation that I not only had a mother who had graduated, had gone to university, but also a grandmother. So that's very rare. I know in many cases it is very rare. And my family's like they're high on, like, intellectualism. And I have three...my mom had six siblings. Three of them are university professors in Brazil, which is a big deal because it's a great career to have. And that's how I grew up. Like, I grew up going to conferences and, you know, doing all of that. So it's kind of like Second Nature to me to be an academic, although coming here and seeing how the academic job market and the academic context is in England, for example, which is where I am right now, I don't, I'm not sure if that's going to be a reality. As I said, in Brazil, being a professor is like you are a public officer and you have a really good career. You have freedom to... Even though you sometimes don't have a lot of funding because, you know, it's a public university. But also we have freedom to do our research to, you know, be it like... I don't know how to explain it. It's not casualised. It's very different from the situation here. So I don't know if I'll follow that. Depends on, you know, the options. But I do know that I seem to be good at that. At least I seem to be a natural at that. But I do like writing and I do like translating literature. I have translated Yoko Tawada's novel *Etüden im Schnee*, *Memoirs of a Polar Bear* into Portuguese, and that was published last year. And I really liked the process and I do translate. But obviously for magazines or something like smaller ones. But I would like to be a full time literary translator. I do do translation that's not literary, like, you know, for a living. We need to pay the rent and everything. But yeah, I think I might follow that path. Well, it depends on the options, you know, especially after the pandemic. I don't know what will happen with most things, to be honest.

**T01** [01:03:28] Yeah.

**Interviewer** [01:03:29] So that's my issue. Mm hmm.

**T01** [01:03:33] I mean, when you're young and educated and the world is your oyster.

**Interviewer** [01:03:38] Yeah. Well, at least now that was what was promised us, I mean, I don't know if you have the same, but you commented that in Korea it is kind of a similar situation. But in Brazil, you hear all the time that you're only gonna be someone in life if you know a foreign language, if you learn a foreign language. And then I did learn and I had German and English and Spanish. And then people like would tell me all the world is your oyster, like, you know, you go and do whatever you want. But that's not the reality, really. And even though I am privileged, I am white and, you know, at least, you know, even though I am Brazilian, but I look very German. So it opens many, many doors. But I'm also a woman. So that has other implications, right? Yeah. So that's the current. The

big thing is just that my mom was a linguistics, a phonology professor and she passed away three years ago. Four years ago. Oh, four years ago. of Cancer. And then I'm an only child. So and my mom, her dream was always to go and do a degree like a PhD abroad somewhere. And she never managed to do that because I was born and I was like kind of in the middle of that. So that was kind of like my dream and my mom's dream kind of mixed. And then I'll see what I'll do after...

**T01** [01:05:03] Yeah, yeah, you never know, they'll still need professors. If that's the route that you want to go and being a translator. [coughs] Sorry, being a translator has been a really good life.

**Interviewer** [01:05:21] Yeah, I like that. I like that life, too. To be honest

**T01** [01:05:26] Yeah, it's not just the translation, although that's obviously the purpose of it, but just getting jobs, finding clients. It's all really fun and dynamic.

**Interviewer** [01:05:35] Yeah.

**T01** [01:05:36] And I knew that I would miss it if I became a professor. And also like I'm a very mean person [laughs] so it would be hard to be a professor. Like when I was teaching, I tried to [01:05:54]reel it in [0.2s] so much because people kept telling me that I was very intimidating. This profession is like, I'm trying not to [01:06:02]be a bitch [0.6s] right now.

**Interviewer** [01:06:05] Well, I get that. And I was gonna say one thing that I notice... That's why my whole thesis is about that is that I learned, like in undergraduate course, we had translation modules, like, practical translation modules, and we had in both directions actually we had the same amount of modules in Portuguese into English, English into Portuguese. And that was, like, we did a lot of L2 translation in the course, and most of them were really good, actually. And then I came here and reading more translation theory only in English or translated into English. And it was a shock to me that people really think that you shouldn't do that. You shouldn't translate into a second language. And I'm like, well, but we've been doing that for such a long time. And then you start looking into like Brazilian literature, translated into English, for example, especially into English. And it's just like these gringos that come live for like two years and Brazil in Rio, do some samba and then they... Not just, okay. I know that there's a really good translators out there of Portuguese.

**T01** [01:07:12] I know exactly what you mean. I mean, we know.

**Interviewer** [01:07:14] You know what I mean. Right? Yeah. And I've got a bit annoyed that we have good translators here, in Brazil, that can write and translate into English, but they are not the ones that are, you know, kind of spreading the word about Brazilian literature elsewhere. So I got a bit angry about that. So that's what drove my thesis forward.

**T01** [01:07:39] You are doing God's work right now.

**Interviewer** [01:07:42] Thank you.

**T01** [01:07:45] Yeah. [laughs] [unintelligible]

**Interviewer** [01:07:47] You've been a lovely participant. I'm going to have so much fun transcribing this interview, and I might need help with some of the names that you mentioned, because I did take one semester of Korean, but a very messy, no, I don't count that because it was this free thing from the language society at uni. And it was so messy because there were people from all different levels. And I was like a complete beginner. But I did learn...I thought it was fascinating and, you know. Anyway, you might need to help me in the transcription. With some of them.

**T01** [01:08:25] Yeah. Any follow up questions, just keep e-mailing me and I will keep answering them.

**Interviewer** [01:08:30] Thank you so much. I hope I didn't take too much of your time. And I'll probably email you, and if you have any suggestions of other translators like you that you would think would like to participate in this. Please let me know and I will invite them as well.

**T01** [01:08:47] Okay. I'll keep an eye out.

**Interviewer** [01:08:50] Okay, good. Thank you so much. Have a lovely weekend and we'll keep in touch and...

**T01** [01:08:57] Yeah. Have a good weekend, too.

**Interviewer** [01:09:00] Thank you. Bye.

**T01** [01:09:02] You're welcome, bye.

•

## Interview T02.mp4

**Interviewer** [00:02:16] Do you have any comments on the questionnaire, something you would like to add?

**T02** [00:02:22] No, nothing at the moment.

**Interviewer** [00:02:23] Okay. So we can start the interview if you want. So, a lot of the questions are, kind of, clustered, so they have like, it's not just one question, it's kind of a set of questions together..

**T02** [00:02:41] Yes. Sure.

**Interviewer** [00:02:42] So, you're free to, you know, talk as much as you want. and it's an open-ended questionnaire of sorts, and if you have any questions about the questions, you can ask me, obviously.

**T02** [00:02:57] Okay, but I'd be quite happy and comfortable if you set the pace and ask the questions. If I want to digress then I T02, thank you for giving me that freedom, but I am happy for you, the researcher to simply ask what you want, basically...

**Interviewer** [00:03:12] Good, good. Yeah, I just don't want you to feel like, uhm, well, this is a conversation but obviously there are questions that I need to ask anyway, but feel no pressure, this is not a strict environment or anything, I want you to feel comfortable and, well, welcome to talk as much as you want.

**T02** [00:03:28] Excellent

**Interviewer** [00:03:29] So the first set of questions is, kind of, the theme is approaches to languages. So it's a bit more general about your language skills and background. Do you consider that you have a mother tongue, a first language, or more than one? If so, which one(s)? If not, why not?

**T02** [00:03:50] Okay, so this is partly, well, it's partly duplicating some of the questions that were in the form, in the questionnaire, but then again you didn't ask there which languages so this is going into a bit more detail, on the questions you already asked, I guess. I don't think about these issues terribly much, that's part of an answer, I am not terribly dogmatic, I don't think, I do consider that, whether mother tongue is the best term I don't know, but I do have a language which I consider my first language, if you'd like, quite definitely and that's English, sometimes I say the Australian variant of English, which is closer to British than American, uhm, but when I think about it I realise that everyone changes and develops in the course of their lives and I have a lot in a linguistic sense, as well, in that my English perhaps wasn't completely formed, it wasn't really, sort of, stable and well-developed when I left Australia when I was 22 and I've lived abroad ever since, in modern English-speaking environments, for example, a lot of spelling and punctuation rules weren't really clear to me when I left, so I sort of started unconsciously adopting German rules and Russian rules and things like that, which I didn't realise at the time, and here's a generalisation for you: I think my English, although it's very deep inside me, has become a little bit weak or wobbly or, there are areas of terminology, for example, where I am not firm at all in English, where I am much better in German, for example, which is my everyday language, I call that my language number 2. Second Language. Ahm, then again

in German there are things that I haven't experienced, for example, a childhood in Germany, so I am not terribly good on... although I have a child and I am interested in Children's Literature, I don't know terribly much about German Children's Literature, and all the little games and sayings. I've learned a bit of that but that wasn't part of my own personal formation, if you see what I mean, so I just want to say with Mother Tongues and other tongues or first language, second language, third, etc it's wrong, of course, to categorise things in a hierarchy because you need to look at the skills that a real person has, and how they are changing, so yeah, that is how I consider it. Is that enough as an answer?

**Interviewer** [00:06:22] Yes, that's perfect. Actually, you are more than welcome to criticise or talk about the choice of a specific term. I did put mother tongue because the pool of participants that I am drawing from, they are varied in their knowledge of Linguistics terms and or their acceptance of mother tongue, first language, etc, so that's why I put those, like, more general terms, but you're more than welcome to criticise it if you don't agree with a term and why, so that was perfect, thank you.

**T02** [00:06:54] Ok, just tell me, I am curious, how many informants or interviewees do you have?

**Interviewer** [00:06:59] So, among those that have confirmed and those that already, who, you know, expressed an interest, I have around 20, but I am more than happy to get more, it's a slow process because it's not that easy to find that specific type of translator who is T02ing also to be interviewed so I am slowly collecting some more names.

**T02** [00:07:27] Well, I do, one reason I am asking is because a colleague occurred to me the other day who might be interested, so I'll discuss that with her a little bit more and I T02 discuss it with her a little bit more and I'll pass her contact details.

**Interviewer** [00:07:37] Thank you. That would be perfect, actually.

**T02** [00:07:40] If it works out, I can't say it (laughs)

**Interviewer** [00:07:42] Yeah, no, but it's good to have, you know, because that's how I've gathered all the participants, they either e-mailed me or one participant knew of someone else and recommended me, so that's how, this is how my sampling worked out.

**T02** [00:08:00] Right.

**Interviewer** [00:08:02] So, this second question I think you also, kind of, answered, but feel free to talk more about it, What is your language of education? Is it different from your mother tongue?

**T02** [00:08:15] In this case it's not, language of my education, it's primarily English, plus one postgraduate year in ex-Yugoslavia, so there's a bit of Serbo-Croatian there, and one academic year in the Soviet Union when it was still the Soviet Union, so there's a year of Russian there, so that's all of my primary, secondary and tertiary education, predominantly English, yeah..

**Interviewer** [00:08:38] Do you translate into a non-mother tongue or a second language? If so, what is your experience of it?

**T02** [00:08:46] Right. I thought you were going to focus on this, uhm, I translate from several languages into English, Eastern European languages, predominantly, in the past I did a lot of German to English, and English to German, but English for several years has been my sole target language, I have translated quite a bit into German, not only from English but also from Macedonian, in fact, I think I sent you a pdf of one of my translations, the last one I did, das achte Weltwunder, and, so Russian, Macedonian, a bit of Serbo-Croatian and Esperanto quite a bit over the years, I've got four book-size translations to my name, and there's a fair bit that I can say about those individual projects, maybe I can try and generalise, so you're interested in my translations into a foreign language?

**Interviewer** [00:09:41] Yeah, mostly.

**T02** [00:09:44] Ok, so maybe I should focus on the books rather than the whole plethora of little articles and essays and short stories and stuff because that would make it a bit too unwieldy (laughs) So there were three novels and one book of short stories, three from Macedonian, one from Russian, first of the four big projects was in 1993 10:07 uhm, and the last was in 2015, which is the one I sent you from the publisher in Leipzig. uhm, 3 of those 4 projects were fairly regular paid projects, one was done on Sveq, that was the book of short stories which I thought was really [00:10:27] great. [0.0s] And so I translated it in my short time and finally found a publisher but didn't earn a Deutsche mark on it or a Euro or whatever. What other aspects are there? I mean, there are all sorts. How the finding of the publisher went, whether my particular constellation of skills and my name were a problem there. I mean, well, what are we going to look at next? Can you help me? What's the next aspect we should look at that affects us?

**Interviewer** [00:10:53] I'm just asking you so, like, you already kind of answered by listing specific examples of cases in which you did that kind of translation in a different direction than what is quote unquote expected. So that's more than enough. Don't worry.

**T02** [00:11:11] Okay, good. Let's move on then. If that's enough. So, ideally I'd like to finish by five. That's 4:00 p.m. your time. But if we go over, that's okay.

**Interviewer** [00:11:21] No. Yeah we T02. Yeah. Don't worry. This is more than, don't worry, It T02 be over by then. So how would you describe your relationship to the languages you can speak/write/translate in or out of?

**T02** [00:11:36] I sort of understand the question, but what exactly do you mean? How would I describe the way I relate to them?

**Interviewer** [00:11:44] Oh, I think you already kind of answer this but, like...

**T02** [00:11:48] Do you mean, how at home I feel in them or what.

**Interviewer** [00:11:51] And like, you feel more comfortable with one or the other or like you learned one in this specific context or you have this more, you use one more for specific things and you feel more, you know...

**T02** [00:12:03] Okay, I've got you. I feel very at home in all or almost all situations with English and German and then with the other four languages, which I say are my languages in quotation marks. It varies a lot depending on where I am, what I've been doing, who I am with, what the subject area is. For example, three of the languages are Slavic languages, which are fairly closely related. Russian, Serbo-Croatian and

Macedonian. Perhaps a bit like Spanish, Portuguese and French, maybe. And if I've been spending, for example, a month in one of the countries of ex Yugoslavia and then someone rings up and I'm expected to speak Russian... You see, the trouble with me is I started learning the languages at a similar phase in my life at a similar time. And I think because of their similarity, they're probably in a similar part of my gray cells and I find it very difficult to separate them at an active spoken level. So if this Russian person rings up, I'll be stuttering around, talking some kind of pan-Slavic [00:13:17]gobbledygook [0.0s] because I find it difficult to separate them. If I've spent.. I haven't been to Russia for quite a few years. But, you know, if I spend a month or two in Russia, I'll have the opposite situation where I'll be more at home in the Russian, if you see what I mean. So that's the problem I have at the active level, at a passive level, it's not such a problem. In terms of reading, writing, translating, but at the active level, they do certainly compete for my mental resources, if you like.

**Interviewer** [00:13:46] Yeah, that's perfect. Thank you for that. Have you ever been able to express something in a language that is not your first language more satisfactory? How so?

**T02** [00:13:58] Are you talking in general or in a particular translation?

**Interviewer** [00:14:02] It could be in general, but if you want to give me an example of a translation, that would be okay.

**T02** [00:14:11] What can I say here... I'm sometimes surprised. I like to write... I like to correspond with people. I like to translate as well. And I'm really happy when I can express myself in a way that makes my counterpart or the person I'm communicating with laugh or smile or say, "that's witty" or "I hadn't thought of that". So being able to simply express myself in some nuanced, original way and I'm able to do that occasionally in, for example, in Serbo-Croatian, which I have a fairly good grasp of now because it's been my main working language for 10 years now. I am sometimes surprised and happy at how nuanced I can express myself there, in English and German sometimes as well, of course. Macedonian is my baby language. It's the one I perhaps speak the least well of the six. And I don't know if I've had that sort of moment of elation in Macedonian, but I have it in Russian sometimes, I have it in Esperanto, Serbo-Croatian, English and German, obviously. So yeah. Yeah. I think it's that sort of moment of successful communication with another person that makes me think, yeah, I'm part of this, this is part of me. I'm living this language, if you see what I mean.

**Interviewer** [00:15:33] Yeah. Yeah. That's, that's, that's nice. Yeah. I have, I have the same feeling, not obviously with the languages you mentioned because I don't know all of them, but yeah I know what you mean.

**T02** [00:15:42] So what are your languages other than Portuguese and English.

**Interviewer** [00:15:45] Well I know German, And I can read and I can speak Spanish but I need a little bit of warming up because it's very similar to Portuguese and sometimes gets mixed up in with all the other foreign languages in my brain. Yeah. Spanish I would say as well. I have a good grasp of Italian like especially like more passive knowledge. I can understand it, also because they're very similar to Portuguese. So you know, if you read a lot in one language, you kind of start, you know, understanding what's going on in the others. Obviously not enough to translate like literature or anything. but yeah, I kind of understand what you mean. So this next section is about directionality more specifically.

**T02** [00:16:34] Yep.

**Interviewer** [00:16:35] So what is the difference for you between both or more directions of translation? How would you describe your translation process and the types of challenge, both linguistic or otherwise, when you are translating into a first language or and into a foreign language, second language?

**T02** [00:16:56] Good question. I'm not sure I can give a concise answer. I should've prepared myself for this a bit better, perhaps.

**Interviewer** [00:17:02] No. Don't worry.

**T02** [00:17:07] I'm not aware. I'm thinking aloud here. I don't think there's any really definite clear pattern of problems or issues that I have. Obviously, there are difficulties. Obviously, there are things I don't know or can't do terribly well or efficiently. I think a lot of it's to do with practice and use. For example, if I've been working in a particular combination intensively, like, let's say from Serbo-Croatian into English, I'll have a lot of those connections, the phrase, as what you can translate one to one and what you can't, etc. I'll have a lot of that sort of at the front of my mind. And even if I switched then to another combination that I know fairly well, take Russian to English. Despite the similarities between the two Slavic languages I've mentioned, I won't be sort of on my toes and won't have that same sort of immediacy and fluency and skill. It's as if having recent practice makes all the difference. And then if I switch to another combination that's not quite as well oiled, the machinery can really creak. [laughs]

**Interviewer** [00:18:14] Yeah, well, it's interesting what you said, because so would you say that what makes a difference is not necessarily the target language being a second language to you? But the specific direction from one to the other, the combination of languages.

**T02** [00:18:29] That's right. That's right. Well, Yes, yes. That's definitely the case with me. But I think yeah, obviously, because German is rather like my second rather than my first language, it is always a bit harder for me translating into German. I still have slight problems with the articles Der, Die, Das and prepositions occasionally. So I remember when I first started translating a fair bit of Macedonian into German, I had a lot of Russian dominating because I had used a lot of sort of Russian to German earlier in my adult life. That's receded and sort of the Slavic languages have taken over. I'm not really sure what to say. Nothing really comes to mind.

**Interviewer** [00:19:19] That's perfect, actually. Thank you so much.

**T02** [00:19:21] OK.

**Interviewer** [00:19:22] Do you have any preferred genres or text types for L2 translation specifically? How, if at all, do they differ from your L1 translation practice?

**T02** [00:19:32] No, I don't have any any differences there between L1 and L2. I can tell you about my preferences, but no. There's no difference. Difference.

**Interviewer** [00:19:39] No difference in the directionality.



**T02** [00:19:41] No, no. No.

**Interviewer** [00:19:44] Are there any that you prefer not to translate?

**T02** [00:19:48] Yes. But that's not to do with L1 and L2. That makes no difference.

**Interviewer** [00:19:52] Feel free to tell me if you want.

**T02** [00:19:54] Well, simply my individual preference. I like short stories. I'm not a fan of drama and theater. I've never translated drama texts. For example, I translate mainly novels. But I was never a bookworm as a child. I mean, I read and my parents encouraged me to read, but I was always slow to develop good reading habits. Maybe I don't even have good reading habits now. Novels, for example, if I had a choice between translating a collection of short stories and translating a novel, I would definitely go for the short stories unless they were obnoxiously, I don't know, sexist, nationalist, racist or something like that simply because I feel more comfortable with that...now is that genre? Or is that the type of text?

**Interviewer** [00:20:41] It's more genre I guess.

**T02** [00:20:43] Okay.

**Interviewer** [00:20:44] Some people have different, you know, different uses of the terminology like, they prefer text type. But yeah, I get it, like, it's a genre. It's a literary genre, that you like more of short fiction than.

**T02** [00:21:00] Short fiction. Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:21:02] Ok, cool. So the next section is about market and gatekeeping.

**T02** [00:21:07] Mm hmm.

**Interviewer** [00:21:08] Has your translation work been criticized, rejected or disregarded because you are you are not a native speaker of the target language, in this case, German or?

**T02** [00:21:19] Yeah, I think it definitely has. But I say I think because we're dealing with prejudices here, largely with prejudice rather than... I mean, how do you objectively assess a literary translation? It's hard, even if the reviewer or the critic knows both of the languages, which is often not the case with my small exotic languages, even then, how are they going to judge? So I think a lot of the criticism, a lot of the prejudice that I think I've experienced is about subjective perceptions and it is almost impossible to prove or quantify. So what I'm saying now, I perhaps do have a bit of an ax to grind after experiencing what I think is prejudice for a number of years, but. I wouldn't be able to document it.

**Interviewer** [00:22:08] Yeah, I know. Yeah. This is all from your perception of, like.

**T02** [00:22:13] Yeah. S.

**Interviewer** [00:22:15] more than the usual criticism of your translation work, specifically because of your first, second language.

**T02** [00:22:25] Yeah. There are several aspects to it. One is me having a non-German name. So a reviewer T02 probably... not all reviewers have latched onto that. But some have. There was one really nasty review where the reviewer made snide remarks about, oh, German is a hard language, isn't it? And stuff like that, which I felt particularly peeved by. He didn't like the book. He didn't like the translation. But saying stuff like that, sounds very hurtful and unnecessary. but, um, I'm just thinking now of some colleagues here in Germany who were born in ex-Yugoslavia but have German surnames because they've married a German usually. And my suspicion is that they have had a bit easier.

**Interviewer** [00:23:11] Ah, ok..

**T02** [00:23:12] In terms of getting work and in terms of being acknowledged for the work they do, but they haven't always had it easy. And I think maybe their character, how they speak and what they do and stuff, that also plays a role. So I'm not saying that that's sort of the golden mean, the way to be accepted here in Germany. I've had different experiences there. I don't know if you've heard of the Deutsche Übersetzerfonds which subsidizes translators' work. And I have had a very good run of applications, I've applied for three grants two translation grants and one travel grant. And although their approval rating is apparently only 40 percent, I was successful in each case and I made no bones about being a non German. It was all sort of Macedonian to German projects and they were very happy to support me. And I'm just wondering why... [laughs] That was very good. And also the publisher in 1993, when I translated this Russian novel from Russian into German, it didn't seem to be an issue that I was a non German. It could have been because the wall had come down. The East Bloc was dissolving. Maybe this publisher in Frankfurt in West Germany was relieved to find a translator at all who translate from Russian and English that there was an English translation, that all of the notes were still in Russian. So they wanted someone who could cover English and Russian and translate into German. And maybe they were just so happy to have found me that they didn't express any misgivings that they had and then I have had some, sort of, neutral experiences with publishers and reviewers where they've been a bit more noncommittal or opportunistic or whatever. And some negative ones as well, and the most negative thing I can generalize it, but have you heard of [00:25:06] **tradukey?** [0.0s]

**Interviewer** [00:25:09] Not that I know of, no.

**T02** [00:25:11] Not to be confused with Trados or other computer programs like that, **tradukey**, is a network of over, I think, over 20 institutions in Central and Eastern Europe, which funds translations, organizes tours with readers, subsidizes publishers and stuff. So it's a bit of a motor for publishing in eastern and southeastern Europe, supported by the cultural institutions of Austria, Germany, Switzerland, et cetera, and for some reason, I probably got into their bad books at some stage, possibly simply through prejudice rather than a translation that had been poor, that had received a negative review. They T02 never give me any work. I'm convinced. They've had multiple opportunities. And that's this negative perception of me, which once again, I can't prove, but seems to be there, is one big reason why I don't think I'll ever be able to... Just imagine all of my work into English folded. I don't think I'd ever be able to make up by having translations into German because this crucial funding body has some problem with me. And it's never been spoken why, and it's not clear why. But it must be prejudice.

**Interviewer** [00:26:30] Oh, I'm sorry for that.

**T02** [00:26:32] It's okay. Luckily, I have more than enough. I have a glut of work translating into English, so, at the moment I don't mind, but it could potentially be a problem. And I've still got a good 15 years working ahead of me until I reach pension age. And I hope I don't have to rely on translations into German like that because it wouldn't work simply for this reason I've mentioned.

**Interviewer** [00:26:52] Yeah, well. And this ties with this question as well. Have you ever been overcorrected on a linguistic choice or a specific form that was consciously made by you?

**T02** [00:27:08] I can't say that I have. Obviously, I've been corrected, every translator into, whatever their skill level and their language combination does get suggestions made by an editor. And no, no, I think I've had basically good experiences there. Fruitful. fruitful, that's a Germanism, isn't it, creative collaboration. Good feedback. Helpful Comments that make me find another version where what they suggest isn't good either, but, you know, it takes me onto a new solution. No, no, I can't complain there.

**Interviewer** [00:27:41] This comes from this...This question comes from the notion of Obrigkeitdeutsch. That authors who write in German like Yoko Tawada, Franco Biondi, have talked about this in which they were corrected on something that was actually a choice they made. It wasn't a grammar mistake or a stylistical...something that was inadequate. They made that consciously and they wanted to create or say something through that. So that's why I ask. Because that can happen as well.

**T02** [00:28:18] No, I haven't experienced that, fortunately.

**Interviewer** [00:28:21] So the next set is on creative writing, fluency in translation. How do you view the relationship between fluency and creativity in the languages you use?

**T02** [00:28:34] I think there is a definite link there. I haven't thought about this. This is the first time anyone has asked me that question or have read about this. I'm thinking aloud again. I think the extent that, and I won't generalize about other people because I don't know, the extent that I also use the language or the languages creatively does very much open up the possibilities for a good, flexible, expressive translation. There's a definite link there. For example, I don't just translate into German, but also use German well, as an everyday language, obviously. But I am on and off, I write articles for my union paper, sometimes for the professional association. I used to produce the crossword for the back page of the union paper for 16 years, running six times a year. And the other year it was really lovely, a publisher in Stuttgart discovered these and said, how about we put out a collection of them? I was absolutely chuffed. And so although I'm not a native speaker, I got a real thrill and it became my main hobby for the best part of 20 years, constructing crosswords for other people to enjoy and struggle with. So it's... obviously a lot of that's technical, mechanical even, fitting the words into a sort of a structure so that they fit and it makes sense and so on. But also thinking up witty questions and putting little joke jokes and puns into the hints and stuff like that. I think if I didn't do that, if I didn't have that playfulness at an everyday level, at a cultural level, perhaps my translations into that language, into German, wouldn't be as good.

**Interviewer** [00:30:27] Yes, that's perfect. Do you also do creative writing outside of your translation practice? If so...

**T02** [00:30:34] No, no, I wouldn't call that creative writing. Creative writing really suggests to me fiction.

**Interviewer** [00:30:40] Okay. Yeah,.

**T02** [00:30:41] I do write a lot, but it's... well, apart from correspondence with, you know, friends and acquaintances and stuff, the crosswords... I mean, what I've written for sort of union, and leftist publications over the years has more been about work-related struggles of politics, unions, language policy, a lot of it to do with Esperanto, a lot of it to do with the languages of ex-Yugoslavia. So it's more, if you like, applied social sciences or political sciences or stuff like that. So I wouldn't... Maybe you call it creative writing. There is a degree of creativity that goes into writing anything in a way that's going to appeal to the reader. But it's not what I think most people understand under creative writing, which is writing fiction.

**Interviewer** [00:31:28] Or you could say it's creative nonfiction, which is a whole other...

**T02** [00:31:33] I like that definition.

**Interviewer** [00:31:34] Yeah, there is this definition which I find it fits so many different texts that we write. Yeah. So you definitely do creative nonfiction then and you said you experiment with different languages. You write in German, in Esperanto you said..

**T02** [00:31:51] Yes. Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:31:53] So how do you feel this create this creative writing or the creative nonfiction writing relates to your translation practice?

**T02** [00:32:03] Not directly, more at a background or passive level of keeping me mentally agile and interested and curious, playful. So there is a link. But I think it's more sort of diffuse. And in the background.

**Interviewer** [00:32:23] So then the last couple questions are about training and professional status. So the first question is like a cluster one. So it's it's long. Bear with me.

**T02** [00:32:33] OK, I T02.

**Interviewer** [00:32:35] Did you have formal translation training? If so, did it include different translation directions. If you did research receive training in different translation directions, has there been a change in the direction that you practiced since completing your training? Do you still translate in both directions or more, in only one, or in one much more than the other?

**T02** [00:32:57] OK. The answer to the first question is no. In fact, translation studies in any shape or form were not introduced in Australia until after I left the country. I left in eighty seven and I think they were introduced in the early 90s at a university in Melbourne. And I did my first exams to be qualified as a translator for German to English, English to German in the mid 80s. But there was no.. There were a few guidelines for preparation, but there was no training at all. And even with my other language combinations, which I subsequently qualified for, like Macedonian - English, Russian - English, Serbo-Croatian - English. I didn't have any training. So I don't I don't know if the other questions that follow are relevant or not.

**Interviewer** [00:33:46] Well, yeah, well, you answered, they were kind of clustered to the first one. Yeah.

**T02** [00:33:53] I don't have much, I haven't had any, any academic training or even any real academic experience since nineteen, mid 1990 when I finished my postgraduate year in Russia. So, but I am very much aware of the need to hone my skills, to further develop my skills to, what's the word, to preserve the skills that I've got, vocabulary work and all sorts of other things. At an informal level. And it's good that the professional associations that exist, well, the ones that I'm a member of, that they have several offers and that they provide opportunities for further development. But no, nothing structured, nothing education-like.

**Interviewer** [00:34:36] Well, I ask this because, for example, in different countries where we come from, there T02 be different systems of translation training, for example, in Brazil. I did my undergrad in translation English and Brazilian Portuguese, and we had the same amount of modules for translating into English and translating into Portuguese. So for us, like, doing my undergrad degree, we thought we were perfectly able to translate in both directions. That didn't make, it makes a difference, but we train for both in the same amount and then I come here and in English, in the Anglophone translation studies, there is a lot of them don't even have a training or say that it's translating into English. So into their first language. And in the universities in Spain, they have very strong translation courses, and they also do both directions. So that's why I asked, because this T02 also depend on where you come from and your own experience with translation

**T02** [00:35:41] Right. Well, I've told you my experience. I came from Australia where none of that existed basically in the 80s and moved into professional freelancing in the early 90s and haven't really had the time or the opportunity or the need to do that kind of training. I mean, it would have been a time and yeah, money issue. As a young, struggling father and translator, I mean, it was never important enough. So, no, I can't answer this question. There are two loose ends here. I don't know where to tie them in. Do you want me to leave? I'll make a note. You want me to leave them for later? Not sure exactly where they fit in. Let's keep going with the questions.

**Interviewer** [00:36:18] There's just another one. But you can at the end, you can add things that you wanted to add that.

**T02** [00:36:24] Yes. Let's do it at the end.

**Interviewer** [00:36:25] So the last one, the last proper question is, I think you're kind of already answered, but I wanted to know which ones. Are you a member of a professional association? Which one?

**T02** [00:36:38] Yeah, I used to be a member of the Australian Professional Association, AUSIT, but I left it several years ago and switched to the Translators Association in Britain, which I've been a member of since I think 2015. So Translators Association UK and the VDU in Germany. Have you heard of it? VDU?

**Interviewer** [00:37:06] Yes.

**T02** [00:37:07] [00:37:07] **Verband der Übersetzer Wissenschaftlicher und Literarischer Werke...** [0.3s] a long title.

**Interviewer** [00:37:11] Yeah, no, I've heard of it. Yeah.

**T02** [00:37:13] And I've been I've been a member of that for much longer, since the mid 90s.

**Interviewer** [00:37:18] OK. Yeah. Good to know. Well do you want, do you want to take this time now to add anything that you wanted to add.

**T02** [00:37:27] Yeah. Just two things I guess. One is... I thought of it when you mentioned your experience of coming to the UK and of the translator training, focusing a lot more on translations into English rather than in the other direction as well. If I got you right.

**Interviewer** [00:37:43] Yeah.

**T02** [00:37:44] And that made me think of a comment that a Bosnian translator made a year or so ago. He translated a subsequent book of an author who had already translated a Bosnian writer. And this fellow was very competent in English. And he made the remark, which I found a bit arrogant at first, but then again, I thought, he's probably right. He says: To be a good translator into whatever language, you have to have an equal mastery of the other language in the pair. And I'm not sure I agree with him. I think I felt... He's a very self-confident guy. And I thought this was him sort of tooting his own English skills a bit. But, I mean, being a good translator depends on a lot of things, but I'm sure there is no disadvantage in having a really, really, really good mastery of both languages. Of course, that would be great. I don't claim to have mastery of some of my Slavic languages, but it doesn't mean I'm not a good translator. But still. But when you said what you said, it made me think of this fellow's comment and I wonder about that. And I don't really have a clear opinion.

**Interviewer** [00:39:03] Yeah, I understand your problems with it...

**T02** [00:39:06] I sometimes have mild self doubts about not having a perfect mastery of Macedonian, for example. But it doesn't stop me from translating from it and doing translations which other people sometimes think are very good. So I don't let it bug me too much.

**Interviewer** [00:39:24] I do think that that self-doubt is important. I think we all need to have that because otherwise we're talking about ideal translators and not real ones.

**T02** [00:39:33] Yes, well,.

**Interviewer** [00:39:34] We are people and we have, you know, I don't think I am that good in Portuguese even. And like, you know, and sometimes I think, well, this is the language I grew up speaking. And I should know more of that. And then, you know, you're always doubting yourself. And I think that's good.

**T02** [00:39:49] Yeah, well, it is a bit. I see what you mean. I meant self-doubt in a more negative way of really sort of fearing I'm perhaps not competent to do this, but I sort of agree that it's good to always challenge your own assumptions and challenge your own perception of what's a good translation, of what sounds good. And so and so. I often like to, you know the bit about when you're reviewing one of your own translations, it helps to set it in a different typeface? So if you've done the translation in times New Roman, set it

in Arial or something else. And it's sometimes incredibly... Sometimes it changes your perspective a bit or, do things after you've had a bottle of beer or... you know, you are much more relaxed when you read the translation, when you've got a bit of alcohol in your system, although there are different strategies, or what I find helps is when I think of an older esteemed colleague or maybe a friend who I am a bit uncomfortable with or an older relative, I think of some kind of figure of... This is going to sound silly, but authority sort of sitting in the back of my mind and that person being a critical reviewer of what I'm doing. So I'll be putting the finishing touches on a translation and I'll be trying to see the translation through that other person's eyes rather than mine and I find that helps as well. Okay. I don't know where that fits in to say that. Yeah, it... so what do we call it. Self... not self critique. Self self doubt.

**Interviewer** [00:41:26] Self doubt. Yeah, well I think we all suffer from it. I definitely do suffer from it. And yeah, I also have that very negative one. I keep it's kind of, it's imposter syndrome that I... I translated Yoko Tawada's Etüden im Schnee from German into, it was published in Portuguese last year in Brazil and I still think that I don't know enough German, my German is not good enough. You know, I am always doubtful. So yeah. And I think that's important. And also Tawada herself says that even the use of words such as to master, mastery is a bit like... Do we ever master a language? Because it's not ours to master. We are not the masters of the language. You know, we just we just live with it and through it. And, you know, I but, you know,.

**T02** [00:42:21] I agree fully. And although I did use the word mastery myself, I agree.

**Interviewer** [00:42:25] No. No. Yeah. Well, you were also talking about his own statement and that kind of, a lot of these kind of statements contain words like, you know, to master, to dominate, you know. And that's more than, you know, that's our kind of dialect, we use these words, sometimes without thinking. But I like how she criticized this idea.

**T02** [00:42:49] Right.

**Interviewer** [00:42:50] Sorry, I'm talking more than you...

**T02** [00:42:53] No, that's all right. That's all right. Congratulations on that. When I Googled you a while ago, I saw that this translation had been published in Brazil. So that's good. Another thing under your belt. Yeah. The other thing I wanted to mention is simply, um, the mirror image or the back side. Oh no. What's the word? Like I said, I think I may have been sort of cumulatively this advantage to put in Germany through not being a native speaker and stuff like that and not having a German name and sort of those superficial things being used to judge me and my work more than the quality of the work itself, okay. However, obviously that sort of prejudice exists in other countries, in other environments. You've experienced it in Britain. And I think the fact that I do have an Anglo surname and I am an English native speaker has helped me get established with translations into English, whereas there, like this Bosnian guy, he is very competent in English, but maybe he won't make it with a big British or American publishers because he has a Bosnian name and a Bosnian surname. And they'll be probably. Yeah. A little bit prejudiced about him.

**Interviewer** [00:44:16] Yeah.

**T02** [00:44:17] So to an extent I may have been disadvantaged in Germany, but I guess I have that native speaker bonus when I approach publishers in the US or Britain or Canada or whoever.

**Interviewer** [00:44:28] Yeah. So I think we reached the end of our chat.

**T02** [00:44:37] Okay, good.

**Interviewer** [00:44:37] Any more questions. Obviously if you want to add anything, you feel free to do so. But this is the end. And I'm, I'm sorry if I... It's still it's not yet five, for you. So we're still okay.

**T02** [00:44:52] Okay. I don't I don't have anything really urgent to say or to add. I guess there's this one issue that we could briefly speak about, I don't know how relevant it is. I don't know if I mentioned it when I sent you the PDF of this Macedonian to German translation, this *das achte Weltwunder*. It's the second translation I've done which has got translators' notes at the end of it. It's not like an introduction. It's really looking at the nitty gritty and explaining why I made particular decisions. There are 20 of them, I think. There used to be 30 and I think 10 of them were a bit too banal or a bit too complex. So we got rid of them. But there's still 20 there. And I did the same thing, well, the publisher suggested I do that with a rather long translation of a short story into English as well. And both publishers said that this is a good way of, you know, being open with your readership, with the audience and showing them what translating is about. And I actually like that. And I think even translating into my second language. I felt fairly self-conscious about it, but I think it's a good thing. And I was happy to go along with the publisher's suggestion of putting these 20 *Anmerkungen des Übersetzers* at the end of the translation, simply to sort of show. Yeah, that the difficult issues, the difficult thoughts and ruminations that go on before you arrive at a decision.

**Interviewer** [00:46:30] That's actually really nice, because most often than not, we don't have that luxury of being able to add the notes. So it's nice to see that. And it T02 be a nice piece, for me to analyze as well. I can read in German and I can use that as well.

**T02** [00:46:49] if you have the time and inclination, have a look at that. I don't know if it does very much for your particular topic, but it's interesting.

**Interviewer** [00:46:57] I mean, I'm always interested in general, so.

**T02** [00:47:00] Right.

**Interviewer** [00:47:01] Thank you. That was a lovely note to end on.

**T02** [00:47:05] Okay. Let's end there. And I'm still available if you have any more questions or issues over the next months. What's the time structure? When's your big deadline?

**Interviewer** [00:47:17] So because of all the Corona crisis and everything that's going on and because translators are often very busy and you know how many. And I have translators all over the world being interviewed. We kind of set up like a very long, very, very long time like window. So we have until like the end of December. So we have enough time to gather all the... To add more participants and set up the interviews.

**T02** [00:47:49] Right. So that's the interview phase until December.



**Interviewer** [00:47:51] Yeah. And I still have like I'm going to also not interview, but I sent questionnaires to publishers and translation students so I would be able to compare different groups. If there is a one unifying thing to a group because, you know, they have different.. Each person is different. So that's part of a bigger scale project that, you know, we interview more people and different agents in this translation world. Well, we'll have time. You know.

**T02** [00:48:24] Okay. Tell me, are you planning to ask any publishers about their policy on whether they would consider engaging a L2 translator for a literary translation? It would be interesting to get some of their sort of upfront statements on this like, no, never. Or it would depend or. Yes, definitely. We think it's even good, you know, just to hear what publishers say.

**Interviewer** [00:48:47] So they T02 be anonymized. So we won't necessarily, like, the reader of the thesis won't know necessarily what publishers saying that. But I T02 ask some of these questions and kind of understand their beliefs surrounding translation. So I'm asking only publishers in English who publish translation, which is, you know, like obviously some of the bigger publishing houses like Penguin. And, you know, it's a bit harder to get in touch with them. But the majority of these are like smaller publishing houses, independent ones. So I got a good response so far, a lot of them accepted to be part of this. And yeah, what part of it I T02 ask them, like, do you do something different when it's an L2 translator? Do you have a different strategy or different policy. So I'll ask them that in the thesis somewhere.

**T02** [00:49:48] Good. Good. All right. Well, good luck and hope to be in touch again.

**Interviewer** [00:49:54] Be safe there. Thank you so much. Just.

**T02** [00:49:56] Take care. You're welcome.

**Interviewer** [00:49:57] Bye bye.

•

## InterviewT03 part 1.mp4

**Interviewer** [00:00:03] And also, my questions are in English, so it's not like I can, I mean, I can try. Anyway. Let's do it in English. How you doing?

**T03** [00:00:11] Yeah. Perfect. I'm good. How are you?

**Interviewer** [00:00:15] I'm OK. Here in the UK, things are, like, looking better now, and we might, I mean, we can see the light at the end of the tunnel. You can imagine that. I mean, in the US and in Brazil, things are not looking that great. So,.

**T03** [00:00:31] Yeah,.

**Interviewer** [00:00:32] I mean, constantly split between, you know, I am here and I'm living here. But at the same time, my mind is also with my family and my friends back in Brazil and obviously worried about them. But I'm trying to do my best.

**T03** [00:00:47] So you have family in Brazil. That's awesome.

**Interviewer** [00:00:50] Yeah. Well, I am Brazilian, like. Born and raised. I. This is the first time I'm living abroad for a longer period. I lived in Germany for a little bit. My mom's family was German, is German, but I am Brazilian through and through. No doubt about that.

**T03** [00:01:11] Oh, well, me too.

**Interviewer** [00:01:15] Well, yeah. So yeah, obviously all my family, my dad actually, my mom's passed away, but my dad is, is back in Brazil and at least he's quarantining and not you know, he's, he's behaving himself and not.

**T03** [00:01:29] Good.

**Interviewer** [00:01:29] leaving the house and so, and.. Where are you, ahm, you live in the US, right?

**T03** [00:01:35] Yes, I live in the US right now in St. Louis,.

**Interviewer** [00:01:40] Is that Missouri, Missourt, right?

**T03** [00:01:41] Missouri. And I kind of hop around the U.S. a lot. I first lived in Vermont. That's where I went to college. Then a little bit in Boston. A couple of years in New York. A couple of years, Couple of years in Iowa. And I've been in St. Louis for a year.

**Interviewer** [00:01:59] You've sort of been everywhere or almost.

**T03** [00:02:03] Minus the East (sic) Coast, but yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:02:07] Well, so I want you to feel comfortable with this. This is an interview, but also, it's a chat. So I didn't want anyone to feel like, you know, there's a right answer. There's a wrong answer. This is just, like, obviously I have questions that I have to get through. But you feel free to, you know, if a question doesn't, you know, doesn't apply to you, you can give me a short answer, but you can also, like, give you can talk for as long as you want. That's basically what I want to say. And you can obviously ask for

clarification if you don't understand the question. Do you have anything to comment on the questionnaire that I sent you, that other one?

**T03** [00:02:52] No, that was good. I did add a quick comment just because with a lot of the questions I was like, yes and no or sometimes yes, sometimes no. So I would end up putting something in the middle so in the comments I added something just like, well, my answers, I think have to do a lot of my particular circumstances. I think, you know, being educated helps having degrees to back me up or publications and stuff. I guess what I mean is I didn't always feel the way I said I did in the questionnaire. The questionnaire is mostly how I feel right now. When I first moved to the U.S., I did feel a little differently. I felt like there was more of a pull to prove something about my English. Yeah. And I also had a lot more self-doubt. Whereas as time has gone by and, you know, I've gone through grad school, I think both I care less about what people think. And I think also that I'm an adult with credentials. You know, people treat me professionally, whereas they didn't really treat me with much respect when I was like 18.

**Interviewer** [00:04:05] Yeah I can imagine that. Yeah. Well, we change. I mean, I change my opinion almost monthly and so someone.

**T03** [00:04:13] Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:04:14] And also some of these are. But it's OK if you are somewhere in between. One answer and the other because, I mean that, that's why I put it in a likert scale so that, the agree, that strongly agree, doesn't agree, disagree and all of that, because it's not, it's not such a there there's not one answer or this one way you should feel about that. But this is just for me to have like a big picture. Obviously, most of my information will come from this interview. So don't worry about that. If you're if you want to add things, you feel free to do that.

**Interviewer** [00:04:50] So the interviews, the questions are some of them are clustered so that they're big questions. That adds to other questions. But I split them into different themes. So I start with approaches to languages, which is where you'll be able to maybe give me a bit of a background on your language learning and your whole history of how you came to be in this position today and how, you know. So this the questions are kind of want that answered, just so you know. So the first one is, do you consider that you have a mother tongue, a first language or more than one? If so, which ones? If not, why not?

**T03** [00:05:40] Oh. So that's a tough one. I do consider that I have a mother tongue, which is Portuguese, but I also think that my concept of mother tongue is not that that language. It must be stronger than all. I think, though I have one mother tongue, Portuguese. I do have two dominant languages, English and Portuguese. I feel like my English is stronger in a professional environment or academic environment than my Portuguese could ever be. For example, my Portuguese is more familial. That kind of thing, because I only really studied up until high school, that kind of thing. So though I do consider Portuguese my mother tongue. It doesn't mean necessarily that it's always my strongest language.

**Interviewer** [00:06:31] Yeah, well, you feel free to comment on or criticize any of the terms that come up, because I added the mother tongue, first language, because not all of the interviewees will be familiar, or will have a specific opinion on these terms. But if you have a problem with any of these, please share your thoughts on them.

**T03** [00:06:52] Yeah. No, I do. I do think I do have a mother tongue. A mother tongue is a useful term. But, you know, the assumption of the mother tongue is always someone's main language is not entirely true for me and for a bunch of people. But yes. So I do think of myself as having two dominant languages as like being fully bilingual. Yeah. And my mother tongue being Portuguese.

**Interviewer** [00:07:14] Yeah. So the second question kind of relates to what you said. It's what's your language of education? Is it different from your mother tongue?

**T03** [00:07:26] yeah, it is. Yeah. So, my literary education has been all in English. So, you know, all the critical theory and whatnot. I've never read that in Portuguese and it shouldn't really matter much. But I do sense a difference. Like I'll be talking to my mom about feminism or something. And I'm constantly grasping for, you know, the words. I'm like, what's that? Basically, I'm translating from English to Portuguese in my head. So whereas I think a lot of my colleagues assume I only do it in the other direction. Like Portuguese to English, I do from English to Portuguese, at times as well.

**Interviewer** [00:08:04] Well, I get that. And I I'm lucky that my dad understands enough English so that sometimes when I'm I'm struggling to, I need to talk about a topic, that sometimes we don't have words for in Portuguese. I mean, there's sometimes that there isn't isn't a word yet in Portuguese for some of these things.

**T03** [00:08:20] Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:08:21] . And he understands. But it's very hard sometimes. Yeah, well, I'm.

**T03** [00:08:25] Totally, yeah, So language of education I consider English.

**Interviewer** [00:08:29] OK, cool. Do you ... This is obvious. I know the answer, but I have to ask anyway. Do you translate into a non mother tongue? If so, what is your experience of it?

**T03** [00:08:40] So I do, in my experience of it. Let me see how I can summarize it. I don't know that when I'm translating, I'm actually thinking about it in terms of foreign or mother tongue, no mother tongue. Mostly I'm thinking about my relationship with that particular text. So, yeah, my experience is not really affected by my nativeness, per say.

**Interviewer** [00:09:06] yeah, well, that makes sense. So you have experience translating into a non-mother tongue then, like that's you.

**T03** [00:09:13] That's what I primarily do. I primarily translate into English from Portuguese and. Yeah. And I, I, I guess when I was very young I was very aware of that, of the fact that I was translating into foreign language. I was like, whoa, can I do this, like. Will someone, Will the cops come or something. [laughs]

**Interviewer** [00:09:37] Yeah.

**T03** [00:09:37] But in grad school when I was just doing my assignments, everyone had their assignments. It really made no difference in that context. And then when I started publishing, I was very passionate about the writers and the texts I was working with. I thought that I could capture something about them in English. That was pretty unique

about, you know, I'm also a writer in English as well. So also in a second language, and I'm very preoccupied with like atmosphere and mood, dialog. Those are some of the things I enjoy writing and that I think I write well. So in those writers, those Brazilian writers, I primarily work with Caio Fernando Abreu right now. His work had been translated, but it felt too 20th century European literature, you know, in the translation, it was too cohesive to flowy. I needed it to be more spoken, more rhythmic, all of that. And that was something I felt that I could do well. So I did it. I translated him. I liked the work I was doing. I, I did think that I could hear something in the Portuguese that was unique to my ear. Maybe only I could hear it at the time. And I also felt that I could transfer that well enough into writing in English. So at that time, there was that shift that I wasn't thinking of. It is like, oh, no, I'm crossing a huge border here. It was, it felt more personal, like it was my relationship with the book, not with the politics of the English language anymore, you know. Yeah. So suddenly I had crossed that threshold. From then on, I've been translating professionally and I've done a couple of his books now, which are still forthcoming, as publishing is so slow. But I finished the books. They come out next year. Then I've started doing others, other books. Yeah. So at this point it almost doesn't matter what language I'm writing in anymore. I feel like, when I am in the book I'm in a land of its own.

**Interviewer** [00:11:45] Mm hmm. Yeah. Well, I get that. And thank you for doing that work because I kind of agree with you. Some Brazilian authors, when they get translated, it kind of, they adapt, adapted too much to kind of this sense of fluency and having to sound English.

**T03** [00:12:06] Mm hmm.

**Interviewer** [00:12:07] And then it kind of erases the Brazilianness, not the Brazilianness as if that's a thing. It's not a thing. But some of....

**T03** [00:12:15] What is unique about their aesthetic or their style

**Interviewer** [00:12:18] Yeah, yeah. That's a yeah. That's what I meant.

**T03** [00:12:21] Yeah, sure. Mm hmm.

**Interviewer** [00:12:23] How would you describe your relationship to the languages you can speak, write, translate, in, Out of.

**T03** [00:12:31] So Portuguese for me I think. It feels like a really close friend, like childhood friend or like a relative. I have a sister who's younger than me and because she's my sister and I'm her sister. We know each other in the best light and also in the worst light. You know? We've seen each other being ridiculous and doing embarrassing things and fighting with our parents and celebrating, you know, everything, all of it. I feel a little bit, that's my relationship with Portuguese. I have good memories and bad memories in it. I've seen it do beautiful things and also some pretty painful things. And yeah, so it feels that way. So more or less, I guess what I'm saying is I associate Portuguese with my lived experiences in it. And, you know, every argument I've had with my parents, every time I talk to my grandma and we said we loved each other, like all those memories kind of taint the experience of the language for me a little bit. So, yeah, I think of Portuguese as like a sibling or a parent, you know, someone I love. And I have those issues with, not, Yeah. Not an unambiguous relationship, partly because I think... So I'm from the northeast of Brazil. And so Portuguese has become, I think, heavy with a lot of connotations for me for that reason. I have a particular accent, for example. I do sound a certain way, and I've

mentioned this to some of my American friends, that when I speak Portuguese, people might point out my accent and they are like, no way. That can't be possible. Like, no, totally. I have an accent in every language I speak. And then, anyways, I was doing a, I was moderating a talk at the public library in Iowa with a bunch of great people. It was me, John Keane and Katrina Dodson. So this was so exciting, you know. And then this Brazilian woman, who is also a writer, I think she writes in English, was in the audience and of all things. And when she came to talk to me, she commented on my accent, she was like, well, you talk so funny in Portuguese. And then all my classmates, my friends who were there were like "Ha! You were right. That's a hundred percent true". You did say that if you ever came across a Brazilian person, they would say that. I was like I told you I wasn't lying. So, yeah. So Portuguese has a little bit of baggage, you know, that's one of them. The fact that I sound a certain way. Another baggage I have is that I'm constantly bothered by the. Occasional callous sexism or homophobia in it. My father is gay and I grew up hearing all kinds of slurs, you know, and stuff like that. And they're just entrenched in the language, it's not necessarily because people mean to be offensive in any given time. So, yeah. That's my relationship with Portuguese. Love it to pieces. Have questions about my belonging in it. I also later went to Portugal and Lisbon and whatnot, felt like, oh, I'm going to study Portuguese, I'm going to, I was there to study literature and I was like, I'm going to belong so completely. And it was very clear to me that I was an outsider in that sense, too. Yeah. So many layers of belonging and not belonging. There's also the fact that when I go back home now, I will say things and people will find it really funny or strange. They'll be like, what is that phrase? Ha ha you're so funny. I don't understand it, who would even say that? [laughs] Yeah. So anyways, my relationship to Portuguese has shifted a bunch of times. So my relationship to English has also changed a ton. I've written a few essays about it. But at first it came with economic opportunity, that kind of thing, you know, like, oh, I want to study abroad. This is gonna be a good thing for me, professionally, as a person, etc. It's the kind of thing you don't say no to, especially if you're a poor girl from the northeast of Brazil. But also at the time, I didn't realize how permanent of a decision I was making.

**Interviewer** [00:16:55] Mm hmm.

**T03** [00:16:56] Yeah. So that was my entry point. Like, I wanted to be cosmopolitan and be, you know, in the middle of serious discussions about politics and gender and whatnot. And then I kind of abandoned my political side. I started out wanting to be a journalist, and then I became more and more literary. But yeah, so as I went into the more literary stuff, you know, I fell in love with a bunch of writers I really liked and reread others I'd already loved. And it became more and more as a way for me to be aesthetically the kind of writer I wanted to be without the constraints of this language I had inherited, I felt that with English, I could be strange on the page or take risks or have a style of my own or as in Portuguese, I felt like it was impossible to develop a style because I was already in the style I had inherited that from the way my parents talked, or the way my city communicated, and in English, I felt like I could go anywhere. I could have any accent. I could say whatever thing. I could really play with syntax and break it apart. So more and more, as I took creative writing classes in college, my teachers were like, this is interesting. This is not something I've done before. It's good. Keep doing this. So I ended up going to grad school. I went to NYU for an MFA in creative writing. So I continued writing fiction, at the time I did translation on the side only more towards the end of my writing MFA. I was like, Okay, I want to do translation more seriously. So I published my first little pieces in journals and stuff like that when I was at NYU and then after that I went to Iowa for translation, knowing already that probably I would finish the program with a book or something like that. Like, I was committed to making a career out of that.

**T03** [00:19:04] Yeah. But at first my relationship with English had everything to do with wanting to be a serious writer, but also, a writer who I love to read and I read a ton. But there is still a couple of books that I kept looking for and I couldn't find, you know.

**T03** [00:19:24] Yeah. And that was the style, more or less that I was working in and honing that style. Well, there's no way to divorce that from my relationship to the language anymore. I definitely have an English of my own when I'm writing. You know, that's not either the way I speak or the way I hear other people talking. It's kind of its own genre because I. So, I'm a big form person. My writing had to have a form of its own and that form requires a certain way of talking, etc., etc. I could go on and on. I know writing is not quite the point of the interview, but yeah,.

**Interviewer** [00:20:03] Well, it has a lot. I will, more towards the end. There are some, there's some specific ones about writing, but it's all very interesting. I agree with you and I have also this weird relationship because Portuguese is my mother tongue by all means and all the senses. But at my mom's mother tongue was German and so I had a Brazilian childhood. But at the same time, I also had a very German childhood in Brazil. And so it's a big thing because I have the German from like hearing it. But I didn't learn it properly until I was, until later on. So I have this kind of question I ...when you said about English, I kind of, it reminded me of this quote by, Yoko Tawada says this, she's Japanese and writes in German. Right. And she talks about how sometimes for women to go to a different place, a different language. It kind of there's this sense of this is freedom that comes with it because you can kind of reinvent yourself. Like, for example, for her coming from Japan, going to Germany, the societies, the cultures are very different. So when she came to Germany, she could be this new person, this new woman who, their position in society in Germany is different than in Japan. So and I completely understand that as well. Like here it's you feel freer. And at the same time, this is just about me. Sorry, this is not about me. This is your interview. But I feel that, for example, I was told by people that I'm funnier in Portuguese and in English, and that is, you know, striking for me because it's like, I'd never, I didn't realize that because I feel very comfortable in English, but obviously with the accent and the different kind of ironies and the sarcasm, sometimes I get, you have a different kind of sense of humor, different kind of rhythm. And it kind of I don't know how to explain that, but I, I totally understand that is like different relations and I like that you you commented on the sibling or parents kind of metaphor or familial romance, you know, because we sometimes link languages to specific, you know, members of our family or friends or, you know, lover or whatever.

**T03** [00:22:26] But sure, and I think, you know, the comparing, I've done a lot of that comparing that you're describing. I think I'm a better writer in English. For example, a better thinker in English, too. But I also think in Portuguese, my, I would like to think I'm funny in both but I think you're right that the sense of humor has to be different. I think in Portuguese, for example, my sense of humor is more risqué. Like I say, inappropriate things, you know, for fun. I take those kinds of risks whereas in English, my sense of humor is just more witty in a little bit more well behaved.

**Interviewer** [00:23:06] Yeah.

[00:23:06] You know, there are differences. I'm often comparing that. But Yeah. English very much. I totally agree with what Tawada said. English for me came with a kind of freedom like the thing about being a writer from the Northeast, that kind of thing. When writing in Portuguese, I was often wondering, like is this a word that everyone uses, or is

this regional like that kind of thing. Whereas in English I was unrestrained. I was like, I don't have to write a North-Eastern novel. I can write about whatever I want. In the end, I am writing a North-Eastern novel in Brazil in the same, you know, but not because I must, because I chose to, that kind of thing.

**Interviewer** [00:23:47] Yeah, I think I get it. I mean, I do think that I for example, when I speak English, you can you can hear my Brazilian accent. But for example, I'm from the South, I'm from Porto Alegre. And obviously we don't have the prejudice that people from North East suffer from. But we have, it's a very strong accent, very different, kind of almost a dialect, like, we have so many different words. I'm sure you understand that. You also have very different words from like the center, like São Paulo and Rio. So kind of like I get that because it seems that all writing from the South, for example, is regional literature. Whereas if you are writing from the south east, it's Brazilian literature.

**T03** [00:24:31] Absolutely.

**Interviewer** [00:24:32] Which is problematic. It doesn't happen. That happens in English as well, but not for us, I guess, because we are not.

**T03** [00:24:39] Not for us.

**Interviewer** [00:24:40] Yeah, exactly. So if you are from a specific place in... Sorry?

**T03** [00:24:45] Yeah. I'm under pressure and quickly, I guess I understood that if I wrote in English, I would be an international writer. But if I wrote in Portuguese, I'll be an North-Eastern writer.

**Interviewer** [00:24:56] Yeah.

**T03** [00:24:57] Yeah. So, you know, at this point, I mean, then, you know, after grad school, like, I got an agent, I started publishing fiction and my translation journey has been very much like walking hand in hand with my experiences as a writer, too. Even though writers I choose have something to do with my own writing as well. Caio Fernando Abreu, who I translate, is also from Porto Alegre.

**Interviewer** [00:25:22] Yeah.

**T03** [00:25:23] Yeah. I know a ton about, you know, his way of speaking, that kind of thing. And I love that he can sound so much like himself. But I never felt I could do that in Portuguese without sounding either. Like I try. I'm putting on a façade or, you know, it was too complicated. I kind of evaded that problem altogether. Wrote in English. Where other problems emerge. For sure. [laughs]

**T03** [00:25:54] But but I felt like at least stylistically I could, I had freedom. And then I had a different kind of freedom. The freedom of having a support system, mentorship, a university that gave me money, let's be real. Just studying literature. Whereas in Brazil I didn't have, you know, that kind of venue. I didn't know any other writers. I'm from Natal, you know, it's a different kind of place. Whereas being in New York or being in, I was at Bennington College in Vermont, all my professors were well-known writers. I studied with, you know, Zadie Smith and Amy Hempel and so and so. Yeah, I don't know. So when I was going through with I didn't think of it as being like, oh, here's an opportunity. I should take it. It just kind of presented itself in front of me. And I wanted to be a writer, not



necessarily in English. But I wanted to be a writer and the opportunity I did have to study writing was in English. And then suddenly now I am a better writer in English.

**Interviewer** [00:26:59] Yeah. These programs are much stronger and, like, they are growing now in Brazil. But I studied Letras, right. So like languages, translation and literature. But there wasn't, the creative writing aspect wasn't very strong in it. Like obviously a lot of these students were wannabe writers as well. But it's something that they did in their spare time. There wasn't any mentorship kind of scheme or anything like that. But now, there are some more of these type of courses. But obviously in the US and or in the English speaking world, there is more of this structure with the MFAs and the writing mentorships. So that's, it's good. I'm happy. I'm glad you found that space to do it.

**T03** [00:27:41] And I found it when I was pretty young. I was 18 when I moved and but, you know, so, over time I found funding. I. Every school I've gone to, I did go because I had a full ride, you know. Yeah. So I found funding. I found opportunities. And then later I got grants and whatnot. And now I do it full time. So more or less, I don't know that I would be able to sustain the kind of lifestyle I have, which is just around literature, back home. You know, I found a way to do this only here and in this particular context. So I kept doing it. So now English has become kind of my whole life. Yeah. And then I also have Spanish. I studied it in college because being Latin American was important to me. And I wanted to study Latin American studies or have a greater sense of my place in the world, you know, and where I belong. So I studied somewhat American history and politics and stuff like that. And I took three years of Spanish. Now my Spanish is mostly retired. But yeah,.

**Interviewer** [00:28:50] I mean, when you go to the U.S., I guess it's stronger but here as well. Before I went, before I came here, I didn't feel, I didn't because I'm very white and kind of German-y. So I never thought of myself as looking very Brazilian in the obvious kind of stereotypical way. And when I first went to the US, this woman in the store was all "because you're Latina, right?" And I'm like, I never felt myself as Latina. Obviously we are. And this is, that's why you kind of feel more like a, almost an ambassador or kind of.

**T03** [00:29:25] Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:29:26] So you have more curiosity to learn, to know more about Spanish and more about the rest of Latin America when you're outside of Brazil.

[00:29:35] Totally. Yeah. I had also never thought of myself as Latina because of course, I'm not thinking of myself when I'm going about my day. Oh, my, I am in Latin America? No, I'm thinking, oh, I'm at home, I'm in my neighborhood, you know. Yeah. But totally. People would constantly be like, Oh, you're Latina. Or quickly they would inform me what my identity should be.

**Interviewer** [00:29:59] Yeah.

**T03** [00:29:59] Yeah. I studied, you know, quite a bit of Latin American stuff. I studied a little bit of French. But that never quite took off. I even spent a little time abroad in Morocco and whatnot. And I took two semesters of French, but never quite was dedicated to it the way I was to Spanish. Yeah. All my languages.

**Interviewer** [00:30:20] All the languages. Yeah. So I think this next one you kind of already answered but you can, you can just repeat and you know, Have you ever been

able to express something in a language that is not your first language more satisfactorily. How so?

**T03** [00:30:38] Yeah, totally, I have. I do it all the time. I think it comes with, I am significantly more well read in English than I am in Portuguese. I have more access to a wider variety of books in English as well. Right. I can read all kinds of literatures, all kinds of thoughts in English, whereas in Portuguese, partly because here I live right next to both a public library and a university library. You know, I can read whatever I want. Even books in Portuguese I can bring here. In Portuguese, in my hometown at least, I felt pretty confined. I both didn't have access to as many books because they're not available in that language. But also physically, I didn't have a venue where I could go and get a hold of a copy. So yeah, in English I'm just plainly more well educated and. Yeah. And I think that it shows in my writing. So there are tons of topics I am I feel I can express more satisfactorily in English. I can talk about literature, any kind of politics or current events or. Yeah. Anything academic in English. I teach a translation class. I can't even imagine teaching that class in Portuguese. I'd have to do quite a bit of research to even know how to say [00:32:05]stuff, gloss [0.6s] or foreignising, you know, that kind of thing.

**Interviewer** [00:32:11] Yeah. Yeah, I get that. So the next block of questions is more specifically to do with directionality so, different directions of translation. So this first one is a bit of a cluster question. Bear with me. What is the difference for you between both or more directions of translation if there is one? How would you describe your translation process and types of challenge, linguistic or otherwise, when you are translating into a mother tongue versus into a foreign language, or second language?

**T03** [00:32:48] So in Portuguese, I, what I've noticed when I'm translating from English to Portuguese that I will go with my instincts even when my instincts are wrong. I just go with it. I don't look up stuff as much and there it goes and then an editor might catch later that I actually have quite a few things that weren't right. Whereas in English I am very cautious because when I first started out, you know, I got in that habit of looking everything up, checking etymology, checking if there are references there that I'm not catching to other literary texts or anything, if there are echoes of any other text in it. All that kind of research work that I got used to doing in college, I do it to this day. I have so many references, books, dictionaries. And whatnot. You know, I'm checking everything at all times. In Portuguese, I'm not. Both because I don't have all the reference books with me, the way I have in English, but also because I never quite got in the habit of being quite so bookish. I just go with my gut and hope it's great. It sounds nice. It sounds right. [laughs] So I've noticed that difference in my process. I also don't translate into Portuguese that often. I've done a couple of texts recently and I hadn't done that in ages. And when I did like [00:34:18]the specimen/spes motel(?), [0.2s] I was like, whoa, this is easier than I thought it would be. This is fun. I thought it was going to be impossible. And, you know, it's not. It's fine. I can do just fine.

**Interviewer** [00:34:30] Do you think that's an advantage for you, the fact that when you translate into English, you are more aware and more cautious. Is that an advantage you think? Like, does it make the text better because you are more attentive to it.

**T03** [00:34:45] I think it might. I think I am. Yeah, probably. I do think I'm a better translator. I read it out loud a lot more. You know, like I need it to sing, I need it to be perfect. That can't hurt. Well, I guess it can, but it doesn't. Yeah, I think I'm a better translator. And because also my my training as a writer is in English and stuff. I am more aware of like syntax and stuff like that in ways that in Portuguese I'm like, oh I don't know

enough about should this thing come at the end of the sentence or the middle or the beginning. I'm going to wing it and say it goes here, whereas in English, it might be a little bit more deliberate.

**Interviewer** [00:35:30] OK. So do you have any preferred genres or text types for L2 translation? How, if at all, do they differ from your L1 translation practice? Please explain the reasons for this.

**T03** [00:35:46] So for both L1 and L2, I like lyrical or language driven text. You know, less plotty, more like texts where the language matters. The way that things are being told really matters, because that's what I enjoy doing. Like playing play doh with language. This is all into English. I've done short stories, pretty lyrical, compact, short stories. I've also done dialogue-heavy short stories, almost like plays. I really like working the dialog. And I've also done poetry. So I've done essays like both more academic and more personal. But I don't like them as much. Usually when I do essays, it's because they were commissioned.

**Interviewer** [00:36:37] OK. But you have between them any preferred genre or do you like them all equally?

**T03** [00:36:44] Yeah. Those are all the ones I like. I like them equally. I have a ton of fun with poetry and I have a ton of fun with language-heavy short stories. I have yet to find a novel, that I love, to translate. I mean, as a reader, I find a bunch because novels need to move forward right there. They have that forward motion that sometimes makes the language less heavy. I like heavy language. I like language that needs to be labored. So, yeah. So I've had better luck with short stories and poetry. In Portuguese, into Portuguese, into my L1 I've done poetry and also lyrical fiction. Right now I'm doing a little novel, but I don't know if commercial concerns, you know, are relevant for you. But a big reason to, that I don't translate into Portuguese often is because of the way that publishing works there. The publishers choose the books and hire translators randomly.

**Interviewer** [00:37:48] Yeah.

**T03** [00:37:49] Whereas in the US, translators choose books and pitch to presses, they bring them to the publishers. So I have a lot more creative control over what kinds of texts I'll be working with, whereas in Portuguese you are an in-house translator, like a staff, and you can get whatever book that publisher wants to give you. They might give you a lovely little novel one month and then a diet book the next. So I don't quite, I can't see myself doing that. So I have avoided working with Brazilian publishers. In the end, at this point, I don't know that I will ever really translate a full-length volume into Portuguese because of those constraints. Not because of my taste or anything.

**Interviewer** [00:38:36] It's a bit like this closed club, I find, because I studied translation in my undergrad in Brazil and everyone, a lot of the people there got into translation because they wanted to be literary translators. And they now are technical translators. And I myself have done a lot of technical translation because they keep telling you it's really hard to get into these little clubs that the Brazilian publishers have. And I got lucky. The book I translated, the novel by Yoko Tawada, memoirs of a polar bear. She knew about my project. She knew that I was doing it for my masters. And she, when this random publishing house bought the rights to publish this in Brazil, she contacted them and said, I want this translation to be the one published.

**T03** [00:39:33] that's awesome, was it Todavia?

**Interviewer** [00:39:37] Todavia. Yeah. Yeah.

**T03** [00:39:38] I didn't realize you did that book. Congrats. That's amazing.

**Interviewer** [00:39:41] Thank you. Yeah. It was part of my master's work. Yeah. I got lucky because a lot of the times you don't have....

**T03** [00:39:52] You got to choose, you got to do the thing that I said It's so hard.

**Interviewer** [00:39:54] Yeah, exactly. But then I even told them I don't know how much I can talk about this here. I even told them, like, you know, if you need me for anything else, you know, I thought "I am in now". I mean, now I am a published translator. I worked for this publishing house. So now I'm in. You know, and I offered, like, you know, I can translate from English, from German. You know, I'm here. Think of me. But they never called me again. I don't know what's, except I got lucky. I think I got a little window and I got lucky that Tawada was very nice and email them saying, like, I want Interviewer's translation to be the one published. But anyway,.

**T03** [00:40:33] That's lovely. And that's so nice of her because a lot of writers don't, you know, are not particular, don't care, that kind of thing. Well, that's awesome. I'm happy for you. Yeah, I've tried. You know, I'm like Todavia I would love to work with you. But particular books. It's just not how it works unless you have Tawada endorsing you personally. That's just hard to get.

**Interviewer** [00:40:55] I completely get it. And it's just like you're like, I can do the work. Please think of me. And then it's really hard to get in. I had a professor telling me that she was translating from German and she came to this publishing house in Porto Alegre and she was like, you know, I can translate. I have this new experimental translation of Kafka to offer you just fresh out of grad school here. And then they were like, yeah, but we have Lia Luft.

**T03** [00:41:21] Oh, great.

**Interviewer** [00:41:22] as a German translator so we're not looking for, like, new fresh out of college kids to translate things. And it's like, OK, yeah, well they have this established author translators, in-house translators. And that is much harder to get in also because the translation market is stronger I guess in Brazil, because the market is so much, we have a larger percentage of translated books in the Brazilian market. So it's kind of.

**T03** [00:41:50] A lot more than in the English language. Totally.

**Interviewer** [00:41:54] Yeah.

**T03** [00:41:54] And even if I did, say if I became an in-house translator, then the editor would give me books to translate, books that I don't want to translate.

**Interviewer** [00:42:04] Yeah. Yeah.

**T03** [00:42:05] So I'm not I mean, I'm in this privileged position at this point in my career that I'm not looking for a job translating just any book. I would like to work with books that I

like and in English I already have the opportunity to choose that. So why make myself go translate, you know, random stuff they're giving me that I've never even heard of. Or I might get lucky and have something I love or I might not. And I might get a random book and suddenly I'm translating David Foster Wallace. Please don't. I don't want to do that. It's too much. [laughs]

**Interviewer** [00:42:39] I mean, I think in the in a sense, you work as, in the context that you are in your work more as the agent also not only the translator, but you have to kind of pitch yourself or the book. This book is worthy to be published in English. Please think about,.

**T03** [00:42:56] Yeah, and you know, talking with presses in the U.S. like right now for Caio Fernando Abreu, my press is Archipelago,.

**Interviewer** [00:43:04] Oh.

**T03** [00:43:04] You know, and yeah. So I work with Archipelago and And Other Stories in the UK. Yes. But with these presses, with And Other Stories, this was never even an issue. They never questioned my background, but with Archipelago when I had coffee with their editor, to pitch, I had pitched her the book over email. Then we met in person. She didn't question, you know, my English per se, ever. She would never do anything like that. But she did ask. Oh, just curious, when did you start writing in English? How did you end up where you are now? So it's interesting that I mean, of course, like, I understand why people ask these questions, but yeah, I did have to explain, oh you know, I went to this school and then that school and then that school, and she's like, oh, my God. Amazing. So you've been in very literary schools, in selective literary schools, basically for your whole adult life. Great. Let's publish this. So I'm pretty aware of how much weight, you know, having those names next to mine gave to my. Yeah. Like, it makes me reliable more as I don't know that without saying " oh, I studied with so and so", with all the namedropping it would hold water. My passion would be enough. I don't know. I will never find out I guess. But I do wonder.

**Interviewer** [00:44:26] So the last question in this session, there's some more. Sorry. It's a long interview. Are there any genres or text types that you prefer not to translate or that you refuse to translate?

**T03** [00:44:42] That I refused to translate. I don't know. No genre, But there are certainly authors, like styles of authors, for example. I'm not that interested in doing like, say, a big Brazilian politician wrote some dumb autobiography or something. And I wouldn't be really into it. I wouldn't do it, probably, unless it paid a significant amount. But I know it doesn't. So probably I won't do it.

**Interviewer** [00:45:14] Well, would you publish, would you translate Temer's book of poetry into English? [laughs]

**T03** [00:45:21] [laughs] No, absolutely n... I mean, if you gave me a couple million I would, but, no, I would not. I would be doing it for the money alone. And in that case, it's got to be a hefty amount of money. Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:45:35] Yeah.

[00:45:36] So there are kinds of things like that. You know, I'm not a, I wouldn't translate Trump's book, like, I'm just not interested. Hell, probably wouldn't even translate Hillary Clinton's either. It's not just because of the political leaning. I just think it's really boring. It's partisan. It's boring, it's self-aggrandizing for them. I'm not into it, that kind of thing. I would not look forward to translating a detective novel or anything like that. But if I got an offer, I would do it. I've done all kinds of random things, like I do quite a few translat... Most of my translations are literary. But I do the occasional commercial stuff for magazines, like, I do subtitles for Vogue videos. So they'll be like, this is Anita talking about whatever. Can you subtitle it for us? I do those with pleasure. But because they're short, I can do in a day. It's like a 15 minute video. I don't think I would like to do it if it was something I had to do everyday.

**Interviewer** [00:46:36] Yeah. Yeah. I get that.

**T03** [00:46:40] It's nice. I learned quite a few skincare tricks from translating celebrities.

**Interviewer** [00:46:48] You learn some.

**T03** [00:46:48] Like to wear sunscreen. That's nice.

**Interviewer** [00:46:52] So the next session is about market and gatekeeping. You also commented on this before, but you can, feel free to talk more about it. So has your translation work been criticized, rejected or disregarded because you are not a native speaker of the target language?

**T03** [00:47:11] It has not been rejected officially. I think I've been pretty lucky. I've had a lot of luck publishing both in journals and with presses, but on occasion it has been criticized. Yes. A couple of instances come to mind. One, I did, so ALTA, the American Literary Translators Association. They have this fellowship at their conference. I was a fellow in 2016. In 2016. And the way it works is the fellows do a big reading right before the keynote speakers, the keynote address. And it's like a nice night of festivities. It's a really lovely as an emerging translator. It is specifically for people who are newer, new-ish to translation. Yeah. And the keynote speaker that year was Lydia Davis. It was awesome. And I was very excited. I was very proud of the work I read that night. It was a short story by Caio Fernando Abreu that I had just published in Words Without Borders at the time. So I was thrilled. I was so happy. Anyways, I did the reading. Afterward, this Portuguese language translator of some renown came to me and in front of everyone was like, I noticed you have an accent. I'm like, Yes, I do. Yes. Good observation. Wow. If you hadn't said that... And he was like, then, don't you think in that case you need a co-translator, you shouldn't do this on your own, because once I was translating Lispector and she said,.

**Interviewer** [00:48:48] Oh,.

**T03** [00:48:49] I know, he said that she mentioned Morro dos Ventos Uivantes, And I translated that as "howling winds" because I'd never heard that. See, had I been a native speaker of Portuguese, I would have known that she was referring to Wuthering Heights by the Bronte sisters, you know, by Charlotte Bronte. But I didn't know that because I'm not a native speaker, so I translated that wrong as howling winds. You see, I should have had a co-translator, so I told him, well, unlike you, I just happened to have read literature in both languages. How the hell do you not know that is Bronte's novel. And what I mean. So I had, you know, Some comeback, but I was still humiliated. It was terrible. And everyone else was like, Susan Bernofsky was there and she was. "Oh, come on, please. Come on

here, what's your name again?" And she was so sweet and she was like, "Oh, come have drinks with us", blah, blah, blah. She tried to make my day...

**Interviewer** [00:49:51] I mean, when I went to New York two years ago, I went just as a tourist with my dad. But then I emailed her and I was like, listen, I translated the same book that you did. The Tawada one. And I was like, could we maybe meet? And then I met her in Columbia. Her room there, her office and we talked. It was just just so nice. But I mean, I don't want to get, mention names here, but I know who the guy that you met, that you said criticized you. I have. I'm 90 percent, 99 percent certain I know who it is. And there's this whole polemic around this person.

**T03** [00:50:31] you know, I know, it is not actually that famous guy.

**Interviewer** [00:50:38] It was Not?

**T03** [00:50:38] As much as I dislike him. And I have other problems with him. It was a different Lispector translator, an older one from before the new New Directions series. But Yes, that particular guy. I also have issues with him and he has also been rude to me, but just not that one time. Yeah, it was a different older man. Yeah. But it was so rude. And then another time also at ALTA, I did another reading and Ellen Doré Watson was there. She's amazing. She's translated Adélia Prado, among other books. She's a really good translator. She. Yeah. Anyways, she's also an Elizabeth Bishop scholar. She teaches at the university. She's an editor of a journal, very respected. She read with me. It was her, me, a couple of other translators. And this translator, who is also well-known but from the Spanish, Italian and Romanian, questioned something from my reading. He was like, did you just say that line? That's a weird line. And I'm like, it is a weird line. That is not an accident. I made a choice there. And he was like. But that's strange. I. You're not a native speaker, are you? that line sounds strange, by the way, to my years, a native speaker and then Ellen Doré Watson was like, what are you even talking about? Like, that line was perfect. That line sealed the deal with me. And she kind of took over, started arguing with him. And she was like, oh, I edit this journal. No, in fact, you should, I loved what you read. You should publish with me, blah, blah, blah. So as much as, yes. Those things had happened, I also had found people who were very passionate and came, you know, and interceded on my behalf.

[00:52:22] Yeah. I think it's funny how the the feelings, "feelings" and "Oh, this sounds weird. It just feels weird to me." Are, like, in many ways. And in some of these circles, like, they are more important than the actual research that you've done and or the fact that you have you had thinking behind it or even. It happened to me. They were like "oh, this sounds odd in English" I was like, well it sounds odd in Portuguese as well. What can you do?

**T03** [00:52:49] I know, that's also what Ellen said. And she was like, that is an odd challenging line. I loved the solution you came up with blah, blah, blah. Yeah. So, yeah, totally. I work with odd writers in Portuguese. Let me be strange, you know. So, yeah, that that has happened. Both of those, the instances I mentioned, these were older men like in their 70s maybe. But it has happened with younger translators too, you know. Oh on occasion. But more or less I think as they become more established, I just, it required a lot of patience. As the years go by, I find that people question me less and less.

**Interviewer** [00:53:27] That's good.

**T03** [00:53:28] But it also you think I started to care less. So when they question me now, I kind of don't even remember it anymore.

**Interviewer** [00:53:35] Okay. Yeah, well, it's also good to hear that other people came to your aid and felt that you deserved to be, you know, different somehow.

**T03** [00:53:47] I met great allies that way. So I guess in many ways I owe the bullies for this, I would never have met Susan or, I became close with Esther Allen or other translators, even a professor of mine introduced me to Archipelago. And he also, you know, was someone who was passionate about having someone like me translate the book. So in many ways, there are people there who would think of me as even more qualified, would see my relationship to my languages as an asset.

**Interviewer** [00:54:23] That's good to hear. Well, you deserve it anyway, but.

**T03** [00:54:29] You too. [laughs]

**Interviewer** [00:54:31] the second question is really. Yeah. I think you're also kind of answered it already, it's related to the first, obviously. So have you ever been overcorrected on a linguistic choice or a specific form that was consciously made by you? How so?

**T03** [00:54:47] Yeah, all the time. Also, as a writer, people are like, this not how we say it in English. What I have to tell them is we who? Who is we?

**Interviewer** [00:54:57] Yeah.

[00:54:58] And then I say it in English and I'm saying it here. But of course, I'm usually sweeter than that because God forbid I offend someone. So [laughs] I'm usually like, Oh, thanks. I am aware. I don't know why you think I'm not, but I am aware but I am overcorrected. You know something I remember as a writer once at NYU, someone was like, "Oh, I saw this line and I showed it to my coworker who is also from Brazil." And I'm like, What? Do you show it to a random person? Not in our workshop? "I showed it to this person. And they're like, yeah, totally. Brazilians make this mistake a lot. So here we go. I fixed it for you." And when that guy, the same person who offended me was being workshopped, I had to fight the urge when I caught a mistake to be petty and say, look, I caught a mistake here. I'm pretty sure it's because they're from Seattle. [laughs] I really had to fight the urge. But yeah, that stuff happens. You know, totally. It's usually the kind of person who is not content with just, if they catch a typo or something, fixing the typo. But they also think it's going to be helpful to diagnose the origins of the mistake in front of a whole classroom full of people.

**Interviewer** [00:56:15] Oh, yes.

**T03** [00:56:18] Clearly, their motivation is something that has nothing to do with me. I don't know what compels someone to do that, but it happens. Yeah, I think something to do with reasserting their own place in the world, their own role, their own power.

**Interviewer** [00:56:32] It's a whole linguistic gatekeeping. That's what. Like, you know, they are the gatekeepers. They decide what's right, what's wrong, what's, they need to teach you or something. Well, I added this question because I know that some writers, exophonic writers that, you know, who write in a second language. Tawada, for example,



have suffered from this. When there's a poem that she wrote, it got corrected because of this grammatical inaccuracy. And they were like "Oh, She didn't understand this. And she used the wrong kind of word, the wrong tense". And then she was like, no, I did this on purpose. It was a comment on the German grammar. And this is called by this other author who's Italian and writes in German Franco Biondi. This was called an authority German. So like someone who is a native speaker, kind of has the authority to go and use that force you to kind of.

**T03** [00:57:31] As if they own the language, Right? They are like I'm the one who owns it. And I'm telling you that here are the bounds and you are misbehaving in it. Crossing the bounds as if those are fixed, then I'm like, no, I can't. I can hold the rope too. So I mean in terms of people who have been advocates alongside me and who have made room for me, like Esther Allen, like Susan Bernofsky, like Archipelago Books or And other stories in the UK. I've loved working with them and with Stephan Tobler there, I had a great experience. My literary agent as a writer is also someone who represents other exophonic writers. I'm not the only client like me. She has another which, she has a Turkish writer who lives in France and writes in English. I know there are others. So it's interesting that I guess instead of fighting, you know, with certain people, I've quickly kind of fallen into a community of people who are doing great work. Like in the same vein I am doing it.

**Interviewer** [00:58:44] That's fortunate. So the next cluster is the next set of questions is obviously also you already talked about this. But feel free if you want to add something else to it. So the next set is called Creative Writing Fluency, and Translation. How do you view the relationship between fluency and creativity in the languages you use?

**T03** [00:59:10] Creativity and fluency.

**Interviewer** [00:59:13] I've had one of the participants, not going to reveal the name, saying that he thinks that fluency is the enemy of creativity. And I guess this relates to what we've been talking about as well.

**T03** [00:59:27] Yeah, I think as a translator, I often question this idea of fluency. This idea that if it is fluid, therefore it's superior. Like I mentioned, some of the works I translate don't want to be fluid. It would be an overcorrection if I made them sound, you know, flowy. Yes. So but it's, it doesn't necessarily mean it's against creativity. I'm thinking of writers like Virginia Woolf, like writers who in stream of consciousness, writers whose fluidity has everything to do with them going in unexpected directions. You know? I just think maybe fluidity and creativity are not necessarily related. Yeah, they might be any might not. It really depends on the premise of that particular work.

**Interviewer** [01:00:19] So, yeah. Well, yeah, that that makes sense. And also, there's a difference between fluency and fluidity, you know, so.

**T03** [01:00:27] Totally.

**Interviewer** [01:00:28] Fluency, for example, in the language vs. the text having to sound fluent or sound fluid. You know, I find it interesting that you mentioned this other term. So there's some tensions going on between them.

**T03** [01:00:44] Interviewer, can I ask you a question real quick?

**Interviewer** [01:00:46] Yeah, sure.

**T03** [01:00:47] I just think I have another call.

**Interviewer** [01:00:50] OK.

**T03** [01:00:51] But I really appreciate this conversation we're having. Would it be OK, if I don't know, this is unorthodox. But if I went to my other call and I came back in 30 minutes for us to continue?

**Interviewer** [01:01:02] Yeah. Well, just so you know, we have just, we have three more questions. So just tell me when, and I can set up another meeting. It can be today or any other day. Doesn't matter.

**T03** [01:01:17] I would be fine with doing it today because we're already I'm already thinking about it.

**Interviewer** [01:01:22] OK.

**T03** [01:01:22] So I'm so sorry to do this.

**Interviewer** [01:01:24] No worries. It's gone over an hour anyway.

**T03** [01:01:28] I mean, I what I wanted to keep talking. It's just I have a call about, I'm doing this podcast for the Kenyan review and I have to do a call with them. But they said it's not going to take more than 30 minutes, so.

**Interviewer** [01:01:42] OK.

**T03** [01:01:43] It is 3:00 for me here. What if I. Can we do at 4:00? So in, I guess fifty five minutes.

**Interviewer** [01:01:50] Yeah. Yeah. And I'll send you an invitation like the one that we just had, skype for business and then you can just join the meeting when you're done with your call. But yeah, I will set one up for four o'clock then at 4:00.

**T03** [01:02:08] Yeah. I probably would be done earlier than that but yeah. Good.

**Interviewer** [01:02:11] So there is time if you want to eat something or just take a breather. But let's set it up for like an hour from now.

**T03** [01:02:18] Thank you. Thanks for accommodating me and I'm sorry. I'll be right back.

**Interviewer** [01:02:21] Okay. No worries.

**T03** [01:02:22] More soon. Thank you. Bye bye.

**Interviewer** [00:00:03] Coming back.

**T03** [00:00:04] Yes. Sorry about that.

**Interviewer** [00:00:06] No worries.

**T03** [00:00:09] I'm recording a video chat with another translator for the Kenyon Review. I just don't like the idea of being filmed, but it's going to happen. So, it's going to happen tomorrow. So we had to go over our script real quick today.

**Interviewer** [00:00:24] Well, you mentioned podcast, and I shouldn't talk too much about it in this because this is all being recorded. I'll transcribe all of this later for my thesis, but I started a podcast about Translation, and I would love to have you as a guest if you would be willing, because the podcast is, you know, as this conversation, is not with the image, it's not with your video, it's just voice.

**T03** [00:00:48] Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:00:48] So it's much easier also to edit. And, you know, I think, I've been doing it myself, like alone, kind of recording the episodes in my room in quarantine. But I, I feel that these need to be more of a conversation. Otherwise people get bored of .

**T03** [00:01:05] No, I would love to.

**Interviewer** [00:01:06] Okay, great. Well I'll message you like separately because in everything from my.

**T03** [00:01:13] What is it called. I would love to listen to it too.

**Interviewer** [00:01:15] It's Babel Babble.

**T03** [00:01:17] Oh great name. OK, I'm Googling it.

**Interviewer** [00:01:22] I just started. So there's like two episodes, they're like super short. And it's clear that I'm learning how to do this. But I just got, you know, this feeling that I have been reading some great translated fiction. And because my supervisor is the organizer of the Warwick Women in Translation Award. So every year when the prize is over, I get to go to her office and get a lot of books from her. So I'm very, very fortunate to have that. So I've been reading a lot of books in translation. So I was like, I want to talk about them. But also then I started to think that there's other topics that I think we should talk about. And obviously one of the things I was like, oh my God, but who would want to hear like who would want to listen to me talk about, you know, this? And then I also, like, I couldn't hear myself, but I just I recorded it and I just released it because I'm such a perfectionist. And I, so I think, oh, my God, my accent is horrible my English is horrible, it is gonna be so, like, Cringey and whatever. And I just decided to get started before I, you know, stop procrastinating and, you know, creating all these hurdles, you know.

**T03** [00:02:39] Oh, I'm glad you went ahead. I mean, I guess this is kind of related to our conversation, too, but I'd never done a podcast before. And then I did one last year. And I was so self-conscious of the fact that I had an accent. I had to say my name out loud to introduce myself in the podcast. And I was like, oh, how do I say my name?

**Interviewer** [00:03:04] I know what you mean, because I adapt my name all the time. I say.

**T03** [00:03:08] Me too.

**Interviewer** [00:03:10] because they can never say my name. My name is Lúcia and they always say Lucia Lusha, there's all types of versions of my name. And T03 must be similarly.

**T03** [00:03:20] Saying, yeah. And then I guess different audiences, like, say different names. But in the podcast. I wouldn't know who was listening to it and I had to set it in stone. I got nervous. But anyways, now I'm I'm proud of the results and now I'm doing the video. I honestly thought the one we're doing tomorrow is going to be audio, but they said for sure video.

**Interviewer** [00:03:38] Yay.

**T03** [00:03:39] Great

**Interviewer** [00:03:42] Yeah, but the other day I had this event that I was being the moderator and it was the first time in like many, many weeks that I put makeup on, because I have been alone in isolation for some eight weeks now. My flatmate is in Canada. So I'm like, in Coventry in isolation. I, you know, it was the first time ever that I put mascara on. So I was like, oh, my God, this is new.

**T03** [00:04:09] I might have to do that tomorrow after a long hiatus. [laughs]

**Interviewer** [00:04:15] I don't know how to do that anymore. Well, so I just need to check where we stopped. Oh, so we were talking about fluency and creativity and.

**T03** [00:04:26] YEs, that's right.

**Interviewer** [00:04:28] You kind of also talked about that. But then now is your time to shine because you probably will like this question. Do you also do creative writing outside of your translation practice? If so, is it only in your first language or do you experiment with other languages? How do you feel your creative writing relates to your translation practice?

**T03** [00:04:50] Woo, Great question. So, my creative writing is only in my L2. I do not do creative writing in my L1. I tried and it sounds ridiculous. I just can't even make it. You know, the aesthetic choices don't quite seem to work. You know, so honestly, the language just seems unruly. I have little control over it. Whereas in English, I am so trained, so practiced, you know, I am manipulating it. So, yeah, I'm only write in my L2, I, I mean, I don't necessarily agree with everyone who's like all translators. Everyone should translate because it helps, it improves your writing. Not necessarily. But for me because I am a writer, I, I'm always reading as a writer, so I'll be translating and be like, oh, I see what this author did with a sentence structure or I see this image here, so I am constantly, you know, learning or making decisions about my writing based on the relationships I have with other texts. So translation certainly affects my writing a lot. Even when I'm having a hard time with a character or something. I might take some direction from a translation I'm doing or something like that.

**Interviewer** [00:06:14] Yeah, well, that makes sense. So the next set of questions is on training and professional status. The first question of this is like a big cluster question. So bear with me, this is many like sub questions inside one question. So did you have formal translation training? If so, did it include different translation directions? If you did receive training in different translation directions, has there been a change in direction that you

practice since completing your training? Do you still translate in both directions, in only one or in one much more than another?

**T03** [00:06:55] I do have training. My training is all for translation into English, even though it wasn't necessarily for people translating into a foreign language. But in college, in undergrad, I took translation classes and then in grad school I took translation. I did a whole MFA in translation again. And now I also teach translation classes. So I guess I had the opportunity to reflect on the kind of translation training I got and what was helpful, what was not helpful, and also what was missing, stuff I really needed. And it took me way too long to figure out that I wish someone had just, you know, kind of told me. So when teaching translation, I've designed courses that follow some of my interests, too. I do mention concepts of mother tongue, stuff like that in my classes, which my teachers didn't address. I also talk a little bit more about foreign rights and stuff like that, then they did and talk about craft in a very, in a way more focused on the practice of different translators. Versus just giving people theory, like, instead of just giving them Walter Benjamin, I'm like, this is this particular translator's approach to translation. They might reflect on Walter Benjamin and [00:08:22] Berger, [0.0s] and Schleiermacher in their essays, but I'm not as interested in providing my students with the actual Schleiermacher, the actual Benjamin, you know. So my training was pretty theoretical in that sense. So I've I've already made some changes when I teach. Yeah, that's pretty much it. And then part of my training was also some formal mentorships I had, like the one through ALTA. You can get a mentor for a set number of months or something like that. I consider those as part of my education too.

**Interviewer** [00:08:55] OK. I ask this because in my personal experience, I've had, I studied an undergrad course in translation, one of the very few that exists in Brazil. And we have the same amount of modules for like, we had four modules for translation from Portuguese into English and four modules were English into Portuguese. So, it's clearly seen, as, you know, as obviously different processes, different strategies. But it has the same amount of, the same kind of weight and importance. So that we had practice in both directions. And that's not always the case in different countries. So that's why I asked is and also your translation training and your knowledge of theory and your experience with that, kind of, also informs your practice? I guess I would say.

**T03** [00:09:51] Totally, yes. And even my answers to your question, one thing, like, in undergrad, my professor was very open to people translating into languages that weren't English, she was like "Oh, primarily any languages into English, because that's what I can read". But I talked to her. "I've never translated into Portuguese". And she was like, "why not?" I was like "Because I've never had the venue. I've been taking classes with people like you and they always ask me to translate into English".

**Interviewer** [00:10:21] Yes.

**T03** [00:10:21] And she said, Oh, give it a shot. I mean, that's fine by me. You can translate into whatever language you want. So that was the beginning of me trying to translate into my L1 as well. But the final for that class, I did it into English partly because I wanted, you know, the opportunity to get feedback from her.

**Interviewer** [00:10:41] Yeah.

**T03** [00:10:43] Then in subsequent classes I always did it into English. And then in grad school at Iowa, the rule was people could translate from any language into English. So that

was more prohibitive. But it made sense because we were all working with long form projects by then, like book length project.

**Interviewer** [00:11:04] Yeah, well, that that is different. But I've noticed that, for example, with my classmates back in Brazil and university, they felt much more confident translating into an L2, like, they felt that they had earned the right to at least try to translate into English. Whereas if in my experience so far here in the U.K. talking to translation students, they, like, some of them, are British and know enough of a second language to translate from that, but they definitely don't feel comfortable or confident translating into that language. So there's also an issue of, you know, the place where you come from. You know, sometimes we, as a former colony, we kind of grew up hearing that we needed to learn a second language to be someone in life, or at least, I don't know if that's your case, but I've heard it all my life, at least some English, some Spanish, you know, to get good jobs and all that. So and that's not what they hear here in the U.K., I guess. I mean, it's. And so there's also the question of confidence in using a second language but obviously, the place where you do this, the place where you do this workshop will make a difference, because obviously your tutor needs to be able to assess the text. Right. Yeah.

**T03** [00:12:24] Totally. One thing that was a big influence, too, on me was that the director of the literary translation program at Iowa, Aron, also translates into his L2 and does not translate into his L1.

**Interviewer** [00:12:40] Yeah, yeah, he might be interviewed as well.

**T03** [00:12:47] Yeah, I adore him. And he was a pretty big mentor for me, and it meant a lot to be someplace where someone doing the work I'm doing is just perfectly normal. Because I guess, you know, at this point I know people from all over who have a variety of relationships to their many languages. And in the world we live in, we're not only, colonialism is real, but neocolonialism is also real.

**T03** [00:13:14] Yes.

**Interviewer** [00:13:14] It only makes sense that we don't have that much of a choice. Like our bodies are kind of thrown around. You end up places, your life ends up taking directions that you didn't expect. And now English is a huge part of my life, as is a huge part of Aron's life. So talking to Aron, not to expose him in any way, but it meant a lot to me to hear his perspective because I asked him, does it ever go away? You know, this feeling that you have to prove yourself. And he said, no, that doesn't go away. What goes away is the feeling that you need to, you know, the feeling that you have to prove yourself. People asking the questions, they don't go anywhere. And this is very true because at the ALTA conference when I was so pissed off that people were treating me a certain way, and at that same exact edition of the conference, I overheard someone say, the same man who was rude to me, the exact same one saying, oh, you know, did you hear that aron said this expression, this idiom in this way, we usually say it this way, it's because he's not a native speaker of English.

**Interviewer** [00:14:20] Oh, OK.

**T03** [00:14:21] And I took huge offense because at the time Aron was the president of ALTA. So I'm like The Nerve, You know, he's gotten the NEA. He's received the National Translation Award. He's the president of this association. He's the director of the main literary translation program in the English speaking world.

**Interviewer** [00:14:39] Yeah.

**T03** [00:14:40] What else does he need to do. We had a great talk about it and he was like, I don't, I don't give a shit. That was basically what he said, he was like the people who matter. The people I want to work with are people who are fine with me. In fact, I don't even, wouldn't even think of this as an issue. So, yeah. So he was an important figure in my understanding of I do what I do with my life. I am not necessarily going in the opposite direction as much as I understand that this, I acknowledge that this direction exists in the same way. I mean, to be fair, I've given many lectures about this, so I'm just going to make sure you I know You already know all of this. But people have been writing in second languages forever, right? People writing in Latin and whatnot, were writing in second languages. For a variety of reasons. Wars happen. Displacement happens. Economic migrations happen. So the fact, the monolingualism that people assume is the norm is just so misguided. That's just not how most of the world lives anyway. So Aron was huge in pushing me in that direction. He's like, here is Yasmin Yildiz, go read about the monolingual paradigm.

**Interviewer** [00:15:54] I love her

**T03** [00:15:55] I love her, too, and he was like here's this other essay about this and that, you know, and then in the end, I end up doing a lot of work in that field. And now at Alta, every year I do a call. I do a panel with you about that, with other translators. Just this, now, this November, I went to the conference in Rochester and I moderated a panel about translating into the "stepmother tongue". And it was me, Jeremy Tiang, who is from Singapore, [00:16:28] Ian Stein, [0.6s] who is from South Africa. So I guess I wanted to question the different Englishes, our different relationships. There is also [00:16:36] Savinch Turk [0.0s] who is from Turkey and lives in New York. So, yeah, all of us, we're just talking about our different experiences with it. It was interesting to see who's encountered issues, who hasn't, for what reasons, who gets to own English, call it their own, who doesn't. In, for example, Jeremy's case. I mean, English is his colonial language, and yet he can't own it. You know, we'll never get to own it. So there is no way around it. And I also hear this from friends of mine from India, from Nepal, from Sri Lanka, who are like, English is my language. It's the only one I know. And people are constantly telling me I'm really good at it.

**Interviewer** [00:17:17] Yeah. [laughs]Yeah.

**T03** [00:17:19] So to go on. Yeah. So Aron was a big part in my awakening that I could do something about it. Someone else who was really important to me was [00:17:28] Madu Kasa. [0.4s] I was in her kitchen table translation anthology and she kind of opened up this world of possibilities to me in thinking of the translator as immigrant and why immigrants who translate day to day are not taken seriously as translators but, say, some random white man at a university might be.

**Interviewer** [00:17:51] Yeah.

**T03** [00:17:52] Yeah. So anyways, it's been a long time coming, you know, that I'm this... I feel very comfortable writing in English, but it's been a long time coming for me to be where I am right now.

**Interviewer** [00:18:03] Mm hmm. Well, I have this book that you mentioned, the kitchen table translation, organized by edited by [00:18:09] **Madu Kasa**. [0.0s] I'm just flipping through the pages here and I can see your name there. Susan Bernofsky recommended it to me when I met her. And then I remember I went to this bookshop near Columbia campus and I bought it. And yeah, well, there was like so many I liked that you mentioned the Latin example because that was what I was doing the first year of my phd. I was just doing this huge literature review of many different things, of nationalism and language, of other studies that mentioned L2 translation and also of the history of multilingualism in, for example, medieval literature and translations into Latin in early modern times. And one thing that strikes me as interesting, and you also mentioned the word craft, is that for these people who wrote in those times, writing in different languages, like the multilingualism, before romanticism, it wasn't about your expression, your identity. It was more of a kind of, like a craft, a practice. So, like, for example, this type of poetry you write in Occitan, this type of poetry you write in Catalan and Italian, and especially in Europe, obviously it's different in other parts of the world. But it was not about what they thought, you know, the language that they were native speakers of or something like that, it was just like because this genre of literature is usually written in that language. So I'm going to practice writing poetry in that language until I get a grip of it. It's not that much about your expressive abilities or the fact that you were born into the language or anything. So I find that to be fascinating, that actually something that we think is so old and ancient is actually, you know, from the 19th century onwards, is not that old and you know, this is how things should be. This is the direction of translation that you should, you know, this is the direction that should be accepted. And, you know, also it's different among different languages. Well, if I start talking about this within this, we will stay here forever. But yeah, well, it kind of ties with what you said. And I'm trying to kind of find the loose ends and tie them together. We have one. Sorry you wanted to say something?

**T03** [00:20:42] No, I was just thinking about, also in undergrad, when I was still pretty conflicted about being a writer in another language, that kind of stuff. My translation professor at the time recommended me two books. One of them called Lives in Translation: bilingual Writers on Identity and Creativity. And another one called Letters of Transit, edited by [00:21:04] **Andre Asseman** [0.8s] both of them about writers who write, their entire body of work is in a language that doesn't happen to be their first.

**Interviewer** [00:21:13] Mm hmm.

**T03** [00:21:13] So I was reading Andre Assiman and I was reading. What's her name? Edith Hoffman and Arundhati Roy. You know, all these writers whose experiences of their languages may not be so straightforward. Sometimes you can't even fully delineate what's first or second or that kind of thing. So I really enjoyed reading their work. So ever since undergrad people were already, you know, telling me, hey, there, there might be life for you in this field.

**Interviewer** [00:21:49] One of the reasons why my idea in the beginning of this PhD you might like it might change until the end of it. But my idea was, I like the term Exophonic, or exophony, because it doesn't imply, it doesn't use terms like L1, L2. And it's more about.

**T03** [00:22:06] Which is ranking your languages.

**Interviewer** [00:22:08] Yeah, exactly. Which is hard to do. I mean what is... Yeah, it's tricky. And one of the participants that I asked to, you know, to interview, she said, well, I'm an L3 translator. How do you fit me in this? And it is tricky because it's a very varied group



of... Like, the people I'm interviewing have so many, like the backgrounds is [sic] so different. So different. And, you know, their relationship to the many languages they use are different. So it's obviously not easy to just say, well, it's L1, L2, L3 because it's not that simple. And all these translators are not... A lot of ...not only this group of translators, but also others don't fit this kind of straightforward definition of, you know, L1, L2, because this comes from.

**T03** [00:23:01] Totally.

**Interviewer** [00:23:02] ...Kind of, this monolingual ideal that this, how can I say, monoglot. I mean, at least in the U.K., what I've seen in the literary translation context is that they are British people who learned a language, who who did a degree in modern foreign languages and spent a year, an Erasmus year abroad, in that country, and then come back and translate into English. And that's a very monolingual translator, if you think about it. Well, they know a language, but they are very, very comfortably placed and can answer quite easily what their L1 is, which is not true to a lot of translators.

**T03** [00:23:47] Absolutely. So like you mentioned, you know, Julia, Julia and I have talked about this, too. And, you know, depending on your upbringing, you know this, you grew up with multiple languages, depending on your upbringing, your first language might not be your dominant language or you might have multiple first languages. Yeah, it is. Yeah, it is something.

**Interviewer** [00:24:10] Yeah. That's. I'm fascinated by that. And I actually, I will take note of some of the authors you just mentioned, because obviously I knew a lot of them, but some of them I don't know much about. I will get to reading some of them. I have a last question. That's a very simple one. But feel free to talk as much as you want, in your answer, which is Are you a member of a professional association? Which one?

**T03** [00:24:40] I am a member of ALTA. I am also in their conference committee, so I helped organize the conference and I'm a member of PEN America, though I don't know if that's quite a professional association as much as just, I guess, a group of people. I don't know. You get it.

**Interviewer** [00:24:57] I get it. I joined because I tried the PEN Heim Fund, I saw that you won that last year.

**T03** [00:25:04] Hm hmm

**Interviewer** [00:25:05] But I also didn't prepare very well for it. I was like, I found out about it quite late and I had like two weeks to slap something together. And obviously I didn't get it. But I remember you had to join the association. You had to join some form of like cause I joined PEN English like the one in the UK because, you know, that's where I'm placed. But you can join different, you know, versions of PEN,.

**T03** [00:25:31] Right, the chapters. I am also a member of the Authors Guild. That's helpful for me both as a translator and as a writer. Yeah, they're very helpful with a lot of legal stuff and contract evaluations, that kind of thing. Yeah. So Authors Guild, ALTA in America.

**Interviewer** [00:25:50] OK. Yeah. Well, we've reached the end of my prepared questions. Do you want to add anything to wrap up or comment on any...

**T03** [00:26:06] Let me see.

**Interviewer** [00:26:08] Do you have any questions for me? [laughs]

**T03** [00:26:12] Oh, I'm sure I do. I just can't think of them clearly now. I guess one thing I would like to comment on is that, so I don't do a lot of commercial translation. I do mostly literary. And I found that with commercial translations, they often, at least in their job announcements, they say native speakers only. So I haven't you know, that hasn't been my experience. But I do think that if I did a different kind of translation, it might become a more serious issue.

**Interviewer** [00:26:47] Well, so you feel that in literary translation, as far as your experience goes, you didn't feel that much of a, you didn't feel that this was that much of an issue as compared to in technical translations, is that what you mean?

**T03** [00:27:03] it is still an issue, but not as prohibitive as in technical translations that they foreground that information. Like, first and foremost, let's weed out the non-native speakers. You know, as a writer, my very first writing job was at a newspaper, was at The Christian Science Monitor in Boston. And it was, I wrote book reviews and stuff like that. I was in the books department. I interviewed authors. It was a lot of fun. And then at the very end of my internship, my boss, who was the editor, took me out to lunch just as a thank you. And then she said, oh, you know, I'm really glad you didn't tell me in your application that you were an international student. I thought you were Brazilian American. I'm really glad you didn't say you were Brazilian because then I wouldn't have hired you. And you were a great intern. And I was like, I was shocked that she said that out loud. And she was like, not because of you, but just because we've had international students in the past. And it was so much more work for me to keep correcting their English. But with you, I didn't, I know, it's super offensive. She's like, I had one intern from China once and another one from whatever. And it was so much more work for me. They're not usually quite as independent as you but I'm really glad, you know, that I was proved wrong and that we took a shot at you and it was great. She's like, I will, I'm more open minded now. I might do that again. But I remember being so upset. I cried on the subway ride home. And I think I was like maybe a junior in college then. So I was probably like 20 or 19. And I was so upset and I remember really thinking, I can't do this professionally. You know, if people are going to keep doing this to me. So I guess it helped that I'm not very shy because then I had other jobs later. I interned at other places, too. I interned at New Directions and other presses and other newspapers. And Journals afterwards. And I'm like, I am abroad. I'm from abroad. And then I would emphasize all my education, all of that. And then I would try to sound well read and I would more and more get comments on "Oh, you're one of those cosmopolitan people who go to boarding school and speak French and German and Spanish and Portuguese and English", you know, that kind of thing. It is not true. I didn't grow up bilingual. My parents don't speak any other languages. But I let people think that of me, that I am just oh, look at this smart person who is very cosmopolitan, especially New York City. It was a good way of faking this idea that I'm an international student who can't speak. Yeah. So I had to kind of found a way out of the stereotype. And the best way I found for that was to use a different stereotype. [laughs] So people are like, are your parents diplomats? I'm like, no, no. Really, really far from that. Yes. So that was one way of doing it. And then another way of doing it was, I guess, like I mentioned, finding allies and people I could be honest with, who weren't quite so tied to these stereotypes. Here and there I hear snarky comments, people are like, oh, your English is beautiful. I really want my Norwegian or my Japanese or my Swedish to be as good as your English one

day. And then I, when I'm in a foul mood, I will say you wish your English could be as good as my English.

**T03** [00:30:42] So yes, that's it, what I had to add.

**Interviewer** [00:30:48] Well, that's that's all very interesting. I'm looking forward, really looking forward to transcribing this interview because there's so many gems here.

**T03** [00:30:59] I'm glad, this is a really fun conversation for me to have. I always say, I'm always looking for an audience for all these antidotes.

**Interviewer** [00:31:08] I love to hear that. And I love to. I'm sorry if I talk too much, because I'm.

**T03** [00:31:12] Not at all. Not at all.

**Interviewer** [00:31:14] Relate to all of that and get excited and want to.

**T03** [00:31:16] I really appreciate that it was a dialog. This is really nice.

**Interviewer** [00:31:21] So here it is. It's quite late now. I am. My brain is is shutting down.

**T03** [00:31:26] Oh, I bet. I'm sorry. I forgot about the time difference for a moment,.

**Interviewer** [00:31:30] No worries at all.

**Interviewer** [00:31:31] No, I'm just saying that I would love to talk for like hours. Obviously I can't. But let's. I'll email you and we can talk more about the podcast. And if when I'm transcribing, if I find anything that I don't understand or that I understand wrong I can check with you if that's OK.

**T03** [00:31:53] That's right.

**Interviewer** [00:31:54] Yeah. So thank you for that. And I hope it goes well tomorrow in your video.

**T03** [00:32:00] Oh, thank you. It's so nice to meet you.

**Interviewer** [00:32:03] Nice to meet you. Nice to talk to you.

**T03** [00:32:05] And you too.

**Interviewer** [00:32:06] Let's keep in touch and be safe out there.

**T03** [00:32:10] Yeah. You too. Abraço. [laughs]

•

## Interview T04.mp4

**Interviewer** [00:00:04] Do you have anything to add? I guess you you fill out the questionnaire a while ago, so I don't know if you remember, but do you have any comments on that?

**T04** [00:00:16] Not really. One of the things I remember thinking while I was filling it in is that it didn't seem to be applicable to my situation in any way.

**Interviewer** [00:00:28] OK. OK. Well, yeah,.

**T04** [00:00:31] But I'm sure we will cover that. Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:00:33] If you want to add like at the end, during one of, during the interview, in any other questions. If you want to add something, you know like relate to the interview questionnaire. You're more than welcome to do that. So I'm going to start with the questions. They are separated into themes.

**T04** [00:00:53] Right.

**Interviewer** [00:00:55] And obviously, I need to ask all of them, because then it needs to be fair, because that's the same thing I did with the other participants. But obviously, you can add, you can either reply to it, is more like you can say more than the question asked for, you can just answer the way, the way you want to. Like if you want to just say like a quick one, like, oh no. Yes, no. But if you want to talk more about that, you feel welcome to do that because there's no time limit. Obviously there's also your time. Let me know if you want to.

**T04** [00:01:30] No, no, that's fine. That's OK.

**Interviewer** [00:01:32] OK, cool. So the first set of questions is about approaches to languages.

**T04** [00:01:41] OK,.

**Interviewer** [00:01:42] First one is a cluster question. Do you consider that you have a mother tongue, a first language or more than one? If so, which one or which ones? If not, why not?

**T04** [00:01:57] I do have a mother tongue, although that is not my main language anymore and hasn't been for a long time.

**Interviewer** [00:02:06] Okay. Okay. And which which one is that. Can you just.

**T04** [00:02:10] My mother tongue is Italian. But I consider English my, I always refer to it as my adopted mother tongue.

**Interviewer** [00:02:18] OK. OK. Nice. OK. Thank you. So the second one you kind of already answered but you can also, like, add to it as I said. So what is your language of education? Is it different from your mother tongue?

**T04** [00:02:33] Yes and no. I was educated up to university entry level in Italian, but then I did my degree and my postgraduate education in English.

**Interviewer** [00:02:47] OK, ok. So. Yeah. Do you translate into a non-mother tongue. if so, what is your experience of it?

**T04** [00:02:55] Yes, I translate exclusively into my non mother tongue. I translate into English. From Italian.

**Interviewer** [00:03:04] Is it literary translation, technical, both?

**T04** [00:03:07] It's both. Both.

**Interviewer** [00:03:11] How would you describe your relationship to the languages you can speak/write/translate into/from?

**T04** [00:03:19] With Italian. It is a language which I'm obviously familiar because I grew up with it. It was my main language for the first 20 years of my life. But I haven't spoken it on a regular basis for over 40 years.

**Interviewer** [00:03:37] Well,.

**T04** [00:03:37] And I've been in this country all the time. And I think sort of, you know, I, I now consider that, I find that English is the language I go to, even when I'm speaking to Italian people. If I know they speak good English, I tend to slip into English. Because it is the language, I think, in which I can express myself better.

**Interviewer** [00:04:05] Mm hmm.

**T04** [00:04:06] I have to really think about when I'm talking a ton, especially when I'm writing Italian. It's really hard. And I'm very aware that when I speak to my family that, you know, that I will say things. And they then they say to me, you know, that's not quite Italian.

**Interviewer** [00:04:26] Oh yeah. That happens. You start kind of traveling in your mind and you start. Yes, I have that. Yeah. So your languages are Italian and English then.

**T04** [00:04:36] Yes.

**Interviewer** [00:04:37] OK. This question was also like, because I remember you said, right in the beginning of the interview that English is your adopted mother tongue. So you got a mother tongue and an adoptive mother tongue. So those are the relationships then.

**T04** [00:04:56] Yes.

**Interviewer** [00:04:57] OK. So this you also have answered, but you can talk more about that. Have you ever been able to express something in a language that is not your first language more satisfactorily, How so?

**T04** [00:05:09] Yes, that is always the case now. Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:05:13] Okay, cool. So now there's a set of questions more specifically about directionality.

**T04** [00:05:20] OK.

**Interviewer** [00:05:20] So what is the difference for you between both or more directions of translation like English-Italian, Italian-English? How would you describe your translation process and types of challenge, linguistic or otherwise, when you are translating into a mother tongue versus into a foreign language or adoptive mother tongue, in your case?

**T04** [00:05:40] Well, the thing is, I don't translate into Italian.

**Interviewer** [00:05:44] OK.

**T04** [00:05:47] I'm very conscious of the fact that even though it is my mother tongue, my understanding and knowledge of it from a professional point of view is it's just not good enough for translation.

**Interviewer** [00:05:59] Interesting.

**T04** [00:06:00] So I only translated into English, which is not my mother tongue.

**Interviewer** [00:06:05] OK. So that's your experience. You wouldn't be able to compare the direction.

**T04** [00:06:10] No.

**Interviewer** [00:06:10] OK. OK. OK, good. That's interesting actually because the whole, you know, native speaker thing like you don't feel that comfortable in a professional setting with Italian, which is your mother tongue, and that can happen in specific contexts. That's interesting.

**T04** [00:06:29] So I just wanted to add something to that because I mean, that translation into your mother tongue or native tongue or ... I know this is an issue in translation terms, but I find myself arguing with people when people say, you know, it's not professional to translate something, that's not into your mother tongue. And my response to that is not only being in this country for 40 years, but all my qualifications, my translation qualifications are from Italian into English. So, you know, I've been accused of not being professional by using a language combination in which I'm actually qualified to translate. [laughs].

**Interviewer** [00:07:15] Yeah, no, I agree with you completely. And just to say, even though some of this terminology might be used, if you don't agree with it, you can always comment on that. I left the most general ones because not everyone that I'll interview are like linguists or people who necessarily, you know, have you know, I had these terms.

**T04** [00:07:41] Yes.

**Interviewer** [00:07:42] But you can always comment on them and criticize them if you want, because that's interesting. Interesting output from you. So this one is also because I assumed a lot of my interviewees were like translating in both directions. But if you want to comment anyway, so do you have preferred genres or text types for L2 translation? How if at all, do they differ from your L1 translation practice?

**T04** [00:08:11] There is no difference because I don't translate into my mother tongue.

**Interviewer** [00:08:16] But do you have, so, then you can just answer if you have a preferred genre.

**T04** [00:08:21] No, I mean, I've worked in a number of fields. Currently my bread and butter business is really boring stuff. It's financial statements. And I would say about 90 percent, 85 percent of my work is in that kind of context.

**Interviewer** [00:08:40] OK.

**T04** [00:08:41] But I also do more creative work. In the last two, three years that's actually been of things like cookery books, for example. But I have done work from literary translation as well. So.

**Interviewer** [00:08:54] And in that specific field of literary translation. Did you do a poetry short stories...

**T04** [00:09:01] I translated a couple of novels.

**Interviewer** [00:09:04] Oh, that's cool. Good to know. Yeah, well, that's what I wanted to know, a little bit more about what type of or what genre you work with. So are there any that you prefer not to translate?

**T04** [00:09:18] I think I prefer not to work in areas that I'm not familiar with. So I mean, I will tackle, you know, a financial statement and financial stuff. I'm quite happy to do. I've done work from tourism and marketing in certain areas. I feel more, if they sort of, are more in line with my own personal interest. I feel I have more authority in the area. There are lots of areas in which I just wouldn't even attempt because it's just not worth the hassle.

**Interviewer** [00:09:52] Yeah. Yeah. I asked this because a lot of, I've heard in my research, I've read people saying that, oh, L2 translation. or translation into a non mother tongue or a second language, oh, that's OK, but not for poetry, because poetry is something else. You shouldn't do it. So that's why I asked because, you know, some people may have different opinions or not.

**T04** [00:10:15] No. I think when it comes to literal translation, you need more than language to translate that. I mean, translating a novel is writing a novel. it is rewriting a novel. So you have to be a good writer.

**Interviewer** [00:10:29] That's true.

**T04** [00:10:30] And if you translate a poem, you'll have to be a poet. You can't. It's not just the language that makes you qualified to translate that. There's actually your personal skills in that area.

**Interviewer** [00:10:42] Yeah, I know this for a fact that I like, I like writing poetry both in Portuguese and in English. And I have friends who are English native speakers and are also studying literature. But they are not poets. They don't have the ear for that. You know, it's kind of a specific skill.

**T04** [00:11:00] Absolutely. Absolutely.

**Interviewer** [00:11:02] Thank you. So now the next two questions are about market and gatekeeping.

**T04** [00:11:09] Right.

**Interviewer** [00:11:09] So, has your translation work been criticized, rejected or disregarded because you are not a native speaker of the target language?

**T04** [00:11:19] No, but I must I preface that by saying that when, for example, when I fill in questionnaires from translation agencies, when I'm asked for my mother tongue, I always put English down because it's just too complicated to explain.

**Interviewer** [00:11:37] Yeah.

**T04** [00:11:37] Yes. my mother tongue Italian, but all my qualification are of translation into English. All they're concerned about is that I have the right qualifications.

**Interviewer** [00:11:46] OK.

**T04** [00:11:47] And and therefore I don't feel I'm actually lying. And I'm never, whenever, if I've ever had any criticism of my translation, it's never been for my use of language. It might have been in an area that I'm not, was not very familiar with. But it was not criticism that will not have been applied to someone that was a native speaker.

**Interviewer** [00:12:13] OK, OK. But thank you for that. Have you ever been overcorrected on a linguistic choice or specific form that was consciously made by you? How so?

**T04** [00:12:27] Not really, no. Because as I said, I mean, my qualifications and I've had twenty years of experience translating into English. So, I mean, if anything, I'm my main, I'm my most vocal critic. so there would be a situation when I might not be happy with something. And I will ask someone for a second opinion, but it's never been from someone else. Especially when it came. I mean, I find, to be honest, that I speak English better than a lot of English people I know. [laughs].

**Interviewer** [00:13:08] Well, yeah. Then yeah. You are your worst critic then.

**T04** [00:13:11] Yes. Yeah. Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:13:13] Yeah. Same. I relate to that. So, the next couple questions are about creative writing, fluency and translation.

**T04** [00:13:22] Yes.

**Interviewer** [00:13:23] How do you view the relationship between fluency and creativity in the languages you use?

**T04** [00:13:31] Fluency is important obviously because to express certain views, opinions, images, emotions, you have to have the tools and you have to have the words. You have to have the structure of the language to express that. But it is not just that, there is, you



need a certain personal affinity to the style to the subject which you're translating or writing about.

**Interviewer** [00:14:01] Do you feel you are more creative in English than in Italian?

**T04** [00:14:05] Absolutely. I don't even try to be creative in Italian. [laughs]

**Interviewer** [00:14:10] Okay. Do you also do creative writing outside of your translation practice? If so, is it only in Italian or do you experiment with English and Italian? How does this relate to your translation practice?

**T04** [00:14:25] The short answer to that is no, I'm not anymore. What I did, I mean, one of the things I did do too, I mean, I was interested in literary translation and my process for getting to that point was to actually take a master's degree in professional writing and my justification for that was that I needed to bridge the credibility gap between... you'd be able to use the language, which I knew I was, as a translator, and be able to use the language in a creative way as a writer. So I wanted to explore my writing in relation to the language. And I discovered that one, I quite liked the course. And I really enjoyed the creative writing, which was all in English, obviously. The best way for me to be creative was actually as a literary translator, because I don't have the stories. I didn't have the stories to write about. You know, the best stories I've written were the ones I was given a brief. I was given a subject or a theme on which to write, but left to my own devices, I don't really come up with any stories. So. So being able to write, rewrite a book that I loved in English. That was my creative. That's where my creative creativity went basically.

**Interviewer** [00:16:03] I completely relate to you, actually. I love writing. But I have always had a problem, especially with, like, longer pieces in that I can't think. I also am very critical of, you know, problems in the plot. And, you know, the plot holes and stuff. So I can't think of a good enough plot for me. But if you give me one, I can write four hours. But like, the problem is coming up with with a story. With a plot.

**T04** [00:16:29] Yeah, I get that.

**Interviewer** [00:16:30] Translation is kind of the ideal thing, that someone else thought of it. And it works and you like it, now you're going to rewrite that.

**T04** [00:16:38] Yes.

**Interviewer** [00:16:39] OK. So the next two questions are just very pointed ones. The first one is actually a cluster question. So bear with me, because it's like a lot of questions into one.

**T04** [00:16:50] OK.

**Interviewer** [00:16:51] So it's about training and professional status. Did you have formal translation training? If so, did it include different translation directions? If you did receive training in different translation directions, has there been a change in the direction that you practice since completing your training? Do you still translate in both directions, in only one, or in one much more than the other?

**T04** [00:17:16] In terms of sort of formal training, yes and no. I started translating. My introduction to translating was a bit of, from a side door, so to speak. I started working with

translators as a copy typist, or an audio typist, rather. The terms sort of indicate how long ago that was so I'm thinking about 25, 30 years ago. And I was watching, basically offering computer services. And I thought, you know, how can I get some added value? How can I get paid more for doing the same work. And I thought, well, if I can, I can type in Italian. So who might want to have someone they can type in Italian? I thought, Well, translators. So I contacted a few translators and that's how I got started. For a few years I was actually typing other translators' work. So it wasn't a formal training, but it was a really good training because I, I would have the original in front of me. So I would have the English version, for example, in front of me. And I was typing the Italian version or the other way round it would be an Italian or French sometime or Spanish, but I would have the text, the original text, and I would type it in English. And so I was actually watching translators in action.

**Interviewer** [00:18:53] Yeah.

**T04** [00:18:53] To see how they tackled certain issues and their approach to translation, how they changed the structure of a sentence around because you made more sense in a language than another. So that's how I started. And then my first work in translation, I was actually translating market research interviews in the medical field. So were interviews with doctors and nurses and patients on a very structured format. And it was a very, I wouldn't say it was informal translating. It wasn't, it was about accuracy and it wasn't necessarily about style. But then when I wanted to make the transition to doing proper translation, that's where I came up sort of the main problem, because then I had to justify why I wanted to translate into English. Having been a mother, mother tongue. So at that point, I did get some qualifications. I passed the diploma in Translation from the Institute of language, and I also took the exam from ITI to become a qualified member. Most people in my business, our business, would just take one or the other. But because I had to prove the point. I took both.

**Interviewer** [00:20:33] Yeah. Yeah.

**T04** [00:20:34] So that I could say to people, you know, I have this qualification. I have this qualification.

**Interviewer** [00:20:41] Yeah. OK, well that's interesting to know. You know that you had to kind of get something like some backing to your claim. And, you know, I have to prove that I can do this.

**T04** [00:20:53] Yes, absolutely.

**Interviewer** [00:20:54] Interesting. Thank you. So the last question is, are you a member of a professional association? Which one?

**T04** [00:21:04] Yes. Currently, I'm only member of the Institute of Translators and Interpreters. I have been a member of the [00:21:14]institute of linguists, [0.5s] and I've been a member of the translation association as well. But I don't really feel the need for having three at the moment, so.

**Interviewer** [00:21:22] OK. OK. So, yeah, we've reached the end of the prepared questions, but if you want to comment on anything, add any, any information that you find is relevant.

**T04** [00:21:35] I don't know how this fits in with your research, but one of the things I found I've been thinking of of late for a number of reasons. I mean, with the whole Brexit thing, I've been questioning whether I really want to live in this country. And the bottom line is I have children here and therefore I will stay here. But I have been considering before all this virus stuff, I considered that I actually wanted to spend more time away from this country. But because of my relationship with my language is one of the things I took into consideration was the fact I don't want to go and live in Italy, because if I go and live in Italy, the Italian side of my languages will take over. And I'm not really quite sure how the English is going to react to that.

**Interviewer** [00:22:25] Yeah. Yeah. It's kind of a battle.

**T04** [00:22:28] it is. So I actually came up with and my plan was actually to move to Portugal because I thought sort of, the language is similar enough in a way that I can relate to it and I can learn but it is also not Italian is also not English. So I can maintain that relationship between those two languages without kind of messing it up too much. I haven't put it to the test.

**T04** [00:22:58] Well, I'm, as a Portuguese speaker, obviously Brazilian Portuguese is slightly different from from.

**T04** [00:23:05] Absolutely. But I do love Brazilian Portuguese. It's just so lovely. One of my favorite languages.

**Interviewer** [00:23:10] Yeah. And my accent is from the south of Brazil. So it's even more like it's different. It's.

**T04** [00:23:16] Right.

**Interviewer** [00:23:17] We say things in a very different way. We don't have dialects per say in Portuguese, but it's kind of a very strong accent. But Portugal is like a nice place. Honestly, I've been with my dad. It was actually exactly a year ago. We were there for like a month. And my dad came to visit and I went to meet him there. And we spent the Dia de Santos, like the celebrations where because of, st Anthony's day.

**T04** [00:23:48] Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:23:49] So it was so lovely. And honestly, I also as a Portuguese speaker, I know a little bit of Italian. And I had like one year of Italian like many years ago. And one of my best friends is Italian. And sometimes she says some things and I'm like, oh, yeah, I completely understand what she said, And she's like, oh yes, shocked. Then sometimes when I'm when I'm talking to friends in Portuguese, she just says, Oh, I understood like 90 percent. So there's really a lot there. I think it's a good intermediary language. And I guess also Portugal is good with its tourism as well. So we would you would find also.

**T04** [00:24:27] I also I mean, one of the reason I decided in Portugal was because I actually I really like the way Portugal has handled itself over the last year, especially in terms of the virus, in terms of how it relates to foreign visitors and so on. And I thought that it is a country I have time for,.

**Interviewer** [00:24:47] Honestly, the quality of life as well. Portugal is just, I mean, woo I was shocked, like living in England only for like two years now. I went there with my dad,

my dad was like, OK, because Brazil is very tropical, we have a lot of like colorful fresh fruit.

**T04** [00:25:08] Yes.

**Interviewer** [00:25:09] And then I went to Portugal and I was like, oh, my God, I missed this. I was like all this diversity, variety in that fresh produce and, you know, good fish and, you know, anything. It was great. So also the people were just great and the. Yeah, I agree with you. It has dealt with the whole coronavirus thing so much better than this.

**T04** [00:25:31] Yes. Absolutely.

**Interviewer** [00:25:35] So thank you so much for joining me for taking your time.

**T04** [00:25:39] You're very welcome. No problem.

**Interviewer** [00:25:41] I hope it was fun for you. It was definitely.

**T04** [00:25:44] It's interesting. It's always interesting to talk to someone that has a, has experienced the similar issues in terms of the language, because, I mean, I remember joining debates years ago. I don't, I'm not really part of any forums these days. But it was a bulletin board in which literary translators said that we're working, and this issue will come up again and again. And the thing is, these days, that the concept of first language, second language is really strange because there are a lot more mixed families, a lot more mobile families and some other translators were reporting the fact, you know, if you have a parent in one language and a parent in another one, and you live in a foreign country, which is your mother tongue? I think that they're all valid languages and it's how you relate to them and how you continue to relate to them, in the course of your life that determines which one you might choose to work with. And then they might have no relationship with the language of the country in which were born, or, you know, your mother country or your father country.

**Interviewer** [00:27:05] Did you know that she is American, but her parents are from India. And she writes in Italian. She's.

**T04** [00:27:14] Yes. I don't remember the name. But yes, I remember her. I remember the.

**Interviewer** [00:27:21] I was writing an article about the mother that... Because I'm very much interested in this, in the metaphor of the language, of the mother tongue, not necessarily that it has to... The term itself has been criticized because, you know, it's not that straightforward, you know. I myself have a complicated history because my mom was born and raised in Brazil, but her family, they're all German. And my mom started learning Portuguese when she was ten.

**T04** [00:27:51] Right. Yes.

**Interviewer** [00:27:52] But she was born and raised in Brazil, never left. And so it's a kind of weird situation. But she never spoke German to me. Like, she never, like, I didn't grow up bilingual, per se. But at the same time, all the nursery rhymes, all the lullabies, were in German, I didn't know what they meant. So if I had a child now they wouldn't have like, I don't know any of the lullabies, like, the nursery rhymes in Portuguese because my mom was... it was a weird situation. And then I started learning German when I was 19. So my

German and my accent and my like, because I also have a good ear, my family, they are musicians and I'm one as well. So I have a good ear for accents and for pronunciation. So and also I heard it all my life, I heard my grandparents speaking and my mom singing to me. So I kind of. But obviously the grammar and all the fluency was off because I started so much later. And also I didn't dedicate myself that much to it because it was, you know, not a very cool language in my eyes, because it was my grandparents' language, you know. But I know how tricky that can be. And I have other participants, other interviewees who are like... I have a problem with L1, L2. So that's why I also have a problem with L2 translation.

**T04** [00:29:14] Yes.

**Interviewer** [00:29:15] Because one of my participants asked me, like, what if I am a L3 translator? Because I'm not, I'm you know, what is... And I think that that definition of L1, L2, L3 is very complicated and j.

**T04** [00:29:30] yes.

**Interviewer** [00:29:30] I'm obviously interested in all the metaphors that people use to like, you know, the adoptive mother tongue. I had a friend who is adopted. She's biologically Chinese, but she was adopted by an American couple. So she's not. No. No word of Chinese. And she was doing something and she was like, oh, this is my biological mother tongue.

**T04** [00:29:55] Absolutely. And I think that this is also one of the things that a lot of people don't realize outside of this, is that your relationship with one or the other, the language sometimes depends on things that have nothing to do with the language [00:30:09] or/of [0.0s] where you are. It is how you relate to the country of that language.

**Interviewer** [00:30:13] Exactly.

**T04** [00:30:14] When I left Italy and I came to live here, I rejected Italy. I mean, my family was there, but I didn't really want to have anything to do with it. I was very happy here. I related to this country. I felt accepted. You know, that's changed over the last four years, of course. But at the times that I felt, you know, this is my country. This is where I want to live in. This is my language. So I want to learn this language, you know? And and so I. I don't read a lot in Italian or I don't watch Italian films other than when I'm actually in Italy. But in terms of my cultural life, it has always been about this country. So the way I relate to it is the fact is, is because of how I relate to where I live.

**Interviewer** [00:31:05] Yeah. How will that change, at the same time? Because I hear of many translators, many bright minds that, there's this exodus because of Brexit. And they go back to... And that's like, obviously I'm very sad because I came here after Brexit happened, already with my German passport. Already knowing that, you know, it wasn't a very welcoming environment for... And everyone is questioning how will England cope with with the loss of all these, you know, multilingual people going back to their home countries. And how will translation deal with that? Because you know it.

**T04** [00:31:47] Yes, I mean, it is. It is interesting. I mean, until four years ago, I was very happy here. And I felt very integrated. I mean, I have a British passport and I've had one for 25 years. So in many ways, although it's affected me in many ways, it hasn't affected me in the way that really matters, which is, I'm actually quite safe here. But also if I want to

go live in Europe, I can do that because I'm still Italian. So I have the best of both worlds. But it's more in terms of, I feel, you know, I rejected Italy to become British, in a way. And now Britain kind of turns around to say, well, we don't want you. And if it wasn't for my children, I would leave. I would leave because I don't feel. I don't feel at home anymore. This used to be home and this, now it is just where I live. It's not the same thing...

**Interviewer** [00:32:49] OK, yeah. So those kind of external things as well. Even if you are established and happy and feeling at home, you know, a political move or a vote like that can just change even your relation to, you know, those languages, I guess.

**T04** [00:33:07] Absolutely. Absolutely. I mean, in some ways. I mean, I'm quite lucky, you know, because I'm not that close, but quite close enough to retirement to say, well, you know, this is just the way it is and I just continue until I stop. But, you know, had I been 20 years younger and I'm not sure what I would have wanted to stay here.

**Interviewer** [00:33:28] Yeah, I imagine. Yeah. I can understand that.

**T04** [00:33:32] And by the same [00:33:33] token, [0.0s] you know, I don't really want to go back to Italy because I don't really feel that Italy is my country anymore. I feel homeless.

**Interviewer** [00:33:41] I totally get that... That's a weird feeling to have. Yeah.

**T04** [00:33:46] Yeah I.

**Interviewer** [00:33:46] Sorry for that anyway. So thank you. Thank you so much for this lovely conversation.

**T04** [00:33:53] It's been enjoyable. Thank you.

**Interviewer** [00:33:55] Thank you. I think I might message you. I might email you if when I'm transcribing this.

**T04** [00:34:02] Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:34:02] If I have any questions or if I've got a word or two that I didn't get properly. Anyway, I'll get in touch.

**T04** [00:34:09] No problem at all.

**Interviewer** [00:34:13] Thank you so much for everything.

**T04** [00:34:13] Thank you very much. And good luck with your project.

**Interviewer** [00:34:15] Thank you. Thank you.

**T04** [00:34:16] Thank you. Bye.

**Interviewer** [00:34:18] Bye.

•

## Interview T05.mp4

**Interviewer** [00:00:05] So thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. Just so you know, there's this is not a very... It is formal because it's going to be in my thesis somehow. But the aim here is to have more of a conversation. So feel free to add more things and comment on things like, for example, if you have any problem with certain terms that I use or with a specific question, if you want some more background information. If you want to know anything, you're more than welcome to ask me. And so I do have to go through all the questions because, you know, I did it with all the other interviewees. But you can feel welcome to just add whatever you want and comment on the questions. So shall we start?

**T05** [00:01:00] Sure, of course. Go ahead.

**Interviewer** [00:01:00] OK. So it's been a while since you filled out the questionnaire online, right. So usually I would ask in the beginning for you, just if you have any comments. I saw that you added some comments, but a lot of them will come up in the interview anyway. So if you want to. But I think it's been a while since you filled that out, right?

**T05** [00:01:22] Yes, it's been a while. So my memory is a bit rusty on what I commented and what I answered.

**Interviewer** [00:01:29] It was pretty much, like, obviously, most of it wasn't very open ended. But, you know, I always ask in the beginning if you want to comment on that. So I kind of split this, the questions into, like, groups, the first group will be, the first set of questions will be approaches to languages. So the first question is kind of a cluster one. But do you consider that you have a mother tongue of first language or more than one? If so, which one? Which ones? If not, why not?

**T05** [00:02:10] I, by virtue of, I think, my mother's insistence, consider Portuguese to be my mother tongue. But I consider English to be my dominant language. It's the language I was educated in formally. And the language of, it has been the language of my social life at various points in my history. And the one I've read most widely in. And that kind of. And the one I feel most comfortable writing in as well.

**Interviewer** [00:02:48] Yeah. So it can be tricky to answer that question. So this one you already answered, but I have to ask you, what is your language of education? Is it different from your quote unquote mother tongue.

**T05** [00:03:00] So yes.

**Interviewer** [00:03:01] Yes, you already...

**T05** [00:03:05] English [ laughs ]

**Interviewer** [00:03:05] Sorry, some people I need to, like, really work to get the answers from them. But you're already kind of answered a bunch of them in the first one.

**T05** [00:03:13] I am very loquacious. [laughs].

**Interviewer** [00:03:16] Do you translate into a non-mother tongue? If so, what is your experience of it?

**T05** [00:03:23] I translate into English, which is not my mother tongue. Technically, I guess, depending on what you define the mother tongue as. What was the second part of the question?

**Interviewer** [00:03:37] So what do you what is your experience of it?

**T05** [00:03:42] My... that's a complicated question.

**Interviewer** [00:03:45] I mean, I know that in your case, you translate a lot into English, but some of the people I interviewed have done in many different directions and have maybe L2 translation as just one small part of their career. So that's why I added that question.

**T05** [00:04:03] OK. So I predominantly translate into English and I have in the past translated actually into Spanish, which is another language that I'm fluent in. But I do not do that very regularly. I've found my personal experience translating into English, as in like the craft of it, not to be particularly complicated, but I do find that sometimes the fact that I translate into a language that is not my native or mother tongue disconcerts people, or confuses them. It's become less and less so the more established I am or the more books I've translated. Because I have in that sense, a CV. But I have come up against suspicion.

**Interviewer** [00:05:05] That's interesting because I would say your CV is great. I mean, you were the first, one of the first I thought of when we decided to interview people, I was like, Yes can I interview her? so, yeah, but that happens quite often that like in general in the beginning, translators need to kind of convince people that they're able to do that. But I guess with... In that situation it is even more, and then obviously if you are more established, it makes a difference.

**T05** [00:05:32] I think that if I didn't have a markedly lusophone or like peninsular, southern peninsular name, that it might be different. My name is clearly not an English name.

**Interviewer** [00:05:50] Yeah, I think Bruna said the same, because it's kind of like I think there is even one comment on the literary translation group on Facebook. This woman submitted two different texts but under different names, one her actual name and the other a pseudonym that sounded really English. And it was basically the same level of, you know, of English and, you know, the same person translating it. And then one, obviously the one with a more exotic name got a feedback saying that it was clearly not translated by a native speaker. But it was the same person. And then she got really, really different responses. So that can happen. Yeah. So this is more like, fell free to elaborate on that and just talk about your background if you want. How would you describe your relationship to the languages you can speak, write or translate into/from?

**T05** [00:07:00] Relationship is such a broad term but I guess I can talk a little bit about my levels of confidence. My Portuguese is, well, Brazilian, as you know. But it is also very limited in that most of it has been learned from interactions with my family, especially my parents who left Brazil in the late eighties, and though they go back regularly, have only just moved back there in the last five years. So there's something, I feel sometimes it's quite dated now, my Portuguese. I learn more about it every day, I read a new book or try to consume more information in Portuguese and interact with new people in Portuguese. My writing is terrible because I never learned how to write in Portuguese. So I essentially applied my knowledge of Spanish grammar, which I did study in school to Portuguese



language and sort of cobbled sentences together that way. I learned Spanish when I was eight years old because my family moved to Mexico. And I went to bilingual schools. So at school I would have classes...Half of my classes were in English and half of them were in Spanish. And I can't remember clearly, but I feel like it was sort of random which classes weren't English and which classes were in Spanish. One year we would learn mathematics in English. In another year we would learn mathematics in Spanish, that kind of thing. Yet there was a year where we learned music in English because the teacher was American. But it meant that I kept up my English even though I was living in Mexico and most of my friends were Spanish-speaking. And most of my life was happening in Portuguese and Spanish. Because I learned the basics of grammar, my written Spanish is much better than my Portuguese. And then when I was twenty two, I moved to Spain and did a Masters, I moved to Catalonia and did a Masters and wrote my dissertation in Spanish. With some help from friends who would, like, correct my grammar.

**Interviewer** [00:09:41] I think we all need that help anyway. [laughs]

**T05** [00:09:43] Yes, well. [laughs] So I'm gonna get into the intricacies of my life story, maybe.

**Interviewer** [00:09:52] But that is interesting and I'm interested in that.

**T05** [00:09:56] I'll start at the beginning quickly, because I mentioned Mexico already, but I left Brazil when I was three months old. My family moved to New York. And then when I was eight, we moved to Mexico. And when I was 13, I moved back to the US for one year. At 14, I moved to Switzerland, where I attended an international school. So even though I do know French, my French is not very good anymore because I haven't used it in a long time and because it was still like a tertiary language in my life. Then once I graduated from high school, I did my undergrad in Edinburgh, so English became dominant in my life again. And as I said, I went to Spain and did my masters there. I was there from twenty two to twenty five. And in Spain I brushed up on my Spanish. And now I have some weird hybrid accent that's part Mexican, part like Peninsular. People never know how to place me. And then after three years there, I moved to the States and I've been here for six and a half years.

**Interviewer** [00:11:14] Mm hmm.

**T05** [00:11:16] And so. Well, yeah. So, that's it for now. [laughs]

**Interviewer** [00:11:23] [laughs] That's a lot of jumping around the continents. I was gonna say about the Spanish, I myself, in the south of Brazil we have a closer connection to Uruguay and Argentina. And my grandma was Paraguayan. So I was taught in school, for some reason our school was very strong in Spanish. But our teacher taught Spain Spanish. How do you call it...

**T05** [00:11:59] Peninsular Spanish?

**Interviewer** [00:12:00] Castillian? Yeah, I don't know. I don't know the official name for it. But anyway, she taught the Spanish from Spain vision. And then I had friends from Uruguay and Argentina. So I kind of got their accent and then I had relatives in Paraguay. This whole mess. My my Spanish is just whatever.

**T05** [00:12:21] Well, that's the beauty of Spanish. A lot of my friends in Spain were Colombian. So I also now and then throw in some random Colombian expressions because I find them very charming and because they stuck in my head.

**Interviewer** [00:12:35] I mean, that's interesting because then you say, well, you translate into Spanish or from Spanish, well, which one? Or, you know, we sometimes take it for granted that, you know, these are all languages that have different nuances.

**T05** [00:12:50] Yeah, I mean, when I translate into Spanish, which is very rarely because I don't do a very good job. I translate into like a pan-Latin American Spanish. I have a friend in Colombia who I will sometimes proofread her English translations and see she sometimes proofreads my Spanish language translations. It's never literary. It's more commercial stuff. And I did, I meant to mention as well. And in terms of my relationship with English, is that sometimes my concept of what is American and what is British is completely wrong, because I spoke American English until I was a teenager and then in international school most of my teachers were British. A lot of my friends were British. And then I went to Scotland, which has its own fun variety. And I sometimes catch myself not quite knowing what the right term is for something, like cutlery and Utensils and silverware.

**Interviewer** [00:13:59] Yeah.

**T05** [00:13:59] I always say cutlery. And then I learned a couple of days ago that cutlery is British and silverware is American.

**Interviewer** [00:14:06] That must be so confusing. Like, obviously my English is a foreign language to me by all means. But I get constantly confused because obviously in Brazil we learn the American version, right. And we hear it more anyway. And then I'm here in Britain, in the U.K. and then my flatmate is from New York. So I thought that finally coming here would get a little bit more of the British English, but then I just talk to an American all the time, so I'm constantly confused by that. So just one question. This is not in my list of questions. But I was just curious. Did you ever translate into Portuguese?

**T05** [00:14:46] I have translated into Portuguese once and I translated myself. And it was horrible. And I would much rather pay someone to do it next time.

**Interviewer** [00:15:01] Yes. Self-translation is a...

**T05** [00:15:04] It was just I didn't sound like myself. It sounded completely unnatural when I read myself in Portuguese. I got somebody to like, read it for me, but I'm like, check my grammar. But still, I just...it was odd. It was so weird. [laughs]

**Interviewer** [00:15:25] That's interesting. So this one you also already answered. But feel free to add more stuff. Have you ever been able to express something in a language that is not your first language more satisfactorily? How so?

**T05** [00:15:41] Oh, damn.

**Interviewer** [00:15:45] You kind of already answered it. But I mean, if you want to...

**T05** [00:15:50] Oh, I'm trying to think of things beyond English. My mother seems to think I have a different personality in my different languages. I feel like in English I'm able to express sarcasm more.

**Interviewer** [00:16:02] Mm hmm.

**T05** [00:16:05] And culturally Spanish permits me to be warmer to my friends, to call my friends, things like querida, and say things like Te Quiero like, readily because it's.

**Interviewer** [00:16:22] Yeah.

**T05** [00:16:24] It's a warm..

**Interviewer** [00:16:26] I wouldn't say it's a warmer language because I don't know if that's a good interpretation, but I feel you in that sense because it's, obviously my relationship to languages is different. But anyway, I'm not.

**T05** [00:16:38] But it's culturally just more permissive of that kind of show of affection. And so I find it easier to say in Spanish. I'm not sure that's quite what you're asking, though.

**Interviewer** [00:16:53] I mean, you are to kind of say because there is some kind of tension between what you consider your mother tongue to be versus your first language or the language you feel that is the one that you use more, if you want. So it's kind of, in itself, it's a bit...this question would be if someone, you know, like in my case, my mother tongue is Brazilian Portuguese without a doubt. But sometimes I prefer to do some things in English, even though that's not, you know, that kind of thing. This is just in case you happen to have any examples of instances and you already have, but if you want to...

**T05** [00:17:33] Yeah. I think that's it. I mean, my brother and I argue in English... I feel like so... I mean, you've already spoken to Bruna. She said something at an event recently that she did with Monica De La Torre and [00:17:55] Jeffrey Angles [0.3s] about... I think it's called Motherless Tongues.

**Interviewer** [00:18:00] Mm hmm.

**T05** [00:18:04] She said that she was, oh, you'll remember then. That she said at one point that she felt more able to engage with theory in English.

**Interviewer** [00:18:14] Yeah, definitely.

**T05** [00:18:15] OK. So I barely know the names for things in the kitchen in English because my kitchen was always in Portuguese until I left home.

**Interviewer** [00:18:27] Mm hmm.

**T05** [00:18:28] So sometimes I can only think of things around the kitchen in Portuguese. I only know how to play cards in Portuguese and don't know the names of the suits in English at all. The same goes for chess because I have mostly just played chess in Portuguese like these are easy things that I can look online and find them, but they're really deeply ingrained in my head in Portuguese.

**Interviewer** [00:18:56] That's interesting. And it's kind of like different repertoires for different things,.

**T05** [00:19:00] They're like different parts of... they're all related to very specific events, sort of. So my family goes back to Brazil every year and we spend Christmas there and we go to the beach and we have for the past 30 something years been going to the same place. And that place for a long time had very bad electricity. And like no phone reception and no TV and no Internet and no laptops. So my cousins and I would play Truco or Buraco or a bunch of these games. And I know cards, I know how to play cards because of that. And so I have never really played cards, cards much in English or Spanish, so I really only know the terms in Portuguese.

**Interviewer** [00:19:52] That's a nice story. I relate to that. So the next set of questions is specifically about directionality.

**T05** [00:20:00] OK.

**Interviewer** [00:20:01] So this first one is kind of a cluster one. So bear with me.

**T05** [00:20:05] OK.

**Interviewer** [00:20:05] What is the difference for you between both or more directions of translation? How would you describe your translation process and types of challenge, linguistic or otherwise, when you are translating into a mother tongue, versus into a foreign language, or your second language.

**T05** [00:20:24] OK.

**Interviewer** [00:20:25] This is like two questions.

**T05** [00:20:27] There's a lot there. So, as you know, I predominantly translate into English. I mostly translate literature, and because I mostly translate literature, my process varies from book to book and from language to language. But like the process of translating Giovanni Martins was completely different to the process I recently had translating Luiz Ruffatto. And the process I had translating, I guess it depends where the book is from as well, because I just translated a few months ago an Argentinian novel that is set in the outskirts of Buenos Aires. And so I had to do a lot of research into some of the terms that the author had used and also just actually similarly to how I did it with Giovanni, like reach out to her on whatsapp and get her to explain things to me. So, in that sense, translating, when I translate literature into English. Every case, every situation is new, you have to sort of almost reinvent the wheel every time.

**Interviewer** [00:21:47] So it's like would you say that the difference in process is mostly to do with the the source text and not necessarily with the direction of translation.

**T05** [00:22:01] I think so. I mean, at this point, I think I've learned that a positive trait of translation is just sort of doubting yourself quite often. I doubt my understanding. I sort of cast doubt on my understanding of a text when I can't make sure that I've gotten to the meaning and not just assumed the meaning. If that makes any sense. I also because my language learning has been different to that of most translators, also have to cast doubt on my English words and make sure that I doubt myself probably more than one translator who grew up speaking English and only learned another language later in life. I have to ask myself whether people say this in English, whether people say what I have written in English or whether I have just made up that they say that thing. So there's an enormous process of trying to make sure asking people, but from language to language, because

Portuguese and Spanish are spoken in so many different countries. And the vocabulary, there are differences in vocabulary everywhere. Then it's not like I have that much accumulated experience from every region. Like, I've only translated one book from Rio de Janeiro, I only translated one book from Minas Gerais, I've only translated one book from Argentina, one book from Catalan. In that case, I would actually sometimes compare my understanding of the Catalan to the translation in Spanish, just to make extra, extra, extra sure that I was getting it right? Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:24:11] But about the Giovani Martins one, especially that first short story, the lil spin, that one, like in the original, in the Portuguese, is just already a foreign language to me. I mean, I'm from the south of Brazil and that's a very specific Brazilian Portuguese. [both laughing]

**T05** [00:24:30] Yeah. I don't think many people who are not from Brazil realize the enormous variety of Portuguese.

**Interviewer** [00:24:41] Yeah.

**T05** [00:24:42] Brazilian Portuguese that's spoken in a single country.

**Interviewer** [00:24:44] Mm hmm. Yeah. And actually your translation helped me understand some of the text, even though I am Brazilian born and raised. It's just [laughs] I mean, I had to go back to the English version, I was like "Ah, it makes sense." Yeah.

**T05** [00:25:01] I don't know if you saw he published. I think it was in either *rascunho* or *Piauí*, I can't remember. In one of the online literary journals, he published a short glossary of certain terms and I still had to reach out to him to, like, ask what was going on with, well, certain phrases.

**Interviewer** [00:25:24] I actually showed... we're going further from my questions. But I just wanted to comment, I actually showed a few pages of your translation of that to a friend of mine who knows no Portuguese because I thought it was so interesting that you didn't italicize the words in Portuguese and the slang and I found that so interesting. And I showed this to a friend who had... Because for me, obviously as a Brazilian, I understand these words that are interspersed like there's some Brazilian here in there. And I showed you a friend who knows no Portuguese. I was like "what you feel when you read that". because I feel like ever since I came here that people expect the text to be kind of invisible. It has to sound fluent in English. It has to sound as if it was written in England. And I just find it so odd and obviously that text shows that this is not happening in Coventry or in like East London. It's obviously Rio. But that's not a problem, is it? I mean, you understand it. And I asked her, like, do you understand? You know, from context, what these words mean? And she's like, yeah, I can read it easily. And I was like, OK, well, good. Obviously, you already kind of checked that with your editors and be all the great reviews. But that was interesting for me because obviously I understood the slang words and they were in in the English text. But.

**T05** [00:26:54] I mean, I was sort of taking a bet hoping that people would understand. And to me, the editors were the first readers who were going to give me the seal of approval or not. But I don't think I would have maybe approached other texts in quite the same way, but as you said, like his language isn't easy to understand for a lot of people in Brazil. So I figured that, you know, maybe it shouldn't be that easy to understand for other readers either. that was a headache to translate, I am so glad it's over. [laughs]

**Interviewer** [00:27:43] Well, yeah, it worked definitely and also the the feeling of reading and not necessarily having to understand everything. I'm used to that feeling. But some people, especially people who never learnt a foreign language and didn't have that kind of feeling when you start reading in a foreign language and you kind of get stuck and you don't know everything, but you kind of get it from context, that kind of reading experience. I'm used to that, but obviously not everyone is. And I kind of think they sometimes expect it to be completely, you know, accessible, which... so that was an interesting example of. Yeah.

**T05** [00:28:24] Well, thank you.

**Interviewer** [00:28:27] I just used this to like, compliment you. Sorry about that, must be weird. So this next one, obviously you mentioned you do more literary translation, but even within literary translation. Do you have preferred genres or text type types for L2 Translation? How, if at all, do they differ from your L1 translation practice? Please explain the reasons for this.

**T05** [00:28:55] So in this scenario, L2 is English, right?

**Interviewer** [00:28:58] Yeah.

**T05** [00:28:59] OK. So I mean it differs in that I don't really translate into my L1 language except for, you know, small things that someone might ask me to for the sake of understanding. But I translate mostly into English and I've forgotten the part of the question. My mind has just gone blank.

**Interviewer** [00:29:25] Sorry. It's it's also a bit, yeah. So like if you have preferred genres.

**T05** [00:29:31] OK. I'm not sure if I have preferred genres. I like translating books that I like reading. [laughs] When I was translating... So, this book that I translated by Luiz Ruffatto is called *O Verão Tardio*. And I realized at one point that the sections I most enjoyed translating in that book were the descriptions of nature and the landscape. So I think I prefer translating description more than I like translating dialog. I find dialog extremely difficult to translate. I met several people who are the exact opposite and find dialog very easy. But for some reason, I think dialog and writing, just like writing dialog, feels very tricky to me, because everything in a piece of writing is so considered. And yet dialog is oftentimes something that we don't necessarily control when a person speaks. They don't always land on the exact word that they want to use. Sometimes they just reach for the word that is closest to what they're trying to convey. So I get stuck on that, sort of it's almost like the distance between fiction and reality, like the reality of speech and the writing of speech seem so different to me that I get sort of stuck. And also then there are the nuances. Like, if someone, there's a lot of, you know, regional accents in a text and like, how the hell am I going to convey that a person is from, you know, Minas Gerais to a reader of English?

**Interviewer** [00:31:30] Yeah.

**T05** [00:31:32] The first book I ever translated was this book called *Agora e Na Hora Da Nossa Morte* by Suzana Moreira Marques and it's called *Now and at the hour of our death*.

**Interviewer** [00:31:44] Yes, I have that one, actually, I have the copy.

**T05** [00:31:47] I love that book. But it was challenging for several reasons. It was my first full length translation. The author is Portuguese and, you know, they speak differently. [laughs] Thankfully, the author was very understanding and very helpful because it was the first time that she was being translated into English. And we have now a very good working relationship. And the last third of the book, I don't know if you'll have read that, but the last third of the book are like essentially her transcriptions of interviews that she then sort of edited so that they sound a certain way on the page. And there was this one elderly couple who had been, I think they had either been, yeah, I think they had been born in rural Portugal and then moved at a point to Angola and spent a long time in Angola, and then they moved back to rural Portugal. And I had to try to convey that in English. And it was just very challenging.

**Interviewer** [00:32:58] I imagine. I haven't reached that part yet. But I'm.

**T05** [00:33:01] I mean, I think it's sort of... I haven't, like, I've translated that book six years ago and I haven't gone back to it, so I can't tell you if it was successful or not. But my editors seem to think it was successful at some point. But they had to urge me to actually push it further because I had been very shy about creating a language that sounded hokey.

**Interviewer** [00:33:25] Mm hmm. Mm hmm. Interesting. Interesting that the the editors kind of.

**T05** [00:33:32] Yeah, I love them. They do great work.

**Interviewer** [00:33:38] Well, I added this question because some people would say, oh, yeah, I like to dabble into like L2 translation or I have translated technical translation or even like short stories or novels. But I wouldn't dare touch poetry because that's something else I like to translate poetry into an L2 would be... Because I've actually read that in theory as well. Things like "Oh, but poetry is another thing entirely". So that's why I added this, because sometimes people would say, yeah I can do, you know, different directions of translation but only in certain genres. But actually your answer was much more interesting than I was anticipating.

**T05** [00:34:22] I mean, like, poetry is just really fucking hard. Sorry, I curse. Sorry. It's very hard to translate.

**Interviewer** [00:34:30] Yeah. It's hard to write anyway. Like in any language.

**T05** [00:34:33] Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:34:35] So are there any genres or text types that you prefer not to translate?

**T05** [00:34:43] I don't, I feel like I'd be probably be very bad at, like technical translations and legal translations, so I don't try.

**Interviewer** [00:34:52] They're also just boring.

**T05** [00:34:54] They seem boring. I hear legal translations pays very well. So, you know, that would be nice, but I of, like, half of the time, I don't understand what a contract says. So I don't.

**Interviewer** [00:35:08] Yes. It's like another language there written.

**T05** [00:35:11] Yeah. I don't know if people who do technical translations understand everything they're reading, or if they just, because it's technical. The words are sometimes very close. So it actually isn't too hard. I don't know.

**Interviewer** [00:35:27] It's like a ready made... It's like with sworn translators. Sometimes they have this kind of template and they just, you know, change the information slightly and that's it. So I feel that sometimes especially people who deal a lot with terminology and that kind of, like, corpus linguistics. I have friends who do that. And so they're just like, they have a database. And it's kind of like kind of mindless work. I feel like this is my prejudice against that type of translation, but I feel it's a bit...

**T05** [00:35:59] Yeah. I imagine all kinds of translation require a degree of creativity. But I don't think I would enjoy translating like a manual for a washing machine.

**Interviewer** [00:36:11] Yeah, I did that once, was not fun. I did one once that you had to kind of, it was an Excel spreadsheet. And then they had like random things from the Internet. I think we basically were like kind of the people inside the machines, you know, that with captcha and all, they like little codes on the Internet. Is just like you were typing up things that were in the internet. You kind of feeding the machine somehow. It was weird. Like, they paid well, but it was odd. There was even stuff from Pornhub at one point. And I was like, listen, this is a bit too much, like I remember I had to say at one point it was something almost like I interpreted as kind of paedophilia and I am like. "I'm not. I refuse to translate this section." So, yeah. So that kind of stuff kind of comes up.

**T05** [00:37:03] I actually would love to get into subtitling just because sometimes I watch movies and think, wow, they really needed a literary translator because it comes across as so flat. Like, the information is getting across, but you're not getting across any of the depth of feeling or tone.

**Interviewer** [00:37:27] Yeah.

**T05** [00:37:28] I did a brief course in subtitling and I don't remember enjoying it, mostly because I had to timestamp things.

**Interviewer** [00:37:37] Oh yeah. That's soo.

**T05** [00:37:39] So tedious and so fastidious. It's just so hard.

**Interviewer** [00:37:45] Yeah, but I feel you on that. Like that's kind of almost literary translation because I remember I took the test for Netflix because I remember when Netflix kind of ... Can you hear me? Oh,.

**T05** [00:38:00] Yes, I can hear you.

**Interviewer** [00:38:01] There was a pop up. OK. So when Netflix kind of advertised they were looking for translators in the Brazilian market. All the translators were going crazy



and taking the test. And apparently it was really hard to pass the test. I passed it but I didn't know it was that hard, but it was hard obviously taking the test because they took scenes from, I don't remember which TV series they were, but it was obviously those that had like, you know, and innuendo and a double entendre or some kind of. And that's really hard if you're just translating the meaning, like a bit flat, you have to have some creative input in that.

**T05** [00:38:38] Totally...

**Interviewer** [00:38:39] Yeah. Sorry?

**T05** [00:38:41] Did you have to do it straight from the audio?

**Interviewer** [00:38:44] No, they had the image as well. So it's, it was kind of their own platform and they said, well you're gonna get called when we need it. And I never got a call. This was like four years ago. [both laugh] No, less than that anyway. But yeah, it was fun to do the test anyway. But yeah, it was a bit, like, the whole... Yeah, it was tricky. So, sorry, you said something? I keep interrupting you.

**T05** [00:39:14] Well, no, it's okay. No, I didn't, I wasn't saying anything.

**Interviewer** [00:39:16] I find that the only audio-only thing is a bit... Anyway. So the next two questions are about market and gatekeeping. Has your translation work ever been criticized, rejected or disregarded because you are not a native speaker of the target language?

**T05** [00:39:37] Yes.

**Interviewer** [00:39:38] Can you elaborate on that? If you want...

**T05** [00:39:44] A project of mine was turned down once. Which is just fine, on the basis, like, the book wasn't right. But then they congratulated me on. They said this was all through a friend of mine who works as an agent. And she sort of told me about it later. And both cases have to do with this specific text. And so in one case, the text was rejected, but the editor said the sample translation is really great considering T05 is a second language speaker, which is like one of those backhanded compliments.

**Interviewer** [00:40:20] Yeah. I think you tweeted about that once. I remember that.

**T05** [00:40:24] Possibly. It frustrates me also to have people when I tell them I'm Brazilian to say, wow, your English is so good as though English were not like the lingua franca, the language of the empire. Like, of course our English is good. [laughs] And then another time there was a press, a UK press that just refused to work with me and told this friend of mine that it was because I am not a native speaker.

**Interviewer** [00:40:58] Well, yeah, I am sorry it's happened by the way.

**T05** [00:41:01] With a lot of resentment in both cases. [laughs]

**Interviewer** [00:41:07] So this relates to the other question, but, you can, like, if you want to mention specific examples, have you ever been overcorrected on a linguistic choice or specific form that was consciously made by you?

**T05** [00:41:22] Oh, probably. I can't remember. I do. I mean, I sometimes get corrected [00:41:33] **or queuing too close to the** [3.7s] original sometimes or choosing Latinate words instead of Anglo-Saxon words.

**Interviewer** [00:41:49] Was there a time in which you did it on purpose? Or was it just like..

**T05** [00:41:56] There's one occasion that I can remember doing it on purpose in this text and it's where the character starts, like talking a bit philosophically and she uses the term finitude.

**Interviewer** [00:42:11] Mm hmm.

**T05** [00:42:12] And I just couldn't figure out, like, it just felt right to me as a philosophical section to choose a Latinate word. In other situations, I think I was just lacking a bit of confidence. So I was a bit, staying a bit too close to the original. And that's when I was translating from Catalan, which is a language that I'm not as comfortable in because I only lived in Catalonia for three years. And my knowledge isn't as [00:42:46] **in-depth** [0.0s] as it is with Spanish and Portuguese. I appreciate pushback from editors because they make me see my translation through different eyes. And sort of help me become detached from it and give it another look. But sometimes I do think that there is a tendency in English to choose the least obtrusive word, even when the word in the original might be a bit unusual. English translations really don't want to call attention to themselves it's so as if they have to, you know, be coy.

**Interviewer** [00:43:37] This reminds me of translating this short story by Machado de Assis. That was very, it was odd in Portuguese as well. I was like, I translated this with a friend. And I was like, I'm not sure I understand the text itself. Like, I was really struggling with it. And there was some really weird word choices. And I remember having someone read it over, someone who didn't know Portuguese and they were like, oh, this sounds odd. And I was like, yes, it sounds odd in Portuguese, what can you do like I'm not gonna just make it sound super fluent in English.

**T05** [00:44:11] Yeah, it's really hard to account for that when translating into English and I still haven't figured out a way around it. I mean I think I tread particularly carefully because I'm so scared of having people accuse me of like not being a native speaker and telling me to get the hell out of translating into English, even though I've now got, I think, seven books under my belt, it still feels like I'm treading on ice. it's something about the nature of literary translation, we're all... It always feels very precarious, if that makes sense.

**Interviewer** [00:45:05] Like you're never sure, you're always doubting yourself. from the beginning?

**T05** [00:45:08] Yes. I don't. I'm not sure. I mean, a friend of mine who's, another friend who's a translator once said to me, isn't it odd that we, who are such insecure people have found ourself in such an insecure profession. But not only insecure, like a profession that requires so much self-doubt, which is [00:45:36] **the job** [0.1s] I was talking about earlier, the sort of needing to make sure that you're not assuming understanding of something. I'm also an extremely indecisive person who has gotten herself into a profession that requires making constant decisions. So I don't know what that's about.

**Interviewer** [00:46:00] I guess what helped me in that was this whole thing in translation theory, like, I was talking to my friend who is also doing her PhD in translation. We were talking about how, like, every translation is a reading. So I'm still very insecure about everything that I do, but I kind of think sometimes. Yeah, well, this is my reading. If you don't agree with it, just do your own translation with your own reading. But it is tricky because obviously people can doubt your reading and say, look, that's not right.

**T05** [00:46:33] And also, like a translation is a reading. The translator is not the author. So the translator doesn't have access to all of the thought processes behind the author's rendition of a text. We're working with the same exact words that any other reader has on the page. It's just that we spend much longer with them.

**Interviewer** [00:47:02] But you're also the closest, or like you're the best reader of the text maybe because...

**T05** [00:47:09] I mean, you're definitely the most persistent reader of a text. I'm not sure translators are the best readers because oftentimes we don't have all of the cultural context. We have to find the cultural context. One thing that, well, this is anecdotal. Boris Dralyuk once translated this Russian author whose name is escaping me. But it was for the New York Review of Books. Oh, Rock, Paper, Scissors is the name of the book and the author is called Maxim Osipov. And Maxim Osipov, I think, is or used to work as a medical translator and before Boris started translating his book, Maxim Osipov through the entire translation. And like, inserted the meta information, like he picked out every reference that he had made and sort of highlighted it and explained the reference so that when Boris translated this book, he had this whole intertext available to him. Which is, as far as I'm concerned, like a translator's dream.

**Interviewer** [00:48:31] Yeah, definitely. [both laugh]

**T05** [00:48:36] So that's the anecdotal bit. The other bit that I wanted to say that's something that helps me and I only just read it recently and I can't remember where I read it right now. But it's the idea that a translation is not meant to be read next to the original. Like it's not meant to be like set up against the original and scrutinized for what it doesn't do. I don't think. It's supposed to stand on its own with no relation to the original.

**Interviewer** [00:49:07] Mm hmm. Yeah.

**T05** [00:49:09] It often doesn't. And this may be a problem, but I think it doesn't, in translation... When we think of the ideal reader, we don't often imagine a bilingual reader.

**Interviewer** [00:49:22] Mm hmm. Yeah.

**T05** [00:49:23] The book we are translating for, we're not thinking of bilingual people, we are thinking of monolingual.

**Interviewer** [00:49:31] Yeah.

**T05** [00:49:35] Which is probably something that we have to reevaluate.

**Interviewer** [00:49:39] Yeah, that's interesting. Well, yeah, it also depends on the type of translation. But yeah, I would say in general, you won't expect your reader to also be able to access the original and just go "Oh, this is wrong. This is right."

**T05** [00:49:53] Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:49:54] Interesting. Like I added this question, actually, because I study a lot. I study and have translated Yoko Tawada and in the German speaking context, they have a lot of examples of writers who write in German but are not German or have migrated to Germany later in life. And they have this kind of concept of this authority German that, you know, she was a victim of that. When people said this was like a grammar mistake because she's not a native speaker. But actually she did that on purpose because she wanted to, you know, kind of make a joke about German and they were like, oh, this is wrong. She clearly has no mastery of German, which is a word that Tawada doesn't like: Mastery. But it was kind of like she clearly hasn't grasped German grammar well enough. And you can see that she's not a native speaker, but actually she was doing it on purpose. So this can happen with exophonic authors and translators.

**T05** [00:50:59] I love Yoko Tawada, she is great.

**Interviewer** [00:51:00] She's the best. I love her. So much. She kind of, like, my brain is not the same after translating her. But I think it's for the best.

**T05** [00:51:13] Most of the time it's for the best that your brain is changed by a translation.

**Interviewer** [00:51:18] Yeah. So the next set of questions are about creative writing, fluency and translation. How do you view the relationship between fluency and creativity in the languages you use?

**T05** [00:51:36] I am mostly fluent and creative in English, [laughs] and I feel very stilted in Portuguese and in Spanish I feel more adept at all. It all has to do with my control of the language. I guess there's a lot of word association that goes into creating maybe one word would take you naturally to the next. And my vocabulary in English is so much wider. I think my understanding of other romance languages actually amplifies my English. I think it makes it richer. Well, it cuts a lot of the root Latinate. The sort of the roots of the Latinate words in English are. Wait. I just confused myself. What am I trying to say? I'm trying to say that the romance languages give me an understanding of less-used English terms because of the Latin, it also causes confusion because of false friends, so I sometimes think that something means one thing in English when I realize I've just carried my understanding of another language to it. Likewise between Spanish and Portuguese. Damn! That happens a lot.

**Interviewer** [00:53:05] Well, that doesn't have to be a bad thing anyway,.

**T05** [00:53:10] No it doesn't.

**Interviewer** [00:53:11] This is also a cluster question, by the way, do you also do creative writing outside of your translation practice. If so, in which languages in your first, second, third, whatever? And do you experiment with different languages? And how do you view your creative writing if you practice it or.

**T05** [00:53:34] I don't really practice creative writing.

**Interviewer** [00:53:36] OK. OK. So this is an easy one.

**T05** [00:53:41] The most creative I ever get is writing essays about translation.

**Interviewer** [00:53:45] Oh yeah. I read one about... I don't remember in which journal it was, it was about kind of entering in the carcass of. [siren noises].

**T05** [00:54:00] Sorry, hold on. We live right next to a fire stations. Can you hear.

**Interviewer** [00:54:05] What. Sorry?

**T05** [00:54:07] Can you repeat that?

**Interviewer** [00:54:08] No, I was going to say that you had a text, an essay about translation that really resonated with me because I translated a book by Tawada and the three narrators were polar bears.

**T05** [00:54:20] Oh yeah, I know that one, did you translate that for Todavía?

**Interviewer** [00:54:23] Yeah. Yeah.

**T05** [00:54:25] Oh, cool.

**Interviewer** [00:54:26] I would actually have to remove this next bit of information from my transcription, because it's kind of tricky. But actually, my supervisor added his name to the translation without having done any of the work, so. And when Tawada visited, when she went on tour in Brazil. She was very suspicious, at one point she asked me on this, she was like, did he do any work?

**T05** [00:54:52] Of course he's a man.

**Interviewer** [00:54:54] And I was like, not really. He actually he forced me. It was awful is the whole thing. Yeah. But I did it and my whole master's degree was about the translation of that book.

**T05** [00:55:05] I'm very sorry that happened. It's more common than it should be.

**Interviewer** [00:55:14] Yeah. I saw the one about the translator of Clarice Lispector.

**T05** [00:55:18] Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:55:18] Yeah. Well so but that essay you wrote and I remember it was like about inside of a... I don't remember exactly the words you used, but it was like like being inside, getting inside a carcass of an animal or a bear.

**T05** [00:55:34] Oh Yeah [laughs].

**Interviewer** [00:55:35] And I remember I used that metaphor in the event with Tawada, and she just laughed so much, she was like, oh, I love it and she wrote it down. So it's spreading. But that one was really good.

**T05** [00:55:48] It's nice and creepy, isn't it?

**Interviewer** [00:55:51] It reminded me of The Revenant, the movie.

**T05** [00:55:55] Yeah, actually. So this was this came from this book called North Something. I'll see if I can find it for you. But it's not a book I read it's my partner who read it and then told me about this scene and I was like, well, it's also in Star Wars. Right. In one of the Star Wars. The belly of one of those strange Arctic creatures and crawls into it.

**Interviewer** [00:56:18] Yeah. That I've not. There's something there I don't remember exactly, but yeah. That makes sense. [both laugh] So the last part is about training and professional status. So the first question is kind of a cluster again, don't worry if you don't remember all of it, but it's just like, you know, adding to the question before it etc. So did you have any formal translation training? If so, did it include different translation directions? If you did receive training in different directions, has there been a change in the directions that you practiced since completing your training? Do you still translate in both directions, in only one... That part is not relevant. But did you have any formal, like...

**T05** [00:57:09] So I did a masters in comparative literature and literary translation at the Universidad Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona. And I did it because I wanted more training, but I wouldn't say that I learned very much about translation, about the craft of translation there. I had one course in two years. It was a semester, one semester in two years. I did a translation into English. That's it. The rest was sort of, I did subtitling, I did some theory, but I was mostly working into Spanish.

**Interviewer** [00:57:55] Do you do feel that theory helped you in any way as a translator? Like, sometimes it's not very obvious, but sometimes it's on the back of our mind. But did that training help you in any way?

**T05** [00:58:14] I don't know. That's the thing that the phenomenon. I don't know, maybe you can say more about this, but I think the phenomenon of translating into English is different than it is of translating into other languages.

**Interviewer** [00:58:27] Yeah, definitely.

**T05** [00:58:28] What we do as translators is different in terms of like pitching projects and that kind of thing. And it's also the expectation of what our translations should sound like is different. Our position as translators is different. But I mean, if anything, all it helps me to do was learn Catalan in Spanish rather than translate per se, it helped me, like, which is very, very important as well, but it definitely helped me cement my Spanish and learn Catalan for the first time. About theory. I find theory fascinating. And I like being surrounded by it because I feel like it helps me understand maybe what I'm doing day by day. But I don't necessarily think that it affects how I translate.

**Interviewer** [00:59:32] I feel that sometimes you, I remember, because my bachelors degree was in translation, so we had a lot of classes of translation theory and practice and whatever, and it was back in Brazil. So it's a very different field and coming here in the U.K. and it's like a whole different thing. But I remember thinking, like, how am I ever going to apply these things into my translation? I'm not going to use any of that. And I do feel that sometimes they're there somewhere in the back of my head. But it's not something that I can you know, I'm not going to say, look, this is my transl... sometimes it helps, like, to defend yourself, even, like, you say, oh, I use this whatever. And then people my you know, I don't know. I think it's there, but it's not obvious.

**T05** [01:00:19] Yeah. I mean, well, I may die on this hill, but I think that the greatest guide to translation is the text that you're translating. You have to be true to that text, in a way, and each text is so wildly different.

**Interviewer** [01:00:37] Yeah, even in the same text, sometimes you have to change your approach.

**T05** [01:00:46] yeah, that's funny.

**Interviewer** [01:00:47] I'm sorry. Please say...

**T05** [01:00:49] No, no. That was all, I was just uhming.

**Interviewer** [01:00:53] Well, you did your bachelor's in Edinburgh, right? You said.

**T05** [01:00:58] I did my undergrad in Edinburgh.

**Interviewer** [01:01:00] Was that in languages as well? Literature?

**T05** [01:01:03] It was a literature and philosophy.

**Interviewer** [01:01:04] OK. OK.

**T05** [01:01:08] So I got into I got into translation in my last year of undergrad because I had decided that I wanted to write about an author who was not necessarily English. I actually didn't want to write about British authors at all. I ended up writing about Macunaíma and this book [01:01:29] called *Caine* by Harlem Renaissance writer called *Jean Toomer*. [3.4s] But because I was writing about a different, like, a text from a different language, they said that I had to use reference in English translation, though, in referencing Macunaíma in English, I found that the translation was just baffling to me.

**Interviewer** [01:01:56] Yeah.

**T05** [01:01:59] Which is why [01:01:59] *Katrina Dawson* [0.4s] is actually retranslating it.

**Interviewer** [01:02:02] It needs to be retranslated. Definitely.

**T05** [01:02:06] It's just like it's so... It's just like not rude enough. It's not vulgar enough. The translation. It's almost like too genteel. But that's when I started, I hadn't ever thought about translation before that moment. Really. So that's when I started thinking about it. And I was like, oh, this is fun. The rest is history. I guess.

**Interviewer** [01:02:31] So macunaíma kind of brought you into this world in a way.

**T05** [01:02:35] Yeah.

**Interviewer** [01:02:36] Or a bad translation of Macunaíma

**T05** [01:02:42] That translation of Macunaíma alerted me to the craft of it, I guess. I hadn't really thought about it before, even though I read pretty widely. I had access to so many languages as it came, but I often read the books in the language.

**Interviewer** [01:03:02] Yeah. Yeah, that's usually the case. Are you a member of the professional association, which one?

**T05** [01:03:15] I'm a member of the Society of Authors and I am both a member of the Authors Guild and I am on the Council of the Authors Guild. And I am the chair of the Translators Group on the Authors Guild.

**Interviewer** [01:03:30] A lot then.

**T05** [01:03:31] Yeah, I mean, it's all one thing really. It's because the translators group is so insipient.

**Interviewer** [01:03:43] You're also part of this transition collective, right?

**T05** [01:03:46] Yes. Cedilla.

**Interviewer** [01:03:48] So in a way, it is kind of.

**T05** [01:03:52] I haven't thought about it as a professional organization but I guess it could be.

**Interviewer** [01:03:55] It could be. So we reached the end of my prepared questions. I talked more than you I think.

**T05** [01:04:04] No, not at all. It was a very interesting conversation and I hope. You'll find it helpful.

**Interviewer** [01:04:13] Yeah, definitely. There's a lot of great things, like, I'm looking forward to transcribing this, which is saying a lot because transcribing is a very slow and difficult job but I'm looking forward to transcribing this one. And obviously, I might have questions to you. Once I'm transcribing it because, you know, sometimes I don't know. I might not understand a word or something? Then I'll just email you with with that, if that's ok.

**T05** [01:04:43] Of course. Of course. Of course. Please feel free to e-mail me with any follow ups.

**Interviewer** [01:04:48] Cool. Do you have anything else that you want to add to wrap it up?

**T05** [01:04:53] Oh, I guess in terms of training, I remember now it's not really training, but I did go to the BCLT Summer School one year.

**Interviewer** [01:05:03] All right.

**T05** [01:05:03] And I did go to Birkbeck one year as well, mostly because I wanted to meet Margaret Jull Costa. [laughs] I am a firm believer in workshops. I feel like I learned a lot from my fellow translators.

**Interviewer** [01:05:21] Yeah, I missed the deadline for this year's because they went online, right. The BCLT one. And I missed the deadline for some reason. I think COVID



kind of is guilty of that because it was a bit of a mess. And now I saw it's beginning like in two weeks or so, they are starting. And I'm like, oh,.

**T05** [01:05:42] There's always...

**Interviewer** [01:05:44] What?

**T05** [01:05:45] There's always next year.

**Interviewer** [01:05:46] Yeah, definitely. I'll do that. So thank you so, so much. I hope we keep in touch. And have a nice end of your... I hope you're, also, you know, be safe out there.

**T05** [01:06:01] I will, and you too. Take care. And I hope you get a good night's sleep.

**Interviewer** [01:06:06] Thank you. Bye!

**T05** [01:06:09] Tchou!

**Interviewer** [01:06:09] tchau!.

•

## **Interview T06**

**Interviewer** [00:00:03] Can you turn your volume a bit up.

**T06** [00:00:07] Yep, is it any better now?

**Interviewer** [00:00:10] Yeah, much better. Thanks.

**T06** [00:00:11] OK.

**Interviewer** [00:00:13] So how are you doing?

**T06** [00:00:14] I'm fine thanks. How are you?

**Interviewer** [00:00:17] I'm fine, yeah. It was a bit like I understand your situation with your computer because I as it turns out, I use my Mac and the Skype for business thing for some reason, the audio. I Googled it. And apparently there's this fault with the Mac and the Skype for business.

**T06** [00:00:36] Oh, gosh.

**Interviewer** [00:00:36] So it's a whole thing. And then I you have luckily I have another computer like a Windows one, but it's is I don't use it a lot. So for example right before we started it was like updating the programs.

**T06** [00:00:52] Of course, it always does [laughs].

**Interviewer** [00:00:54] And I am like. Oh no. But luckily I think it worked.

**T06** [00:00:58] That's great. We got there in the end. I also tried with my partner's Mac, but it wouldn't work either. So anyway, we managed.

**Interviewer** [00:01:08] I'm lucky that we managed and sorry for all the back and forth in the emails. It was a bit of a hectic couple weeks.

**T06** [00:01:16] Don't worry. It's a strange time. And yeah, we all have stuff going on.

**Interviewer** [00:01:22] I am suffering from Corona brain or some something of that. Not Corona because I don't have Corona but lockdown brain or something like it.

**T06** [00:01:33] Yeah, it's a common condition, I think, these days.

**Interviewer** [00:01:37] Is it hot? Is it warm there where you are?

**T06** [00:01:41] I'm in London. It's yeah. It's sunny today. So it's a bit warmer, but the last few weeks have not been great. Where are you based?

**Interviewer** [00:01:53] Well, the thing is, I'm in Coventry, which is an hour and a half away.

**T06** [00:01:58] Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:01:58] But here it's like I had to hide myself in my bedroom because my living room is frying up. It's so warm in my living room. So that's why I asked because, you know, this morning was like. But luckily, you know, I prefer the sunny skies than anything else .

**T06** [00:02:19] Yeah. Yeah, it's nice. Although I think I've resented this stupidly sunny spring that we've had right this year when we couldn't go anywhere. I was like, you know what? You could have done that last year. But, you know.

**Interviewer** [00:02:38] Yeah. I mean, I think at the end of this year, we are gonna be like I'm not gonna count this year when I'm thinking about my age, like, 2020 didn't happen.

**T06** [00:02:48] Yeah. That's a good idea.

**Interviewer** [00:02:53] So, the thing is, I have questions to guide me and I have to ask all of them to make it fair, so I ask the same things of all the interviewees, but obviously some might repeat themselves or like something that you already... Sometimes people say more in their answers and then they already kind of answer other questions. So this is just to say that if I ask something that you feel like you already answered, you can just say, well, that's that's something that I already talked about. Or if you want to add to something that you said before, you're also more than welcome to comment on any terminology that I use to ask questions about the questions. You know, feel free to do that. So, I don't remember, did you take the questionnaire right? The online one. What did you think of that?

**T06** [00:03:50] I thought it was fairly general. I mean, it was fine. I think it didn't go so much into the details of one's relationship with the languages that we speak. That was the only thing. But I assume that was on purpose. We were going to have an interview anyway.

**Interviewer** [00:04:15] Well that was the comparable part? Because I have similar questions but it's slightly different, but the structure is similar, like and the questions are kind of similar that I ask of publishers and also student translators. So that's why the questionnaire is a way to have more quantifiable data. And obviously, this part is more... you're more than welcome to add things into. If you feel that a question is too narrow and you want to just add a piece of information. I mean, I've had translators talk for two hours in these interviews and some just talked for 20 minutes. You know, it depends on the person, really. So feel free to just go with the flow.

**T06** [00:04:59] Okay.

**Interviewer** [00:05:00] So shall we start then?

**T06** [00:05:03] of course, sure.

**Interviewer** [00:05:04] Sure. OK. So the first set of questions has a common theme which is approaches to languages. The first one is a bit of a cluster one. Do you consider that you have a mother tongue, a first language or more than one? If so, which one or which ones? If not, why not?

**T06** [00:05:28] OK. So yes, I consider myself to have a mother tongue. And only one I'd say, and that is Italian. I've always wondered about this phrase mother tongue, because I consider Italian to be my father tongue as well. But I have to say, I did all my education in

Italian, and I didn't actually, I mean, I studied English at school, but I, I, I don't think I was learning more than the grammar, if you know what I mean.

**Interviewer** [00:06:16] Yeah.

**T06** [00:06:18] And therefore, my knowledge of languages came quite late. So, yeah, I don't know if it this...how what someone means when they learn the language comes into the definition. I think that's partly why I don't feel I can say English is my mother tongue, too, because I didn't start speaking English until I was well into my twenties.

**Interviewer** [00:06:49] That's why I add, obviously, some some translators are more passionate about. I mean, they can use, like, adopted mother tongue or my biological mother tongue or something like that. I mean, people use different terms to define their languages. But, you know. Good. Thank you for that. So the second question you kind of already answered. But like, what is your language of education? Is it different from your mother tongue?

**T06** [00:07:19] No, that's the same.

**Interviewer** [00:07:20] So you did all of your education in Italian then?

**T06** [00:07:23] Yes, including a master's in translation.

**Interviewer** [00:07:27] OK, cool.

**T06** [00:07:28] So. Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:07:30] Do you, uh, translate into a non mother tongue? And if so, what is your experience of it?

**T06** [00:07:37] Well, that's a big question. Yeah. I translate... So, I have to say, I, I mostly translate into Italian, so I mostly translate into my mother tongue. But I also translate into English a bit, which I know some people used the term language of habitual use, which is quite fitting, a bit clinical, if you may, but it is what English is for me. And, what's my experience of it? so, when I translate into English, I either translate working drafts. So I've worked with theater companies where they needed a script to be able to do a first reading of a play. And in that case, I worked by myself. And then I get feedback from the actors and the people involved in the reading, etc. But if I am translating something for publication I usually co-translate, that's more what my experience is like in terms of translating out of my mother tongue, and then I have one other language that I translate from, but I don't translate into it, which is Croatian, Bosnian, Serbian, Montenegrin...

**Interviewer** [00:09:10] There's a, there's an acronym, Right?

**T06** [00:09:15] Yeah, BCSM.

**Interviewer** [00:09:16] I had another translator, another interviewee who also translates from these languages.

**T06** [00:09:23] I think that's how I am. he mentioned your research to me. And so I got in touch.

**Interviewer** [00:09:30] That's. That's right. Yeah, that's right. Well, yeah. So this is there's a whole club of these translators. I'm very bad with acronyms. But anyway. Yeah. Good to know that. So you translate from those languages into Italian and/or English?

**T06** [00:09:47] Both.

**Interviewer** [00:09:47] Okay.

**T06** [00:09:48] Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:09:49] So it's like.

**T06** [00:09:50] But I never translate into any of those languages.

**Interviewer** [00:09:53] Okay. Okay. Cool. But it's interesting that you had the experience of translating into. I mean do you have any... So Croatian or this subset of languages are like languages that you learned later on in life as well.

**T06** [00:10:11] Yes.

**Interviewer** [00:10:12] OK. So you would say that you translated from them into English. So it's like a second and a third or something like that.

**T06** [00:10:19] Yeah. It was essentially from my third language into my second.

**Interviewer** [00:10:24] Yes. I've had that experience with German into English. So it's another layer of directionality which is interesting.

**T06** [00:10:35] Yes. And I think, you know, there's obviously a lot of debate about translating into a language that is not your mother tongue or native language. And I think it gives me a sort of term of, like, of comparison, because I know a lot of the people I think that translate into their non-native language, translate into it from their native language. So, for instance, there will be English to Polish, Polish to English. And I think translating from your third to your second language gives you an additional layer of complexity. And also perhaps more awareness of what, where the difficulties are, because you are not, fully, not at ease, but, yeah, I find that when I translate from Italian into English, it's a different process.

**Interviewer** [00:11:42] Mm hmm. Yeah, interesting. I feel similarly. So this next one you kind of already answered. But you can, you know, elaborate on that. How would you describe your relationship to the languages you can speak, write, translate.

**T06** [00:12:06] [sighs, then laughs].

**Interviewer** [00:12:08] Don't worry, you don't have to come up with a like big deep metaphor or something like that, just just, you know, like talk about why you learn them? Why? And, you know, that kind of stuff.

**T06** [00:12:19] Yes. So I. I learned obviously both, uh, let's say Serbo-Croat, just for easiness of, yeah. Speed. I'd say both Serbo-Croat and English I learned first while in Italy. And therefore I studied them as you would study a second language. It was a lot of grammar-based study. And then I, I did live in Serbia for almost a year. And obviously I've

been living in the U.K. for much longer than that. So. I have experience of both cultures from living in the country. I do not, which I know is, not often the case, but can be the case for people who decide to write or translate into a language that is not their mother tongue. I know that some people have a sort of traumatic or negative experiences of their own mother tongue or language. I don't know, I think about Aleksandar Hemon who is a Serbian writer that essentially mostly writes in English. I don't know if you're familiar with him.

**Interviewer** [00:13:47] Yeah. Because the pool of exophonic authors is not that big. So obviously, I don't know if I've read him, but I know about him. Yeah.

**T06** [00:14:00] Yeah. And I think he's written an article about this and how when he when he first went to America, he felt he couldn't write about his experience as a refugee in his mother tongue, because he had no... I don't know. It was obviously a very complicated relationship. And I don't think I have a complicated relationship with any of the languages I speak. Not complicated in the sense... Not dramatic. Not negative.

**Interviewer** [00:14:35] Can I ask how long have you been living in the UK?

**T06** [00:14:39] It's been six years in London. And then I lived in Jersey for a year and a half before that.

**Interviewer** [00:14:48] OK.

**T06** [00:14:48] Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:14:55] So.

**T06** [00:14:56] But it's hard. I'm sort of defining my relationship, and I was just in a negative way saying what it is not. I'm not sure I know what it is.

**Interviewer** [00:15:05] That's OK. You don't have to know, it's just that, I mean, some people have all these kind of complicated, you know, weird situations with so many languages and so many experiences. So that's why I added that. But, you know, that seems good for me.

**T06** [00:15:26] I think maybe the only thing I can add is that I have a slightly more complex relationship with Serbo-Croat just because it is a more complex in itself, types of languages, as in there's some conflict intrinsic in it and even the fact that how you decide to call that set of languages can be tricky. And obviously it's not my native language either. So I feel also a little bit as if I am an outsider. And I feel always when I talk about those languages and my understanding of those cultures, I feel more like I'm treading on a difficult ground, whilst that doesn't happen so much for English or Italian.

**Interviewer** [00:16:25] Yeah, I guess that can happen when, you know, obviously politics is everywhere. But when, like, I for example, I can translate from Spanish, but obviously I'm from Brazil. I'm not a Spanish speaker. And there's so many different types of Spanish. So there's my more Latin American, but the Southern Latin American kind of Spanish like Argentina and Uruguay. But if I tried to translate something from Mexico, I mean, it's not the same type of political tension, obviously, as, you know, in your case.

**T06** [00:16:59] Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:16:59] It can be complicated to kind of.

**T06** [00:17:02] Yeah. Yes. Yes. And I guess any languages that have a colonial past can be tricky in the sense that you're always dealing with the power dynamics within those languages. Obviously, that's more for when you translate, in the case of English, I mean, it would be more the case if I translated an English, that is not from a country that has a colonial past and all this sort of stuff. But that's not usually what I deal with. So I think I don't have to deal as much with the complication of English colonial history whilst I have, it's inevitable, I don't think any translators from Croatian, Bosnian, Serbia and Montenegro, can get away from that complexity. I think.

**Interviewer** [00:18:03] Interesting. Yeah, well, it's a tricky one. The last question of this set, the first set of questions. Have you ever been able to express something in the language that is not your first language more satisfactorily? How so?

**T06** [00:18:26] Yes, I think so. I think it's partly. I think part of it is the fact that I, on a daily basis, I mean, not so much now that we are in lockdown, but on a daily basis over the last six years, I've definitely been speaking a lot of English and therefore sometimes I find myself thinking in English and it comes easier just because I am immersed in that context. And on the other hand, if I try and say the same things in Italian, sometimes I struggle although I try and make it sort of daily practice, daily exercise? Because I don't want to lose the nuances when I'm expressing myself in my native language. But certainly there have been cases when it just comes easier. I don't know if I'm more satisfied about the results. But it's just more natural. It also very much depends on the subject of the conversation. Anything work related? So I have a day job in science and anything science related, despite the fact that I did my studies in Italy, I've got used to speaking about it in English so much that that comes easier.

**Interviewer** [00:20:08] So I'm just adding this question. It was not originally in my set of questions. But do you think you are like different people in different languages? Do you have, like, different versions of yourself?

**T06** [00:20:20] A bit, yes. I know there's that saying that says that we have one personality for each language that we speak. I think in that way it's true. But also what I've noticed and then my sister, who is a speech therapist confirmed is that my voice is different depending on what language I speak. And this is something my sister says has been studied on a sort of research level, but no one has understood why it happens. But you have a certain different pitch slightly when you speak different languages. But I. I do think, I just think it's slightly different the way I present myself to others, depending on what language I speak and I notice it particularly with Italian and English, just because I've had longer to observe this, essentially. But I think my Italian personality is angrier, more of the fighting type, whereas my British personality, I think is very much influenced by my status as an immigrant. And therefore my... Not that every immigrant has that, but I certainly do, my sort of need to fit in and not to make a fuss about myself and therefore try not to upset.

**Interviewer** [00:21:53] You've become more British then

**T06** [00:21:57] Yes, I think it has been the case, at least for the first five years I've been here. And more recently, I think I've put more of my Italian personality come through in my English partially because of the political situation, making me more annoyed at the party.

**Interviewer** [00:22:21] Yeah, yeah, I get that.

**T06** [00:22:23] Yeah. And also partly it's... After a while. I mean this is from talking to people who had similar experiences and realizing that. I mean, you can be yourself and if other people don't like it, it's their problem. But yeah, it's taken a while. So I definitely think it's especially different depending on what language...

**Interviewer** [00:22:49] I do feel that I'm funnier in Portuguese than in English because the sense of humor of, like, different cultures is also different. But I mean, it's that kind of... Those nuances. And I think, yeah, the voice definitely, I feel that my voice sounds lower in English than in Portuguese. I think I'm more high-pitched in Portuguese, maybe.

**T06** [00:23:12] I think for me it's the opposite.

**Interviewer** [00:23:15] OK. Yeah. I don't know. I thought it was because of, you know, the Latinate languages or something. But I don't think, I think it's just personal. Maybe. I don't know. Maybe. Okay, so the next set of questions are more specific about directionality

**T06** [00:23:33] Yes.

**Interviewer** [00:23:33] So the first question is actually a cluster one. So bear with me. What is the difference for you between both or more directions of translation? How would you describe your translation process and types of challenge, linguistic or otherwise, when you are translating into a mother tongue or first language or into a foreign language?

**T06** [00:23:56] OK. So. I mean, obviously, this is also influenced by the type of text I am translating but for the stuff I've had the chance to translate so far, I'd say when I translate out of Serbo-Croat, there's more of a challenge in terms of comprehension. So I need to do a lot more sitting there with a dictionary and making sure the words I am reading mean what I'm thinking. So that's one thing. And obviously it applies both when I translate into Italian and into English.

**Interviewer** [00:24:43] Mm hmm.

**T06** [00:24:46] Whilst if I'm translating out of Italian into English. There's less of that. Of course, there are some texts where even in your native language, you you do wonder if you're understanding it right or... but it's less of an obstacle or at least it is a less time consuming phase, if I think about how I go about the process. And I thin, definitely for me. And this is obviously entirely personal, and I don't mean to make a statement for every non-native speaker translating into a non-native language, but for me, there is a sort of frustration, a little bit, when I translate into English, that is produced by the fact that I feel like, you know, like you're playing darts and you always hit close, but not right at the target, I think. Whilst at least while I was leaving there, less so now, because I'm doubting my Italian a lot more. But before, when I was translating into Italian, I felt fairly in control of the language, which obviously doesn't mean I don't make mistakes or I don't ask a million people to check my Italian or "do you say these" or "do say that?" I still do that in Italian, too. But I felt like I could use the language in a more sort of surgical way like that I hit right where there where I need to hit.

**Interviewer** [00:26:40] And I think you are more like precise with that.



**T06** [00:26:44] Yes. Precise and more in control of the medium. So I feel that Italian I can bend and twist the way I like it. And I feel fairly confident, that I can do that whilst with English... yeah, I don't always feel, like, sometimes I feel there is a better word and I can't think of it, where there must be a better word because this is close, but not quite where I want to say. And also, I am less creative with the language, I don't... In Italian, I wouldn't have a problem writing something that might not be grammatically perfectly correct. If I feel that that's what's needed, with English, I don't know if I have that ability. Yes.

**Interviewer** [00:27:43] So thank you for that. Do you have any preferred? So this also a clustered one. Do you have any preferred genres or text types for L2 translation? How, if at all, do they do differ from your L1 translation practice?

**T06** [00:28:03] I do, and I think it might be that is just because that's what I've had the chance to translate so far. And partly it's also dictated by the fact that I prefer to work with someone else when I translate into English. So theater has been quite a good, how to say, gym for me to practice my L2 translations. And I've done samples of novels in co-translations, but not entire novels. And I am quite happy with that. I don't know why if I would tackle a novel by myself into English. And they differ from the genres I've been translating when translating into Italian. So I've never had the chance to translate theater into Italian. And that's not necessarily a choice. It's just, it's never happened. And I've translated quite a lot of popular science. And so more to do with my background in science. Well, it's been quite nice because, in a way, because I think that sometimes as translators, we get a little bit pigeonholed in in whatever genre we first started translating. And so, maybe in Italy I am seen as a nonfiction translator whilst translating into English has given me the freedom to say well actually I quite like theater, I'm going to give it a go. And I think theater lends itself very well to collaborative processes.

**Interviewer** [00:30:03] I feel that there's a difference also between in the in the translation markets. I mean, in the literary translation market in Italy, in the UK must be like in Brazil, in the UK, it's a different kind of, like, in Brazil we have such a strong and, you know, important and big literary translation market because we translate a lot. So it's much harder to get the opportunity to translate something and publish it than if you were speaker of another language. And you can, you know, bring that into this more... It is limited, a small group, but still I feel like I've been here for two years and I know a lot of the people who are publishing translation and are translating and you know, and that wouldn't be possible back home. So it's like a different, also the opportunities are different because of, you know, the difference, you know, in the markets itself. Like...I felt that at least in my experience...

**T06** [00:31:10] It is definitely a different market. And for some aspect, it is a good thing because a lot more of the literature that is published in Italy is literature in translation, just for sheer you know, number of speakers that speak Italian in the world. It's tiny compared to English. So you got to branch out and publish translations. On the other hand I have found partly because of the history of Britain, I have found the literary translators community here a little bit more welcoming, even though I'm an L2 translator, which of course generates some suspicion.

**Interviewer** [00:32:01] I feel in that, I mean, I when I first came here, I kind of noticed how it is a very monolingual community, like it's in the sense of they are British people who study the foreign language and maybe lived abroad for a while and are very interested in, you know, a literature that's not English literature. But then I started getting to know these people and they are much more open than I would have thought when I just arrived. And

also, obviously, I agree, I do research on L2 translation, so it's not an easy one to talk about, but I feel much more, much more from scholars of translation studies. I feel much more of a... not resentment, I forgot the word. But, like, they don't want.

**T06** [00:32:56] Resistance.

**Interviewer** [00:32:57] Yeah, resistance. That's exactly the word. Yeah. As you know, if you actually ask translators who are out there, they're a bit more open to that, I guess.

**T06** [00:33:06] Yeah, a little bit. And even if I put aside the fact that I'm an L2 translator and they look at how, what is available for starting out translators that are native speaker of English. There is a lot more here than there is in Italy, where the translation community is very much like a closed, like a club. Yes, very hard. It's much harder to. To get advice, to get. Yes. And yeah. And also, I think. English speakers, whether they like it or not, have had to get used to the fact that English is a language that is spoken with a gazillion different accents and from people coming from all over the world.

**Interviewer** [00:34:06] Yeah.

**T06** [00:34:07] And so there is more nuance in there in the use of the language itself than there is in Italy, which has, I mean, has been until maybe 25 years ago, a very mono cultural place and obviously doesn't have... Not that this is a bad thing, but it obviously influences the use of the language, Italy doesn't have a colonial past as much as Britain does. So Italians have always been used to Italian spoken by Italians. And that is pretty much it. So there isn't even a debate about L2 translation, which I think is starting out here, there is not happening. There is a... They just started the debate about writing in your non-native language, mostly inspired by Jhumpa Lahiri writing her novel in Italian. And that was all new. While British people have been used to non British writers for a long time. Not that they're represented enough in the publishing world.

**Interviewer** [00:35:36] Yeah, yeah.

**T06** [00:35:37] But they get more of that.

**Interviewer** [00:35:38] Mm hmm. But it reminds me of, on flights by Olga Tokarczuk. There's a quote somewhere where they talk about how the English speakers end up...you know, they don't have a language of their own that only they can understand. Everyone can access their... you know? So everyone's like carrying their own like native language that they only talk to their mothers in the language or whatever. And then English speakers just... they're accessible to everyone. And then just she proposes like, maybe we should create a language only for them to use [both laugh] because that's so true of English, I guess. So are there any genres or text types that you prefer not to translate.

**T06** [00:36:29] Oh, a lot of them.

**Interviewer** [00:36:34] Or that you have refused to translate because if you thought they were...

**T06** [00:36:42] I haven't refused because I haven't been offered those jobs and I think there's a reason for that. But one of my lecturers in my Translation Masters used to say that professional translators should be able to translate anything. And while I see where she comes from and how research and accuracy in terms of checking everything that you

don't know is an important skill. So I think that's what she meant by that. But I also think there are books and translators that are better matches than others. So anything that would be, let's say, for instance, I don't know, something about philosophy. It's not something I've ever had, you know, it's not a genre that I would read often, it is not something I have a particular vocabulary for. So it wouldn't really make sense. So I think there are a lot of these because I'm not an expert.

**Interviewer** [00:38:00] But are they because you're not an expert on... But you also are not an expert on them in Italian or in any other. Right. So it's just not.

**T06** [00:38:09] Oh, yes, absolutely. It's not specific to L2 translation, I guess as...again, that is specific to me, not to L2 translators in general, but the more experimental the writing is and the more it requires, as I was mentioning before, bending the language in ways that defy good writing, with inverted commas, I think the harder it would be for me. So, for instance, if you take this to the extreme, poetry would be a really difficult thing to tackle. Not that I would probably translate it into Italian either, but even more so because you have to let go of the structures and the rules. And obviously, this is not to say that if I write anything in English, I write the formal English that I learned when I went to school. So obviously, I think I have to some extent the ability to change register and vary register, but yeah. If you need to really reinvent language or yeah, I was trying to find the word. I don't know if it's clear what I want to say.

**Interviewer** [00:39:49] No, no, I get it. And that's precisely why I added this question, because in a lot of theory or any theoretical text about translating into an L2 I've read it a lot. People saying, well, you can do that, but poetry is another world altogether. So I myself have translated poetry into L2. But it is, I agree, it can be really tricky. Yeah. You feel that you need to control it more somehow. es.

**Interviewer** [00:40:21] So the next set of questions is about market and gatekeeping. So the first one is, has your translation work been criticized, rejected or disregarded because you are not a native speaker of the target language?

**T06** [00:40:42] Well, the thing is, it hasn't, I haven't translated a lot of stuff that has been formally published. Because having translated to theater, that was maybe read aloud, presented to the public but not printed. And it's harder for people to criticize on the fly. [laughs] Know what I mean? while you're looking...

**Interviewer** [00:41:08] Did you get any feedback from these experiences that were that you feel were because of that?

**T06** [00:41:16] Yes, so in terms of of the theater work I think people feel they have more of a right to comment on your translation if you are an L2 translator, but I also have to admit that I tend to ask for quite a lot of feedback and maybe even a tad too apologetic about it, so I think it's not only that I'm an L2 translator, but also my personal attitude that might make people think that actually they can say you should write this here or something like that. So I can't tell how much of these two factors is responsible. You know, which one is dominant? That is in terms of theater, although overall, yeah, overall, it's not like I got pushbacks, like people saying 'you can't do that'. It happened to me once that I was going to... So someone forwarded me a request for a translator from Croatian for a theater residency. And I did mention in my email when I got in touch with the people responsible for selecting the translator that I wasn't a native speaker. And they said, well, actually, for this, we're looking for someone native. So they originally pushed back. The thing is, it then

happened that the translator they chose couldn't do the job. And so they came back to me and I did it. I ended up doing it. Yeah. So. So it wasn't, I mean, there was a push back, but obviously.

**Interviewer** [00:43:06] This got recovered then.

**T06** [00:43:08] Yeah. I think this is my main experience because the rest, the rest of the stuff I translated is mostly samples which are published on the Croatian Publishers Website, but I co-translated them. So I guess it's not quite the same.

**Interviewer** [00:43:27] So have you ever been overcorrected on a linguistic choice or a specific form that was consciously made by you?

**T06** [00:43:36] A bit. Yes. And this is specifically a process I'm thinking of, of translating a specific play that is quite complex and I myself have been saying that needs editing by someone with more control of the language than I have. But I felt... So, the director of the play, of the reading sometimes rejected some of my proposals with a lot of confidence, despite the fact that she doesn't have the translation experience, and she's also a non-native speaker of the language. So I felt that in that case, despite...We... Me and this person with which I have a very good working relationship, by the way, that didn't spoil it, but I felt that despite the fact that we were, in a way, both non-native speakers and I have the translation experience, she felt she could criticize some of my choices, and I think that it's probably because I am an L2 translator.

**Interviewer** [00:45:02] So thank you for that. The next set of questions is about creative writing, fluency and translation. How do you view the relationship between fluency and creativity in the languages you use?

**T06** [00:45:24] I think... I have to say that, to be honest, until a few years ago, I, I didn't even think about creative writing stupidly because I was already translating which obviously is a form of creative writing. But I didn't have an awareness of that. And for me, I've always considered myself someone who likes writing, but doesn't have much to say. So translation was just perfect because I can exercise my writing muscles, but I don't need to come up with things to say. But then I took part in a theater translation mentorship in 2016, and it really dawned on me during that process that I, no matter what, I had the right to express myself creatively in whichever form in the foreign language I liked. So now I don't see any specific relationship between the languages I speak and my ability to express creatively, I probably...it feels less natural to me to express myself creatively in Serbo-Croat just because it's as I say, it's my third language. But. Yeah, I don't make specific links now whilst, I think before I hadn't connected the dots, and therefore I wasn't... I wasn't a creative writer. I only wrote in Italian things that other people had already written.

**Interviewer** [00:47:26] OK, so the second one. The second question kind of connects to what you've said. So it's also cluster one. Do you also do creative writing outside of your translation practice? If so, is it only in your first language or do you experiment with other languages? How do you feel this creative writing, if it exists, relates to your translation practice?

**T06** [00:47:51] Okay, so. As I said, until very recently, I didn't do any independent writing that wasn't related to translation or to my job, which is not particularly creative because it's science papers. But very recently, like in the last few months, and this might partly have to do with the lockdown and the fact that I was stuck in a place and I needed an outlet. I

suddenly felt this urgency of writing about a translation project I've been taking part in. And so I did that and I did it obviously in English, because that's how the process happened. I didn't even question what language, it just felt right that it should be in English. Yeah, so. So I'd say overall, my experience of creative writing is limited. I think, I used to write poetry when I was a child, but I think the main outcome of that poetry writing was to make my sisters laugh. Mostly what my poems did. And then for a long time, I didn't feel like writing. And then this came back to me recently. So I think I forgot the second part of your question.

**Interviewer** [00:49:38] It was more or less, you know, how do you feel the creative writing part relates to your translation practice?

**T06** [00:49:46] Oh, yes. So it relates in this specific case quite closely just because I'm writing about translations. Which is something I find quite fascinating. And I was reading recently something that Kate Briggs wrote on a blog. And she was saying that we always talk about translation in terms of loss, whilst we should study the material, you know, the great amount of writing and material that a translator accumulates around translation. So that's a gain rather than a loss. And I thought that was really interesting. But more in general, I, I started to feel. And that's, again, while I was in lockdown. And I guess in a way less busy than I normally am. But also more in need of a creative outlet. I've started to think of translation as one of, as a part of a wider creative practice, even though the other thing that I might creatively create, I don't feel like sharing with anyone. So I don't necessarily think of myself as an artist, but I do sometimes feel that there are activities that complement very well translation as a practice. So, writing could go in there, as can [00:51:38] **mending**, [0.0s] which is my recent discovery.

**Interviewer** [00:51:43] Did you ever do... Because since you translate, you have some experience translating theater, have you ever tried writing a play or something like that.

**T06** [00:51:55] No.

**Interviewer** [00:51:56] Ok, interesting.

**T06** [00:51:57] Not so far, I don't know. Maybe in the future, but not so far.

**Interviewer** [00:52:01] I used to have a group of I was very active in the drama group in school and we had all these like big festivals that we went, we traveled to present, like to present our plays and stuff. And we used to write our own plays. And there were mostly comedy-style ones. And a lot of them were like adaptation or pastiche or kind of something like that. And then we were in high school we translated a play and that was my first experience ever translating properly? No, actually, my first experience was translating Harry Potter because we wanted to read the fifth book and we were too eager. And the translation was taking so long to come out. So we were translating it ourselves. But yeah, that was my second experience, but yeah. Then I never tried writing a play again. But I remember we as a group, we, we loved writing plays, and then translating it was, I think it was so traumatic for us. None of us went on to be, you know, playwrights or actors or anything of the sort. So I think that translating the play kind of traumatized us, in a way. Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:53:17] Yeah. Well, so the the last couple of questions is about training and professional status. So the first question in this is a big cluster one so bear with me. It's like a lot of questions inside one. Did you have formal translation training? If so, did it include

different translation directions? If you did receive training in different translation directions, has there been a change in the direction that you practice since completing your training? Do you still translate in both, in only one, or in one much more than another.

**T06** [00:54:00] OK, so my background is not in languages and not in translation, but I did do a year-long masters in translation, so I have some form of formal training, although it was very practice-based rather than theory-based. So I don't have a huge amount of academic knowledge apart from the stuff that I've read for my own interest related to translation.

**Interviewer** [00:54:29] But you did have the formal training, the more practice based one...

**T06** [00:54:33] Yes. Yes. And that was exclusively in one specific language combination. It was English to Italian.

**Interviewer** [00:54:42] OK. OK. So L2 is something completely new in that sense, like you weren't trained for that quote on quote.

**T06** [00:54:55] Before the Masters, you mean? Or trained for the Masters or.

**Interviewer** [00:54:59] Or during the Masters or.. you know, I'm just just wondering if you had both directions in formal training,.

**T06** [00:55:07] No, not in formal. But I think, my, probably first experience of translating into English was was the theater mentorship I mentioned, which is a sort of training but it is not formal education or formal.

**Interviewer** [00:55:25] Yeah, but it's worth mentioning anyway, because it is in a way a training that you know, you don't assume that everyone that is going into literary translation has had any, necessarily, any training.

**T06** [00:55:43] That's true.

**Interviewer** [00:55:43] I asked this mostly because my own experience is different, because in Brazil, we have the same amount of modules of like practice-based translation modules in both directions. So there's no like preference, you know. And so that's why I ask because in some countries, depending on where you're from, that might be the case. So just out of curiosity, what was your training in science?

**T06** [00:56:15] So I have a master's in animal behavior and a bachelor in environmental biology.

**Interviewer** [00:56:24] Nice.

**T06** [00:56:25] That's what I.. Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:56:26] OK, cool. So your master's was in literary translation or just translation in general?

**T06** [00:56:34] Literary translation. Both fiction and non-fiction

**Interviewer** [00:56:38] What made you want to pursue that?

**T06** [00:56:43] Good question. I tend to do things a bit randomly, I think. So I moved back from Jersey to Italy and a friend of mine was looking for English language courses for herself. And she came across this school and she said, oh, look, they're also doing a master's in translation. And I thought, well, I'll do the entry test. I'm never gonna be selected because I'm a scientist. I don't belong there. And in the end, I was selected. And it was a wonderful discovery because, yeah, the process itself, which is why I wonder whether it matters, but you probably know this much better than me, whether it matters what direction your training has been, because to some extent, when I got to the mentorship, the theatre translation mentorship, it was a wonderful experience in many other ways, but I didn't feel they taught me how to translate because I felt that my training had done that in a sense, not that you ever finish learning how to translate, but it had given me good tools that I could use no matter what language I was moving in and out of, I thought.

**Interviewer** [00:58:09] Interesting, so the last question is, are you a member of a professional association, which one? If you are...

**T06** [00:58:22] Yes, the Translators Association, so the Society of Authors.

**Interviewer** [00:58:27] OK.

**T06** [00:58:28] And then similarly, I'm a member of the Italian Union for literally translators.

**Interviewer** [00:58:38] So that's the end of my prepared questions. If you have anything you want to add or comment on?

**T06** [00:58:45] No.

**Interviewer** [00:58:47] Did you like the interview? Was it fun for you?

**T06** [00:58:51] Yes, very, very much. It's always good to have a moment to stop and think about these things, because I feel especially with the debate that is going on now around the subject, it's good to have a way to articulate how you feel about this and what your experience of it is and always... go ahead.

**Interviewer** [00:59:18] No, no. I hope this gave you that opportunity...

**T06** [00:59:22] Yes, definitely. There were some things I hadn't thought about, like the genres and that kind of stuff. It's really interesting.

**Interviewer** [00:59:31] Nice. Thank you so, so much for agreeing to participate, for your time...I might email you when I'm transcribing if I have anything that I'm not sure of or that I don't understand or, you know,.

**T06** [00:59:49] Of course, feel free to get in touch whenever and good luck with the rest of your research.

**Interviewer** [00:59:56] Thank you. Have a nice weekend. And thank you again for agreeing to talk to me.

**T06** [01:00:05] You're welcome. Have a good weekend, too. And hopefully at some point we might meet in person.

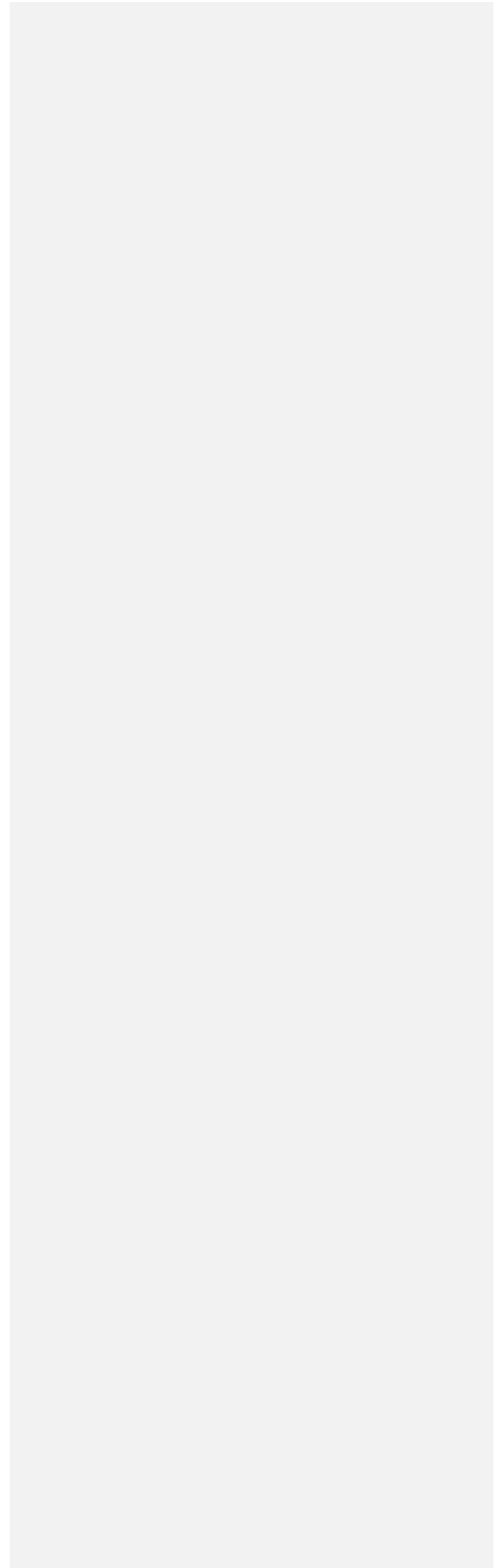
**Interviewer** [01:00:10] Yeah, hopefully. Yeah. Soon, if Corona allows.

**T06** [01:00:14] Take care.

**Interviewer** [01:00:15] Take care. Bye bye.

**T06** [01:00:17] Bye. Thank you.

•





## Interview T07

**T07** [00:00:04] I didn't realize I would have to download this Skype for business. So that, you know, I was here at five past, but you know, it took me a bit longer.

**Interviewer** [00:00:17] Yeah. That's why I, like, I'm not very... the first person I interviewed told me that they had to, but I don't know if it depends on the kind of computer you have or if you had... I don't know but they said that it was like this thing you have to download. But obviously you don't have to have a Skype for business account.

**T07** [00:00:37] Yeah. No, you don't have to have the account. But you need... Because I have normal Skype and I opened that one. And I thought it would work with that one somehow, but it didn't. So, I had to download this Skype for business and then join as guest.

**Interviewer** [00:00:49] Yeah. That's, that's, I am sorry for that, it's very annoying, but the Ethics Committee makes me use Skype for business.

**T07** [00:00:56] Sure. Don't worry. You know, I was just like, I was just sorry to be late. I don't like being late, you know.

**Interviewer** [00:01:04] No worries, yeah, it's a bit...because Skype for business, it records, the audio and the video, but there's no video, obviously, it's just automatic audio only. But then when it finishes, it creates this video file. So, in order to transcribe, because you have to open with a, you know, player and it's a whole thing. I predict that I will spend, like, years and years transcribing all the interviews.

**T07** [00:01:37] Yeah, I can imagine...

**Interviewer** [00:01:38] But I'm happy to have them anyway because it's been a fun ride so far. Are you okay? Are you tired from swimming? Do you need a... Are you good to start?

**T07** [00:01:52] Yeah, I'm perfectly fine, sure.

**Interviewer** [00:01:53] Ok, just to explain to you, so I have to ask all of these questions because they are the same questions that I ask everyone. Obviously, some people are more talkative and then they end up answering all the questions in one. But I just ask them again anyway so that you can always add things to your answer, and you can always... Also feel free to comment on, you know, on a terminology that you don't agree with or that you don't like or, you know, it's your space to talk about these things. And, you know, I have to follow this script, but obviously, you can talk, you can, you know, take more time to answer one and then add some things later on. So, don't worry about that. So, I split the questions into themes. So, the first topic, or theme, is approaches to languages. Do you consider that you have a mother tongue, a first language or more than one? If so, which one(s)? If not, why not?

**T07** [00:03:08] I know that I spoke only Basque till I was five and then I learned Spanish at school, but I don't know, I like to think that, you know, they're both my mother tongue, in a sense, both Basque and Spanish. Because I don't remember actually a time when I didn't speak Spanish, you see what I mean? I know that I didn't. But I don't remember it. So, in my lived experience, really, I always had two languages in my memory of lived experience.

**Interviewer** [00:03:44] Okay. Okay. So, I guess this kind of adds to the previous question, but what is your language of education? Is it different from your mother tongue?

**T07** [00:03:57] Well, I have three languages of my education. My primary schooling was carried out in Spanish because it was, you know, Franco's time and there were no other languages allowed but Spanish and then, you know, with the transition to democracy, then programs emerged to be able to learn in Basque. So, I did my primary in Spanish, my secondary in Basque, and then my university education, including my B.A. I went to Northern Ireland, then I did in English. So, I have three languages of my education.

**Interviewer** [00:04:34] Interesting, yeah, it's a mixture then. Yeah. So how would you describe your relationship to the languages you can speak/write/translate?

**T07** [00:04:47] Sorry, say that again? There was a bit of an interference.

**Interviewer** [00:04:51] How would you describe your relationship to the languages you use? You speak or write or translate...

**T07** [00:04:59] I feel that they are all mine. You know, I don't feel any one of them is, you know, more or less mine than the other, because I feel that I have worked very hard to become extremely fluent in all of them. When I was... My mother says that when I was a child and I found out that other languages, apart from Basque existed, that I insisted that I needed to learn them, you know. So, I loved languages even as a child. And when I was doing my primary schooling in Spanish, I was a very bookish child. I read a lot. I took a lot of pride in writing pretty well and knowing all the words, they used to call me dictionary in school, you know. And then when I went to secondary school and I chose to do my secondary schooling in Basque, there was a battle, you know, to be able to do that because everybody thought I should continue my education in Spanish because I had started in Spanish. Really, from my parents, I had to fight pretty hard to, to be allowed to do this. And then I had to, if you can imagine, you know, I had to relearn all the terms for math, for, you know, geography, for, like all the terminology suddenly was different. So, I had to make this huge effort. You know, for biology, for everything, the way of learning. I was learning everything in a different language. And even though it was my mother tongue, it was, you know, I had not been schooled in that language. So, again, it took a huge effort. A very deliberate effort from me to become, like, completely, you know, integrated into this new way of learning and to do it really well. And I took pride in that. Again, you know, in being really good at writing in that language, in Basque and expressing myself and all of that. And then I did the same again when I went to Ireland and I decided to do my B.A., which was in English and Irish literature, you know. And I again, I made this huge effort to become a very good writer in English. And, you know, I don't know. And so, I feel I have earned my stripes, you know? In all three languages, because I have made very conscious efforts, every [00:07:19]single location [0.3s] that I took upon myself to become super fluent in any language, it was conscious and it was, you know, it took work and it took determination. So, I feel, I suppose, you know, possessive about that effort. You know, I've earned it, you know, like...

**Interviewer** [00:07:38] Yeah, you really did. So, have you ever been able to express something in a language that is not your first language more satisfactorily? How so?

**T07** [00:07:54] Say that again, there was a major interference. Have I ever been able to express...

**Interviewer** [00:07:59] Express something in a language that is not your first language in a more, like, more satisfactorily, like you prefer to express it in another language, you find it easier when it...

**T07** [00:08:15] If anything, I think maybe I'm funnier in Spanish, but I'm funny in each of them. But in Spanish, I can be particularly funny. That would be the only thing, I think, because I do feel that I can speak about any subject, you know, in any one of the languages, although maybe when we talk about, you know, academic subjects, because my brain has been assembled in English, you know, to speak about the terminology, sometimes, you know, the first term that comes to my mind is in English because I've learned it like that, you know. And it might take me a couple of seconds to hit on the right one in Spanish or in Basque. But other than that, I feel equally, you know, proficient in all three.

**Interviewer** [00:08:58] I would just say you have, like, this is not a prepared question, but would you say you have, like, different personalities, or different T07s in each language you speak, or would you think that they are, like, similar?

**T07** [00:09:11] I think they're similar, but I am particularly funny in Spanish. I think that, you know, I can be very, very playful with the Spanish language. And also because, you know, it's the language that, I have a cousin that's like my sister, we're both really funny, so, especially when we were kids and when we were teenagers, we developed this whole being funny, sort of, way of being. And because I had that training, so to speak, you know, with her, I think that I can be really funny in Spanish, more so probably than in Basque or English, just because I haven't had that kind of context that I created with my cousin from when we were kids.

**Interviewer** [00:09:49] Sometimes it's also, like, the cultural differences in humor and I think I'm funnier in Portuguese, but also, it's because I was raised, and in the situation I was in and it's kind of, like... And also, the different kind of sense of humor that, like, Brazilian culture versus here in the U.K. it's different, you know. So, I feel.

**T07** [00:10:12] Yeah, definitely, I think so, yeah. Because it's more like I have a, quite a surreal sense of humor. And I think that's very peculiar to Spanish, that kind of surreal playing with words. And I don't know. Yeah, I think there's something like that. English is drier and more, kind of, it's about, you know, about being very ironic and doing puns or whatever half of the time. I have to say that because I take things literally, like, I don't get the jokes sometimes in English, you know. Yeah, but yeah, but in Spanish, I'm particularly funny.

**Interviewer** [00:10:48] So I was... I always have to keep myself from talking too much because I get excited.

**T07** [00:10:54] Oh it's OK. It's OK. You can talk ahead.

**Interviewer** [00:10:57] No, no. I can think of many situations or, like, different, kind of, like, I think of Brazilian humor as it's. Yeah. That, that's kind of the difference that I felt with that between Brazil and Portugal, Brazilian Portuguese. And since I've been living here, in the U.K. kind of, it's more sarcastic, ironic here and in Brazil, it's kind of, like, you have to be so quick in Brazil, because if you say something that can be, that can have like an

innuendo or can be interpreted or twisted, you know, you can never let the ball drop, this expression.

**T07** [00:11:34] Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's the same as well. There's, like, a very quick, like, they will catch you and, you know, so that there's this whole game of, like, turning and twisting. So, there's words and. Yeah, it's different. No, I agree with you. It's kind of like that with Spanish as well. Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:11:51] And Basque, would you say... The difference you think, you think.

**T07** [00:11:56] In terms of humor?

**Interviewer** [00:11:58] Yeah. But in Basque and Spanish, I'm just curious. This is not necessarily related to the thesis.

**T07** [00:12:04] I think that in Basque, you know, it's kind of you know, it's, it's drier. There isn't this much humor, it's a very serious language. But the humor that is really funny in Basque is the way we create nicknames for everything. You know, Basque is unbeatable in terms of the nicknames and nicknames are hilarious, you know, so because it's an agglutinative language and you can really put things together very quickly. You know, you can assemble words very quickly, you know, out of parts, you know what I mean? So, because of that in that sense, like, in the sort of nicknames that you can give people, I mean, in rhyming, you know, because it's a language that lends itself to rhyming really well. And you can call these really funny kind of rhyming ridiculous things with one another to create like, you know, these very punchy sentences. So, like that. Yeah. In that way it's a very playful language. Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:13:09] Thank you for that. I didn't know any of that, but that's very interesting. Yeah. [noise] Sorry you wanted to say something?

**T07** [00:13:16] No, I was just remembering that with my sister here today. We were remembering we had this aunt who was a fish seller in the market. And she was an amazing rhymmer. And, like, she was funny, and she would sing and she would make things up and she was, like, a little bit evil. You know? And she would say, like, someone would pass by and she would say a very nice thing to that person and then would mutter under her breath to you a line that rhymed with the previous line that she had said perfectly but said something really nasty. You know, so that kind of game that Basque is super perfect for that, because you make, like, this, you know, like a parallel sentence that's kind of a mirror of the other sentence. But it's just like saying like the opposite or something terrible about the person who just passed you, you know this...

**Interviewer** [00:14:15] It just reminds me that, you know, that in the markets, in the street markets in Brazil, I think it's not only in Brazil, but, like, people say, like, especially the men selling fruits and vegetables would kind of flirt with the women or they would shout things to the clients in the market. And it's all very playful, also rhyming. And then they'd say something like, oh, a pretty lady doesn't pay, doesn't have to pay. But then they come and say but also, she won't take anything, you know, but it rhymes in Portuguese, it is like that.

**T07** [00:14:49] So yeah, it was it was the same. It's the same here with that. With that with open-air markets. Because the thing is, like, the sellers, they have to draw attention to themselves and to their stall so, like, this aunt I was telling you about she would sing tangos you know, she would take the melody of a very well-known Argentinian tango. And

she would just, on the spot, she would make lyrics in Basque, you know, the lyrics were about the people who were passing by, you know, and she would say like outrageous things. So, it's really funny.

**Interviewer** [00:15:26] Yeah. I am completely derailing the conversation towards another... And sorry for that.

**T07** [00:15:31] I have a particular talent for digressions, so...

**Interviewer** [00:15:36] Me too. I get excited with this. So, the next set of questions, they are more specific, specifically about directionality? So, the first one is kind of a cluster one, so bear with me. What is the difference for you between both or more directions of translation? How would you describe your translation process and types of challenge, linguistic or otherwise, when you are translating into a mother tongue or one of them and into a second language?

**T07** [00:16:13] Ahm, ok, so the main challenge, the first challenge that comes to mind when translating from Basque into English, which you would say is from my mother tongue into my, well, it's my third language, really, but let's call it the second language. The main challenge is that the order of things is completely inverse in Basque. So, you know, in Basque, the sentence would say something like, well, in English you will say there's a bird on a branch, on a tree at the bottom of a hill. Right? And in Basque it would say there is a hill, on the hill there's a tree, on the tree there's a branch, on the branch there's a bird. Right? So, the direction of things, the way in which the narrative is ordered goes, in Basque, it goes from the general to the concrete. Whereas in English goes from the concrete to the general. So Basque pans in and English pans out. And very often when we are translating literature, especially maybe poetry, you know, there is more... well, in both senses, really, both prose and poetry, very often the development of a scene is really reliant on that progression from the general to the concrete until you reach the resolution. Right? Cause you reach the resolution at the end in Basque. Whereas in English, if you were to translate that in a natural way, that would probably come at the beginning of the sentence. So, this is the big thing that I have to think hard about and sometimes, like I, you know, I play with English. Luckily, English is a very flexible language. I like to say that. You change these things around to create that sort of same effect. That's the main thing. You know, when translating from Basque into English and translating the other way around. I find that, like, you know, at the level of vocabulary, Basque is so, so, so, so rich. And we have so many dialects. We have, like, seven recorded dialects of Basque for such a, you know, geographical bits of land. It's this huge variety of language. So, you know, and especially when it comes to nature language, this, like, this sort of specificity that, you know, it can be, you know, I can take a while to decide on what's the best way to translate something or also because we have all these suffixes, Right? And we have so many of them. And sometimes also because as a language that hasn't been written down for so long. I mean, it was written down but the rules that we nowadays abide by, the standard Basque that we use nowadays it exists only since 1982. So, for example, in my dialect, which is the fishing village dialect, which is a coastal dialect and very different from this standard Basque, I would say things in a certain way. And I have a particular vocabulary, right? And we compress words a lot. It's a bit, like, it would be the equivalent probably of something like a Caribbean... If you think of Spanish from Spain and Caribbean Spanish. Right? Cubans, Venezuelan Spanish. It would be that same difference. Right? So Basque from my coastal village is very, kind of, like, playful and very, like... we eat half of the words, we only pronounce half of the words, like, we don't pronounce the ending of words and all of that. So, for me, the difficulty translating back into Basque is to try to normalise

my Basque, you know, into the standard form, because, hey, I personally think that my particular Basque is more beautiful than the standard one. You know? I think that, I mean, this is a very long conversation, but I think that in the process of standardising the Basque language, they have missed opportunities. You know, they have flattened the language a little bit too much in making this a standard Basque, for my taste, you know, maybe somebody else thinks it's wonderful, you know? So, when I translate into Basque, I depart from the standard deliberately. And that doesn't always make people happy. They correct my departure. You know, they normalise it and that really annoys me. So, this is something that... This is something... You have to understand that when any language which is standardized, right, which is, all languages go through this process, at some point English went through that process, Spanish went through that process, all languages go through this process of standardization. So, if you think about it, if we take a few steps back and look at that process objectively, it's very early since the beginning of the process of standardization. So, people are very, very attached to the rules that they created. Right? I've thought the longer time period that passes **seems to standardization** the freer people will feel about not adhering so, you know, religiously to the rules of a standardisation. And I think in that sense, maybe I'm a bit ahead, you know, because, you know, because I have so many languages and because I have lived abroad and you end up having this [00:22:03] **detachment**, [0.0s] you know, but people inside here, people in this little, you know, community, they look at everything from within the city walls, you know, They are very protective of, like, this is the way you should be reading. This is the way it has to be. You can't use a word from your dialect here. You have to use the standard word, you know. So that kind of thing, you know, it's a bit frustrating for me. But, you know, I think it's natural that it's happening. It's a process.

**Interviewer** [00:22:35] And it's also all very recent, the whole, as you said with Franco and then with the change and, you know, you said about your own experience in schooling and how, you know, these kinds of things.... But do you think that these tensions also exist well, like, thinking about English as a global lingua franca. But in this case, you lived in the US, you studied in Northern Ireland. Do you feel similarly when you're translating into English that you have to kind of, obviously the political tensions are different. But do you think you do feel a certain way with different dialects. Different...

**T07** [00:23:17] Oh, definitely. Because, you know, I get a lot of, very often, I wouldn't say a lot, but very often I get, like, this mistrust about my ability to translate into English. And like, I noticed that some editors, you know, they want to find fault in the things that I do, and they want to normalise things as well, you know, when I choose something instead of something. And I have to be very strong. And this is something that I tell my students all the time. Whatever you choose to translate, however you choose to translate, have your strategy in place. You know why you're doing what you're doing. You know, because there's always going to be somebody. And especially if you're someone who, you know, like me, translates out of my supposed mother tongue into my supposed, you know, second language, third language, whatever you want to call it. There's always, there's this colonialist, I call it a colonialist attitude that assumes that the only people who can write good English are the people who were born, you know, in a country where English is spoken. And that's a fallacy. That's not true because, you know, I know that I write and speak much better English than many people who were born in those countries, you know. So there is this colonialist attitude that is very resistant to accepting that a newcomer, so to speak, you know, can be as good as, you know, doing something and then this whole insistence that I don't know if you've come across this, but it drives me up the wall when they say, like, you know, people will say naturally, like, they're not saying anything contentious, that it's not really important that you have mastery of the source language.

And this drives me up the wall, like, what do you mean? Like, if you don't have mastery of the source language, then you do not understand the nuances of that text. And it's impossible to come up with a good translation because you do not possess that text, you know, but this is something that is [00:25:25] opiated, [0.0s] like, it's of course, what matters is that, you know, you are masterful in the target language. No, you have to be masterful in both languages. There's no other way around it. Otherwise, you're not going to come up with a good translation, you know?

**Interviewer** [00:25:40] No, I do, like, ever since coming to the UK, like, I studied my whole life. My B.A. was in translation. My Masters was in translation, but back in Brazil. And we have a very different approach to translation because firstly, in our publishing market, translation makes up for, like, the majority of publications, at least historically it has been. So now it's changing. But, like, we read translations all the time and I grew up reading translations and in no point was I shocked while reading or even as a child reading a book and knowing that the book wasn't written by a Brazilian, wasn't set in Brazil. That didn't change my experience of reading at all. And I feel that ever since I came here that people want to adapt, especially with, like, children's literature and translating for children. It's not necessarily the translators' fault, but it's also, like, the publishers and the reading, the readership, they kind of want to adapt too much into something that doesn't sound foreign at all. That it has to sound super English. And then at the same time, I found this different culture of like, you know, a lot of English monolinguals who happen to know or happen to have studied a foreign language at uni and maybe lived in that country for six months, and now are, you know, big-time translators of literature, of said country. And that's something that, I don't know, that was a different... It's different in Brazil, obviously. And I started to get... Especially being from Latin America, I started to get up and listen to other Latino translators complaining about the fact that it's very white, not in...white as Latino versus Caucasian, white, European. This is all very new to me, like the whole monolingual kind of view of translation, even literary translation here, especially here in the U.K., I found it shocking because that's not my experience.

**T07** [00:27:46] I call it a colonialist attitude because that's what it is. They think that they can take our thing and, you know, say, my, anything that is in Basque... I mean, this happened to me very recently. Before I tell you that, I want to finish this train of thought. But they think that they can take, you know, because they perceive their culture as superior to either, like, Latin American culture or Spanish culture, or Basque culture, I don't care, because they perceive their culture as superior, they feel they can take it and turn it. And, you know, there's no need to question that because that's the way it is and that's the way it is. Right? I mean, it happened to me very, very recently, a couple of months ago that I had...OK. This story goes back a few years. I knew this very prominent person in the world of literary translation in the United States who owns a press. Right. And this person had asked me throughout the years, asked me for things or in terms of contributing to their blog, writing, you know, essays about Basque literature. They asked me to give a lecture at some point, to participate in a conference that they were organising, all these for free. Right. And then because I had written an article for the TLS and then another article in which I mentioned this particular female Basque writer. This person, he asked me (it was a he of course) he asked me for a sample of that novel and I did it. You know, I had this person as a friend and as an ally, so I did it, so. OK. Yeah. That be great. We'll publish, you know, maybe we'll publish this novel with you if you like it. So, I send them the sample and I put them in touch with the author's agent and send them all these blurbs and good reviews and et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. So, they would get like, you know, I guess for a sense of the book. And so, we sent them the version in Spanish as well so that they could ask one of the readers to take a look, right? He never got back to me. He never got back

to me. And I just thought, OK, they must've just given it a pass. And then a year later, and I see through Facebook that he's got the rights to the book and I'm like, oh, oh, OK. So, he got the rights to the book. And I write to him and I say, oh, I was surprised and pleased to see that you got the book. So, what are you doing? Are we doing it? I mean, what's happening? But the following day the author wrote to me of her own accord, and she said, Oh, A, thank you so much for all the work you've done to push my book forward. Unfortunately, the publishers have decided to go with a different translator. And I'm like, what? You know, there are not many Basque translators, but I thought, OK, well, what happened? And then she tells me that they're going with a translator from Spanish. And I'm like, what the fuck? You know? I mean, that is so wrong. You know, after all this work that I've done for these people and they they've used me as a representative of an indigenous language translation, role model, whatever you want to call it, you know. So, I'm like what the fuck is this shit? That's crazy. So, I write to the dude and I'm like, What? Like what? Like what? Why am I hearing this from the author and why are you doing this? Are you nuts? How can you do that? You know, this is so wrong. I didn't expect it from you. You know, he doesn't answer. And then, like, you know, weeks later his wife, because it's some husband-and-wife operation, his wife writes to me, you know, this is in the middle of the riots in Chicago, right? Like, this is the day that the riots had exploded at its worst in Chicago. And I get this really long email from his wife saying, oh, you know, I guess we better do this sooner than later. Just wanted to let you know that we decided to go with a different translator because, you know, we liked her translation better. You know, maybe you're just not the right person for this book. And I'm like, what the fuck? You know? I mean, how. I mean, not that, you know, I'm not saying that I'm the best translator in the world, but you're comparing my translation to a translation translated from Spanish. From someone who has only translated one book. You know, and knows nothing about Spanish culture and nothing about Basque culture. So, what are you doing? You know, and I, you know, I gave them a piece of my mind, obviously, and I said, well, you know, I completely disagree with what you're doing. You don't have to go with me. But you should have this book translated from Basque. You know, this is one of very few books that are going to be translated into English. You need to do it from Basque. You know, this is a completely colonialist attitude, and you shouldn't be doing this. This is a mistake. I got the most horrendous e-mail back from the dude, like total gaslighting, horror. Like, really, really, really. Basically telling me I'm a shit translator. And he's not a translator, he's never translated anything. He's actually a marketing guy here and he speaks English. Right. He's using the whole, like, English is not your mother tongue. Yeah. He's using it against me, you know.

**Interviewer** [00:33:22] Yeah. I wonder if there's also some kind of something [ringtone] Yeah. Some kind of sexist... Well, there is, but...

**T07** [00:33:34] Absolutely. Because one of the things that he said to me was... One of the first things that he said to me was 'when I received that first e-mail from you questioning my decision, that e-mail was completely out of line.' And I'm like, 'oh, you like your women submissive. Right? You don't want that. You don't like women to stand up to you, right? and tell you that you're a piece of shit because' like, you know. I know his wife. I know the situation. And he used his wife. He's a fucking coward. Why doesn't he face me? I have always spoken with him, you know, in all these years that he has asked me all these favours, he has asked me directly. And now that he's doing this shit, he's sending you to do his dirty work.

**Interviewer** [00:34:19] Yes.



**T07** [00:34:21] You know.

**Interviewer** [00:34:22] Yeah. Very cowardly.

**T07** [00:34:23] Absolutely. but anyway,.

**Interviewer** [00:34:25] I'm sorry this happened to you. This is...

**T07** [00:34:28] But the other thing was, I mean, sorry, I keep interrupting you. But this is a very hot issue, so, like, the other thing was that, you know, the blindness of doing this to an indigenous person in the middle of the riots in Chicago, you know, such is their white privilege.

**Interviewer** [00:34:46] Yeah.

**T07** [00:34:47] And they didn't even give it a thought. They didn't give it a thought that they were doing this in the middle of one of the biggest uprising against racism and this kind of shit that has taken place in America for as long as we can remember. And they do this shit to an indigenous person in the middle of the riots. And that just shows, you know, how absolutely blind and deaf. And they just don't even think... They don't think about any of this. To them they are not doing anything wrong. It doesn't matter, you know, because they feel entitled...

**Interviewer** [00:35:26] One thing, like, so, the book was in Basque originally, and then the person was translating... It's like an indirect translation.

**T07** [00:35:35] Yes, this translator was going to translate it from the translation.

**Interviewer** [00:35:38] Well, that's... I don't get it. Like, I mean, we have situations in, for example, in Brazil for the longest time, we didn't have direct Russian to Portuguese translators, so translations were indirect translations from the French or English. And then when people in the 90s started translating directly into Portuguese, then people were like, what? Is this Dostoevsky? It was completely different because indirect translation, I mean, it can... I'm against it. It's, like, if you have a translator, a good translator who can translate from that, like, less widely diffused language, then there's no reason to use an indirect one. I don't get it.

**T07** [00:36:31] I think it's particularly relevant with an endangered, you know, indigenous language. It's really important to have that representation, it is particularly urgent to do that. So, you know, as I said to them, you know, I'm not the only one, there are four or five people translating from Basque. You can use somebody else but do it from us. But no, they just wanted to give this book to this woman who was not a professional translator until five minutes ago. Suddenly, she's decided she wants to do this. And I bet you anything that she was going to do it for free, you know, so it was probably, you know, a money issue on the one hand. And also, because this person was their friend and they wanted to give her a leg up in literary translation work. That's exactly what's happening at the expense of an indigenous book.

**Interviewer** [00:37:19] Yeah.

**T07** [00:37:20] It's really fucked up.

**Interviewer** [00:37:21] It's really fucked up

**T07** [00:37:25] These transcripts will be full of expletives. [laughs] I'm sorry

**Interviewer** [00:37:30] No worries, I actually I love swearing. And I think people should have less of a problem with swearing because it's... Actually, there's studies that prove that people who swear more are more intelligent and more creative. So, there you go.

**T07** [00:37:48] Yeah, I kinda love swear words as well. I swear a lot in all of my languages, so...yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:37:57] The other day there were some flies in my flat. And I was very angry because they wouldn't go away. And in the end, I was swearing in Portuguese and these people walked by and I was like, "Caralho", like, very loudly. And they were like, what? Obviously, they're not used to someone swearing very loudly in Portuguese. But I, I think it's so cathartic. It's so important, especially for women. It's a sexist thing.

**T07** [00:38:23] Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I agree. I agree.

**Interviewer** [00:38:27] So we jumped because I still have two questions in the directionality session and then it will be about market and gatekeeping and then we can have the time of our lives in talking about this. We kind of already jumped to the next one. Let me just wrap this one up. Do you have any preferred genres for L2 translation? How, if at all, do they differ from your L1, "L1" translation practices?

**T07** [00:39:02] I particularly love translating poetry. Because for me, you know, I'm a musician as well, I'm a singer. To me translating poetry is the closest thing to playing with music in language. And for that reason, I really, really love translating poetry. What was the second part of the question?

**Interviewer** [00:39:23] So are they different? Like, do you have different genres for different directionalities or...

**T07** [00:39:30] For the different languages? Hmmmm, No, I think it's the same with all of them. I do love translating poetry. Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:39:40] I asked this because I, I've read a lot about L2 translation and all that kind of debate, and a lot of people say, well, this can be done, but... and a lot of translators themselves say, well, I think it's possible to translate, like, a novel into a second language. But poetry is something else altogether. You know, it's a whole other can of worms. So that's why I added this question, because some people are very, like, they....so, this kind of kind of fits well with the next question. Do you have any that you prefer not to translate within literary texts?

**T07** [00:40:23] Not that I prefer or don't prefer, but I haven't done any drama.

**Interviewer** [00:40:26] OK.

**T07** [00:40:28] I mean, though I feel that I would be a bit hesitant to take on a big project, you know, maybe doing drama just because I haven't done it. But no, other than that.

**Interviewer** [00:40:41] But you wouldn't refuse then. It's just that you haven't done it.

**T07** [00:40:45] No, I wouldn't refuse. It's just that I don't have the experience. And maybe I would, you know, for my first project, I would maybe like to work with an actor or with someone who would, you know, be more closer [sic] to the world of theatre. Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:41:05] Well, that's OK. Thank you for that. So, the next set of questions, they are about market and gatekeeping. This one I am sure you have a lot to say. Has your translation work been criticized, rejected or disregarded because you are not a native speaker of the target language? in the case when you translate into English or...

**T07** [00:41:29] Well, I have to say that the only bad experience I've had is this one.

**Interviewer** [00:41:35] Good. OK.

**T07** [00:41:37] Yeah. Because before that, you know, all the editors that I have worked with, they've been, you know, they've been very complimentary about my work and we've worked really well together. I mean, I'm very open to the editing process. I think it's beautiful. I enjoy it, you know, and even when, you know, I mean, I remember, like, this was a while back, but when we published Six Basque Poets, which is an anthology, you know, that was published in the U.K. by Arc publications, I had, like, you know, quite a detailed process with the editor, you know, shaping, you know, the points into their eventual form and the published poem. You know, we had a few, you know, back and forth and, you know, obviously, in the end, like, you know, her opinion was the one that mattered the most because she was, you know, she was the editor. But we had a few disagreements, and it was really funny because I felt very vindicated a few years later. One of the poems Death of the Zebras was published somewhere else in a magazine. I don't remember now where it was, I think it was in Brick magazine, a Canadian magazine. And in the process of having it edited to be published in the magazine, the editor suggested a change that brought it back to my original. You know, the editor of Six Basque Poets had changed. And I was, like, you see what I mean? I always knew that line would be better like that, you know. And I told this editor, you know, this is how I had it. And then the editor of Arc Publications changed it. So, like, you know, so in the published version in Brick magazine it appears as, you know, in the way I had it, and in Arc publications, it was published... But so, you know, editing is also...it's very personal. You know, some people just think things have to be a certain way. And, you know, and you are, obviously, because of the publishing process, you are bound by the preference of that editor. But I'm very open and happy to, you know, bend to someone else's will, unless it's something that I say, like, No, you know, but I don't know... it doesn't bother me because I know that this is this person's preference. You know, I don't get hurt and think, oh, my God, I'm not good enough. It isn't like that. I just know that a lot of the time in terms of languages it is very much a matter of preference as well, you know.

**Interviewer** [00:44:14] So you wouldn't say you felt that you were, or it was, like, apart from that story you told me of, of...

**T07** [00:44:22] Yeah. This recent horrible person.

**Interviewer** [00:44:25] They weren't because of the perceived fluency or native status or anything like that, it was just a difference of opinion in the feedback.

**T07** [00:44:35] Yeah, I have actually been really lucky even, like, you know, I write reviews for the TLS and my editor at the TLS always tells me I am one of the best writers in his,

you know, in his, what you call it, his group of writers that write reviews, he was like I barely ever need to touch your reviews, whereas like, you should see the things that some people send, that's what, you know, that's what he tells me. So, I never felt, up until, you know, I mean, this guy and it's hurtful, you know, like the things that he said. I found myself... I'm translating a novel for Archipelago Books now, a book by [00:45:13] [name Riada] [0.0s] and, you know, I restarted translating it. I've only been here for about a month now. And last week I looked at the text and I continued the work that I had left, you know, in Chicago. And I found myself, I found those comments that had, like, come into my head, crowding my head. And I was like, this is such a fucker, like, you know, that this guy said these things. And I know because I have more powerful, better writers, better translators in my ears telling me good things about my translation and my writing. I had, like, you know, the negative gaslighting bullshit from this guy, it was there, you know, and that is, like, so frustrating, you know, because this is, you know, all the tricks that our mind plays, right? Yeah. I mean, that, you know, my cousin is a psychologist and she always says you need to, you know, find good things to counteract the effect of one bad one. Yeah. So, it's so, yeah, I'm going to need now five editors to say good things about my writing again. So, to counter balance...

**Interviewer** [00:46:24] I'm sure you're gonna be fine.

**T07** [00:46:27] Yeah. I've always I've always been fine, you know, I have been very lucky with my editors. They have always liked my work. So, you know, I don't feel... He hasn't really knocked me down, you know. It's just been hurtful to be... I feel I've been used, you know, I feel a bit used by this person, to do all this work that I did for free in writing for the blog and in giving these lectures that I gave for him for free and then bringing this book to him and then like, he just, you know, gave it to a friend of his and pushed me out of the way. And so that's hurtful.

**Interviewer** [00:47:04] Yeah. Sorry. But, so, have you ever been overcorrected on... I mean, yeah, I think you kind of mentioned this with this other case with the editor, but have you ever been overcorrected on a linguistic choice or specific form that was consciously made by you?

**T07** [00:47:31] I think there have been, there have been occasions. Not very often. And I can't give you the exact example, because I can't remember right now, but... Hang on. Hang on. It's there somewhere in the back of my head. Oh, yeah, yeah. I remember this was when I was doing my MA, and there was this particular poem that used, you know, this beautiful play on words in Basque which, the line was [in Basque] which means, literally it means "and I make your lips fall in love delicately" right? But that doesn't really work in English. So, what I did was, like, if you look at the word "to fall in love" in Basque, it means, well, it's made of two words, love and pain, put together. So *maitemindu*, *mait* means love and *mindu* means pain. So, to fall in love is to love pain. And what I did in that line was, like, "and I pain your lips with love". Right? And my professor wanted to make it into either "Oh, I paint your lips with love", or "I hurt your lips with love". They wanted to normalise it. But the thing was that in the Basque it wasn't a very normal way of using, you know, the verb to fall in love. You don't, you know, you don't make your lips fall in love. You know what I mean? So, you know, I had, like, a bit of a back and forth with that, and I did leave it like I said, pain your lips with love. So, you know, it's always when they tried to normalise something that isn't necessarily normal in the original. And they think that you're doing it because you're, you know, trying to be mysterious or whatever. And you're like, no, it's not that I'm trying to be mysterious. I'm trying to reflect the oddness in the original. I'm trying to keep it, you know. But, you know, I would say that there was one person who

used to overcorrect me, and that was my ex-boyfriend who was a bad translator. [laughs] And he was always correcting my texts. But this was, it was a power game, you know.

**Interviewer** [00:50:10] So it's different. Yeah, I, I added this because, mostly because I studied and translated Yoko Tawada and there are cases that people who study her work call, like, authority German in which people would, it happened to her in which some editor, someone would say that she wrote something that was grammatically wrong and indeed it... she did that on purpose because she wanted to play with German grammar. And, so, but they corrected it because they assumed that it was a mistake and not a conscious choice, like, a choice that she made. And I had a similar experience with it, and it's not necessarily that the editor is at fault or anything. But I've sent translations from the Portuguese to people who can't read Portuguese. And so, they say, oh, this is, this sounds odd in English, but to be honest, it sounded very odd in Portuguese as well. So. So obviously they wouldn't know that. And I think they just assumed that it was my lack of fluency or however you want to put it.

**T07** [00:51:30] Yeah. That happens, you know, as it's on those occasions when it happens, you know, when people assume, you know, assume that you're making a mistake, but like, you know. But again, that's the colonialist mind, you know, they're not willing or they're not, let's say, they're not trained into thinking that just because English is the language spoken, you know, in their country, that doesn't mean that a person can't play with it. Yeah, yeah. I know we, you know, languages have always evolved, they evolve continuously, you know. I mean, there are French words in English things, do you think they were always there? I mean, you know, they were great to the language and they become common usage and, you know, and that is perfectly accepted. But I'm sure that at a certain point someone said, 'oh, my God, you're being so affected by using a French word in English or whatever', it doesn't matter, you know, a peculiar word formation. I mean, people get really stuck into the particular version of the language that they have, and they think that that's exactly the way it should be. But, you know, nowadays, English is a language that is spoken throughout the world. And, you know, and all over Europe. All over Latin America. And why shouldn't we who have been speaking English since we were children... Why shouldn't we be allowed to use it however we please?

**Interviewer** [00:52:54] Yeah. Yeah, I agree with you. And I think also, like, having done research on multilingualism, in literature, in everything. More recently, I like, for example, even, like, in the U.K., they don't realise, they have this ideal of themselves as very monolingual, monocultural, and they forget their own history. You know, how many, like, different dialects or how recent standard English really is and how it's not really, you know, it's much more, they're much more multilingual. Their language is much more multilingual in their... Not only global English or international English or whatever you want to call it, but also their own, like insular...

**T07** [00:53:38] Absolutely, like, English, I always say, like, you know, I mean, some people don't like the word mongrel. They think that it has negative connotations. But I actually like it. And I think it's completely a mongrel language, you know, because it is made up of, well, Latin, French, German, Scandinavian languages, Gaelic, you know, many languages.

**Interviewer** [00:53:58] I like mongrel as well, I would use a similar... I was about to say that word, but I never know if people accept that.

**T07** [00:54:06] People don't like it, but I actually like it, you know, I also like mongrel dogs.

**Interviewer** [00:54:15] I just... That has nothing to do with translation, but I just realized the other day, talking to a Brazilian friend who lives here, that there is this very specific type of Mongrel dog in Brazil, that is caramel-coloured. We call it *Vira-lata*, our mongrel dogs, because they turn, you know, they look for food in the bins and the rubbish. So, then they turn the, you know. So, I recently realized that that's not a thing in other countries that people don't... So even if you're translating something from this, this is a very, like, typical Brazilian dog, you see, it is the symbol of our nation is not any other thing. It's that Mongrel dog that is everywhere? I didn't even know it wasn't a thing elsewhere, but apparently, it's specific to Brazil. So, the next set of questions is about creative writing, fluency and translation. How do you view the relationship between fluency and creativity in the languages you use?

**T07** [00:55:28] Fluency and creativity. Well, I think basically the more fluent you are in any given language, the more creative you can be. Right? Because, as you become more fluent, you become freer with the language.

**Interviewer** [00:55:51] I had people tell, like, interviewees... I shouldn't say this, but I've had interviews saying the exact opposite. And it is interesting to listen to all these different opinions. I don't know. Yeah, please. Continue, I'm sorry.

**T07** [00:56:07] I mean, I think that, you know, I mean, I if I think of my, of my translation history, you know, like the 17 years I've been translating or whatever. You know, I am much, much, much freer and more creative now than I was at the beginning because I've developed all these ideas about what language is and what translation is. And they become more and more flexible as time goes by. You know, and I understand more and more that languages permeate each other, that we as translators, we're at the front line of language innovation, you know. And it has been so through history, you know, you can't get German romanticism without the whole history of translation into German without translating, you know, Shakespeare into German, you know, or the classics, you know, Homer, you know, Sappho, everything into German. And they did that deliberately because they knew that the language needed enriching. So, they translated all of this. And this is how you get German romanticism. And this is, you know, that's supposedly, like, you know, the peak of beauty in the German language. So how can we not, at the forefront of language innovation? We are the people who move language forward. So, I think that we need to take ownership of that and do it, you know, do it, really do it, like, move language forward. You know, if you're translating into English, move English forward with your other languages or language that you carry within you. You know, I very strongly believe that.

**Interviewer** [00:57:52] Do you think that, like, the more fluent you are in the language, the freer you get and more and more creative possibilities you have. Is that what you meant?

**T07** [00:58:09] Yeah, definitely. The more fluent I become the more creative I get with my solutions, you know. Definitely, yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:58:19] Do you do you also do creative writing outside of your translation practice? And if so, is it only in, in what languages do you do that? Do you experiment in the different languages you speak, or do you prefer to do it more in one or...?

**T07** [00:58:36] Well, you know, for as long as I've been a literary translator, I have written mostly in English, but my texts in the last few years have become increasingly hybrid. So, I always bring elements of literary translation, so, I will insert literary translations in my texts.

And I also like to insert bits in Basque or Spanish, you know, show that polyglot aspect of my brain. So, I like to play with that, I like to play with the presence of other languages, you know, to disrupt the stability of the text and to bring into each all of these different things. So, you can say definitely that my practice as a literary translator has influenced enormously my creative writing outlook on the things I perceive are possible, the things that we can do.

**Interviewer** [00:59:41] Yeah. This is just me adding to it. But I know that you're a musician as well. Do you feel, like... It is a different language, that of music...

**T07** [00:59:52] Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:59:53] Do you feel that they influence each other? Your music, that you practice, as a musician in your translation, in your creative writing.

**T07** [01:00:01] Yeah, definitely. Definitely. Because, you know, I mean, especially because I have done a lot of flamenco. You know, when you're a flamenco practitioner, like, beat becomes this amazing, huge, wonderful thing, right? And so, I'm always listening to the beat. You know, when I'm translating, when I translate and when I write, I'm always very conscious of the beat. And I'm thinking in terms of beat and I'm thinking in terms of like, you know, how the line ends. Like, you know, I'm thinking about texts as music, basically a hell of a lot of the time. Yeah, definitely. My my music practices really influence my writing.

**Interviewer** [01:00:45] And do you think your creative writing influences your translation as well? Your translation practice?

**T07** [01:00:51] Yeah, definitely. I am a very unfaithful translator. [laughter] And, you know, I am one of those people that, you know, if I get a sense to put something in there that I think should be there, even if it isn't there in the original, I would put it there because I can't resist, you know.

**Interviewer** [01:01:11] So they completely relate in all levels.

**T07** [01:01:15] You know, I take responsibility and I take precision of every text that I create, I think of it as my literary output, whether it's a literary translation or if it's my own writing. It's all my output. It's all my literary output.

**Interviewer** [01:01:30] Yeah. Okay. Interesting. So, the next set of questions is about, they are about training and professional status. So, the first one is a big one, but it kind of, like, it cascades depending on your answer. So, did you have formal translation training?

**T07** [01:01:55] Yes. I did an MA in Literary translation.

**Interviewer** [01:01:58] OK. Did it include different translation directions or just one, or just the other?

**T07** [01:02:04] No, I was just translating into English because it was taking place in the U.K. and, you know, let's say this... Well, I mean, I wanted to do that, too, because I was you know, I was the first person translating directly from Basque to English. And so, I wanted to have the recognition of having an MA and, you know, to be able to embark on that work.

**Interviewer** [01:02:29] OK. OK. And your B.A. was, you said it was in English, in literature, right?

**T07** [01:02:35] Yeah, it was in English and there was literature, and I did it in Northern Ireland. And then I did the MA at the University of East Anglia in the U.K.

**Interviewer** [01:02:42] Okay. Yeah. So, I just added that question because in my personal experience, they're not, they're very rare, BAs in translation. But in my experience, back in Brazil, we had the same number of modules for, like, English to Portuguese, Portuguese to English. So, obviously in my training in my university education, there was no difference. I mean, not that there was a difference, but both were important, and they had the same...the curriculums plans around them, considering them to be equal, like both directions. So that's why I added this question.

**T07** [01:03:24] I also did, I just remembered that before I did my MA in Literary Translation in the summer between my B.A. in English and there was literature and before my M.A. in literary translation, I did a summer intensive course on literary translation into Basque, from Spanish and English into Basque. So, I did that too.

**Interviewer** [01:03:46] OK. Interesting. And how, like, this is just me being curious because... do Basque speakers... they can understand and read in Spanish I assume.

**T07** [01:03:58] Yeah. Yeah. We're all bilingual. So, the closer you are to the frontier with France, people will speak French as well.

**Interviewer** [01:04:05] OK. Yeah. But, like, for example, how is the demand for translation from Spanish into Basque for example. I imagine it must be...

**T07** [01:04:18] Huge because here the thing is, like, I mean this is one of, this is a huge conversation. But OK, so, one of the ways in which we manage language recovery, you have to understand that, you know, after the whole 40 years of Franco, Basque was in a very bad state. And among the policies that, you know, were put into place to resuscitate the language were, like, for example, we have this collection, it's called Literatura Unibertsala, which was a project to translate universal literature into Basque. And this started in 82, right? And the objective was to translate one book a year. So 82 it's almost, like, forty-eight years. Right. So, we translated almost 200. So, we, you know, we've met our objectives a little more.

**Interviewer** [01:05:20] Yeah.

**T07** [01:05:21] And that that was one thing. But then in order to encourage people to learn Basque, if you live in the Basque autonomous region, speaking Basque helps you. It's a very important thing to have knowledge in Basque, if you want to access any civil servant jobs, to be a civil servant in the Basque country, you have to speak Basque. So, you know, and so a lot of people have learned Basque then for that. Another one of the policies is that everything gets translated into Basque. So, you know, if you go to the doctor, all the paperwork is going to be in both languages, if any of your education, blablabla, all bureaucracy, everything is going to be in both languages.

**Interviewer** [01:06:13] Okay. Interesting. Okay. Uh, the last question is very simple. Are you a member of a professional association? If so, which one?



**T07** [01:06:27] Yes, I'm a member of ALTA, the American Literary Translators Association and I will, I haven't done it yet, but I will join the Basque Literary Translators Association now that I'm here. I haven't done it yet, but it's one of the gazillion million bureaucracies I have to now that I'm here. I don't know what it's like in... Are you from Brazil or Portugal?

**Interviewer** [01:06:48] Brazil.

**T07** [01:06:49] Okay. So, like, I don't know what it's like in Brazil, but Spain is super bureaucratic. So, you have to, like, do all this bureaucracy, which I absolutely hate. And I have to do a gazillion gazillion million things I haven't started. But I hate it every step of it. Well, anyway, so I have to do all this stuff. And among the things that I have to do is like I need to join the Basque Translators Association. I'll actually apply to... They've asked me to apply to become a board member of the American Literary Translators Association precisely because I translate from an indigenous language. And they want more diversity in the board.

**Interviewer** [01:07:30] Mm hmm. That's good. Well, the whole bureaucracy, I can relate to that because, I mean, Latin America in general, Brazil is well known for its bureaucracy. And we don't have associations. We have like if I ask this last question to translators in Brazil, they most probably would say that they're not a member of any, because we don't have associations as ALTA or as the Translators Association in the UK. It's more of a union and there's two big ones. And they are more for technical translators than anything else. And they can fight a lot and the whole...to join the union. It's a whole thing. And the market doesn't follow the union at all. Like if you tried to charge for a translation work based on their fares. Oh, my God. You wouldn't get it, you would never get a job anywhere. So it's kind of, it's out of touch with reality. But yeah, that's why I ask, because that's also important to have some kind of.

**T07** [01:08:37] Yeah. Well, you know, the American Literary Translator Association doesn't even have suggested rates. They don't suggest a rate. The British Translators Association, it does suggests a minimum rate, but the American literary translators association doesn't, you know, the American capitalism, free-market sort of situation, like they won't even suggest how much to charge.

**Interviewer** [01:09:00] Yeah, well, that can be confusing or like not very good for, especially if you're starting in the profession. You know, they don't have a clue.

**T07** [01:09:11] I don't know if you know that there is a Facebook Literary translation group. Maybe you'd be interested to join.

**Interviewer** [01:09:17] Yeah, I'm part of that. I think it's the same one. Yeah, I think I saw your post in there.

**T07** [01:09:24] Yeah, every now and then I write something there but. Yeah. But every now and then you get like you know some starting translator and it's like well how much do I charge. And then there's like this huge fight going on. And you know, it's because I said, 'look, you know, a good starting point is like one hundred for a thousand words. If you've never done anything', and then like, I've got all these people. 'What? That's too little bla bla'. I was like, 'well, if you've been translating for, like, thirty years, of course you got to charge more. But for someone who's just starting.' I mean, it's a huge debate.

**Interviewer** [01:09:55] Yeah, I got lucky with my...because my first translation, it was published this year in May.

**T07** [01:10:07] Congratulations, that's wonderful.

**Interviewer** [01:10:07] Sorry. It was last year, May 2019. This whole year has passed me by. But yeah. It was the result of my masters. My dissertation was kind of the critical companion to my translation, and it was of Tawada. So it was a whole negotiation with my supervisor who didn't do any work on the translation but added his name to the translation at the end, something that my current supervisor, we... It's abhorrent. It's awful. But anyway, I'm not, so luckily...

**T07** [01:10:45] Write about it. You know, all this shit, it should not stay in the dark. This is your power. This is, you know, this is going to be my revenge with this whole thing as well. I'm gonna write an article about it. No, these things should not stay in the dark, bring it to the surface because this is how these monsters thrive, by keeping us quiet about the shit they pull.

**Interviewer** [01:11:09] And I've read things about other things happening in the world of literary translation, like, there was this letter in the L.A. Review of books about this other famous translator.

**T07** [01:11:19] Benjamin Moser

**Interviewer** [01:11:20] Yeah. Yeah, that kind of thing, but luckily, like, the thing is, he was negotiating with this other publishing... At this point I didn't know that he was going to add his name to my translation because otherwise I would have asked him to give me more input. But he was negotiating with this publisher in Brazil to buy the rights to publish the novel, it is a 300-word novel. OK. so, it's not like an easy task. 300 pages, sorry. And he was too slow, didn't include me in negotiation at all, was way too slow and way too stupid. And then in the end, this other publisher swooped in and bought the rights. So, but luckily, Tawada wrote to the publisher saying that she wanted my translation to be the one they published, that she was like, now, I don't accept, even though you bought the thing, as an author, I'm saying I don't accept you to publish any other translation. Which was great. And then, and then he added his name to it. But then the publishing house added both our names. But when they asked, like, to which bank account should we give the payment. And I at this point, I didn't know how much I was gonna get paid for it. And they asked which bank account. And then I just I was quicker to reply and I was like, this is my bank account, you can transfer me the whole amount. And then I messaged him privately and say, listen, I did the work. I deserve to be paid in full. And then he didn't say anything about it. He's actually very scared that I will sue him or something. And when Tawada was over there in Brazil, she visited in October last year and we met in person and he kind of like carried her around and took her to visit all these places. He was kind of like acting as the guide or whatever. But she at one point she came to me and she asked, like, how much did he do? How much work did he do on the book? She came to me, took me to the side and asked me. And I was like, I was honest. I was like, no, he didn't do, like, he was my supervisor in the dissertation.

**T07** [01:13:38] She knew it.

**Interviewer** [01:13:39] She knew it, like, she's very smart. We were having this very public event at the uni back home and everyone asking questions. And there was this other

friend of mine who was a master student who had just published a shorter, like, collection of essays by Tawada. A Translation. Also with his name next to her name. And now he was kind of saying, like, Marianna did that. And that is all. And he was talking about all these students of his who were writing or doing dissertation or theses about Tawada in general or about translation of Tawada. And then she turned, in front of everyone, she was, like, and what did you do in all of this?

**T07** [01:14:19] Oh, wow. That's great. That's really great.

**Interviewer** [01:14:22] She was like, did you do anything? Or were you just...

**T07** [01:14:27] I love it

**Interviewer** [01:14:28] I love her.

**T07** [01:14:29] More people should be like her. Please, more authors like her. She knows. She knows.

**Interviewer** [01:14:36] She's smart. Smart woman. Anyway, so that's my experience. So I totally kind of. But then again, I didn't have any say in how much I was going to get paid. I was so happy that I was going to get publish or be paid. And then luckily it was a good amount. Like,.

**T07** [01:14:52] That's great.

**Interviewer** [01:14:53] But I was just lucky that, you know, a lot of beginners, you know, don't really have a say that much.

**T07** [01:15:06] [noise] Sorry that was my sister crushing something in the kitchen.

**Interviewer** [01:15:08] No worries. I need to go now because I need to eat something at some point.

**T07** [01:15:14] Sure. Same here. Yeah. It was really great talking to you. And hey, if you want to talk again, you know, I'd be happy to answer some more questions, whenever.

**Interviewer** [01:15:24] Definitely. I will. When I start transcribing this, I will probably have some questions or like, you know, some things to ask you. But anyway, we can always talk again and, you know, keep in touch.

**T07** [01:15:37] Yeah, sure. [noise].

**Interviewer** [01:15:41] Sorry?

**T07** [01:15:43] Yeah. I said this was great. I was very happy to talk to you.

**Interviewer** [01:15:47] Yeah. thank you for agreeing. And also, I forgot to ask you for the... Did you send me the consent form?

**T07** [01:15:54] Oh, no, I need to fill that out. I couldn't do it in my own computer the other day. I need to print it. Yeah, I'll print it and take a photo now.

**Interviewer** [01:16:02] OK, no worries. No rush. Just before I forget, because I, although I'm not in any...

**T07** [01:16:08] Sure, no, and if I don't do it in the next couple of days remind me because it's just, like, my mom kind of broke, well, not... She broke her back. She has severed vertebrae. So, between my sisters and I we are looking after her and taking turns, so when I'm up in the farmhouse where they live, there is no you know, there's barely an internet connection, there is no printer. So, I can only do that when I'm here in my apartment.

**Interviewer** [01:16:33] OK.

**T07** [01:16:33] So, you know, because it's such a crazy time until she gets her operation next week I might like, forget and not do it. But just remind me. Don't be shy. OK? Just because right now my brain is in a million places. And this year, added to the fact that this just like, shifted my entire life, you know.

**Interviewer** [01:16:55] Yeah. Yeah. Be safe out there and give my regards to your mom. I hope everything goes well in there.

**T07** [01:17:04] Yeah. It should, the doctors said, like, they're going to basically they're going to put like concrete. They say *cemento ósseo*, you know, it's, you know, cement, right? So, cement something. They're going to put that in her back. And the doctor said that, you know, the operation takes, like, you know, three to five hours and that when she comes out of it, she'll be able to. That's what he said. So. So I hope so. Yeah. I guess it's like, you know, with my mom, it's, you know, my mom is like all moms, like, she is very annoying, she is hyperactive. She's always buzzing everybody around. So, you know, I'm always complaining of like, oh my God, she is so energetic, like, you know, but now, like, you know, to see her lying down and then not being able to move so much. I'm like, hm, can I have my mom back, you know, like I don't like this. I don't like this. I will never complain again. Give me the other one. Yeah. [both laugh]

**Interviewer** [01:18:01] Thank you again. Have a nice week and I will get in touch if I need anything or if I want to talk.

**T07** [01:18:10] Sure. Do that. No problem. All right. Ok, Interviewer, Really nice talking to you.

**Interviewer** [01:18:15] Thank you. Bye.

**T07** [01:18:16] Take care.

•

## **T08 (written interview)**

### **Approaches to Languages**

**Do you consider that you have a mother tongue, a first language, or more than one? If so, which one(s)? If not, why not?**

Yes, I consider the Ukrainian language my mother tongue.

**What is your language of education? Is it different from your mother tongue?**

I received my education in two languages: Ukrainian and English. I'm majoring in the English Language and Literature, so, naturally, certain courses (or, rather, most courses) were taught in English. Later, as a Fulbright fellow at the University of Iowa's Literary Translation Workshop, I also attended lectures and workshops taught in English.

**Do you translate into a non-mother tongue? If so, what is your experience of it?**

Sometimes, I translate from Ukrainian into English, which is non-native for me. I'd say that translation in this direction takes up around 20-30% of all my translation projects. I work mostly with non-literary texts on the topics of arts, literature, psychology, lifestyle, marketing, media, politics, etc. Rarely, it's technical or medical translation. From time to time, I also translate fiction into English: excerpts from novels or short stories. I've been translating non-literary texts into English ever since I graduated back in 2010. I started working with fiction only three years ago, as a Fulbright fellow at the University of Iowa's Translation Workshop. A couple of short stories I translated have been published in the American and Canadian literary journals. For some time, I collaborated with an agency promoting the Ukrainian literature abroad, having translated samples for book catalogues and the like for them. My most recent into-English translation is a non-fiction book which is now being edited and is expected to be out in the late fall. Right now, though, I feel like focusing more on into-Ukrainian translation and leave the fiction translation up for English native speakers. I am still eager to translate non-literary texts into English, though. I think it should also be mentioned here that Ukrainian is a "small" language, which means that there is only a handful of English native speakers working with Ukrainian-language fiction. There's a growing demand for translations, though, and for this reason, non-natives with a near-native English language ability step in. Another thing I should mention is that when it comes to translating fiction, I always work with an English-speaking editor. When I work with non-literary texts, in most cases I work solo.

**How would you describe your relationship to the languages you can speak/write/translate?**

Well, Ukrainian is my mother tongue, a language that I use for all purposes on a daily basis. I feel completely comfortable in it and with it, and I like playing around with the language. English is my L2, a language I love working with, a language in which I feel at home. I don't live in the English-speaking environment, so my relation with the language is kind of distant, but I do my best to keep up with English, so to say: I read a lot in English, I write and translate in it, I speak it whenever I have a chance.

**Have you ever been able to express something in a language that is not your first language more satisfactorily? How so?**

Yes, I have, many times. I can't provide a concrete example off the top of my head, but in most cases it happened because English could express a particular thought or emotion in a clearer, more concise way than Ukrainian. It could also be that a certain phenomenon existed only in the English-speaking world or that a certain English word incorporated some meaning or different possible shades of meaning more aptly than a Ukrainian word. Or, an English word / phrase could get the necessary meaning across more efficiently, whereas in Ukrainian, a couple of words or even a whole sentence was needed to convey the same.

**Directionality**

**What is the difference, for you, between both (or more) directions of translation? How would you describe your translation process (and types of challenge, linguistic or otherwise) when you are translating into a mother tongue and into a foreign language?**

I feel more freedom when I'm translating into Ukrainian. First of all, the freedom of choice (between syntactical structures, synonyms, etc). I also feel that as a Ukrainian native speaker I have a bigger "moral right" and more legitimacy to step away from the original, to play with the language. More creative freedom, I'd say. When I'm translating into English, I feel more constrained. I'm always in doubt whether I managed to pick the "correct" variant of translation; whether I chose the word with the right shade of meaning, and so on. I'm worried that I might have missed certain cultural associations or intertextualities that a native speaker of English would've immediately picked up. So, the types of challenges here are linguistic and cultural, I think. On the whole, I feel much more confident translating into my mother tongue. Whenever I work into English, I tend not just to double-check everything, but to triple-check.

**Do you have preferred genres/text-types for L2 translation? How, if at all, do they differ from your L1 translation practice? Please explain the reasons for this.**

When it comes to L2 translation, I usually stay on the safe side and choose texts that are not too complicated (linguistically and otherwise), preferably written by contemporary writers, usually short stories or excerpts from novels. When I translate into L1, I feel much more confident and I can work basically with any type of text. Mostly, these are novels, short stories, non-fiction books about art, etc. I translate children's lit and YA into Ukrainian, too. I would never try translating those into L2, though, for fear of not getting the language right (in terms of age specificity).

**Are there any genres/text-types that you prefer not to translate? Please explain the reasons for this.**

Children's book and YA, for fear of not getting the voices/language right—for example, using words that might be incomprehensible/too adult for small children or using slang that's already outdated in the US and no longer used by the American teenagers.

**Market and gatekeeping**

**Has your translation work been criticised, rejected or disregarded because you are not a native speaker of the Target Language?**

Only recently, my translation has been overly criticized and edited too heavily on implication that English is not my native language. An English-speaking editor basically re-wrote my translation without a valid reason.

**Have you ever been overcorrected on a linguistic choice or specific form that was consciously made by you? How so?**

Yes, in the case mentioned above. The editor made sure to correct every sentence. Sometimes, the edits were like shifting the adverbial clause of time from the beginning of a sentence to its end, or vice versa. Or substituting one word for its absolute synonym. When I asked about certain changes, they said that they just feel it works better this way. The implication was that I, as a non-native speaker of English, can't really "feel" the language. It was a very embarrassing, or even humiliating experience for me. Discouraging, too.

**Creative writing, fluency and translation**

**How do you view the relationship between fluency and creativity in the languages you use?**

I think that fluency and creativity are directly related to each other. The more fluent you are, the more creative you can—or simply are able to—get. Fluency gives you creative freedom, I'd say.

**Do you also do creative writing outside of your translation practice? If so, is it only in your first language or do you experiment with other languages? How do you feel your creative writing relates to your translation practice?**

I used to play around with creating writing. Back when I was a teenager, I wrote short stories and poems, but I no longer do that. When I lived in the US, I did experiment with English, having written a dozen of poems and, again, short stories. But I showed them only to my closest friends, and I did that just for fun, out of inspiration... I have no intention whatsoever to publish anything I write in Ukrainian or English. I don't feel that I have much to say. I do believe, though, that creative writing skills are helpful when it comes to translation, especially, translation of fiction where a translator recreates the original in their language. To do justice to the original and the author behind it, a translator should definitely possess certain creative writing abilities.

**Training and professional status**

**Did you have formal translation training? If so, did it include different translation directions? If you did receive training in different translation directions, has there been a change in the direction(s) that you practice since completing your training? Do you still translate in both directions, in only one, or in one much more than another?**

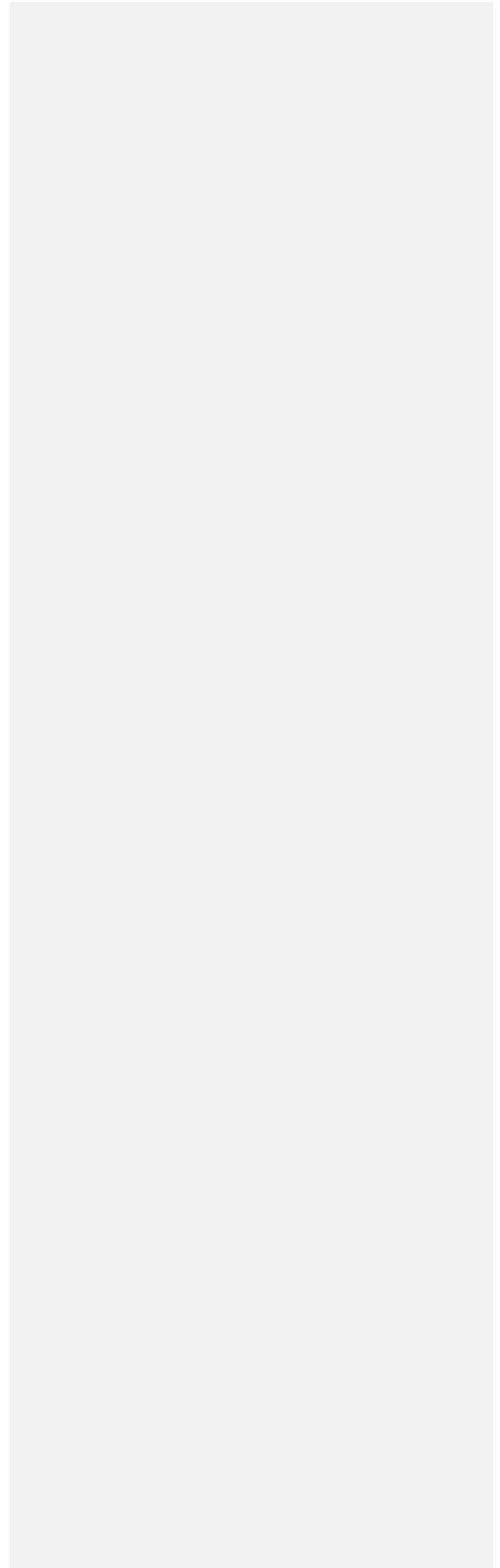
As a student majoring in English language and literature, I took up several courses on the theory and practice of translation (from English into Ukrainian). At Iowa's Translation

Workshop, I focused on working in reverse direction (from Ukrainian into English). During my time in Iowa and for a short period after that, I actively translated Ukrainian fiction into English. Right now, I'm back to translating from English into Ukrainian 80-85% of my time. The rest 15-20% is into-English translation, not necessarily literary.

**Are you a member of a professional association? Which one?**

I used to be an ALTA member. At the moment, I don't belong to any professional association.

- 





## Interview T09.mp4

**Interviewer** [00:00:04] So just as you know, we will be recording, but obviously only audio. What did you think of the questionnaire?

**T09** [00:00:18] You know, I think I'm never sure which one is my L1 or L2, and towards the end, I was just putting neutral answers because I was like, I don't know if this applies to me. So it was interesting, I guess, to be confronted like that, with this binary and language thing which I do struggle with. Yeah. It raised a lot of interesting questions just by the way the questions were framed.

**Interviewer** [00:01:04] Well, yeah, my pool of, like, the group of people I'm interviewing are very different from each other, like, there's... One thing that I wanted to see is how, like: is there something that brings all of these translators together? Is there something in common? And there are some things in common so far. I'm midway through my interviews, but yeah, that kind of thing is what I'm interested in. Like, how do you respond to these kind of questions and how do you see yourself in this kind of binary world? Because it is actually a struggle, because I have two supervisors. One is in Translation Studies, Chantal Wright, and the other is in applied linguistics. So obviously there is some preference to certain terms. But then again, I say, like, if you use L1, L2, there are people who cannot define their L1 or L2. Like, they don't have one L1, you know, or many people have, like, a very complicated history, backgrounds with language. So, I'm finding very interesting to see the differences between, you know, everyone that I've interviewed so far. So there is obviously no right or wrong. What I want to see is how you... What you have to say about all these issues and how you comment on that.

**T09** [00:02:35] Sure.

**Interviewer** [00:02:35] Yeah. So, I basically want to see how people who deal so closely with language, how they talk about language or how, you know... So obviously, you're more than welcome to comment on any terminology that you find is not good enough or you don't like, or you don't like being used to define you. That's interesting as well for me. So, I have questions that I have to get through because then it needs to be comparable, quote on quote comparable. But obviously some of them won't apply to a specific situation. So, you can comment on why it doesn't apply or you can just say "oh yeah, this is not applicable for me", et cetera, et cetera. So, yeah, it should be like an informal fun chat, it shouldn't feel like this very formal, strict interview. So, can I start? Should we start?

**T09** [00:03:33] Oh, yes, sure. Yes.

**Interviewer** [00:03:45] Thank you for accepting my invitation. And yeah, I was actually struggling whether I should contact you, because a lot of my interviewees actually contacted me, so it's weird to kind of just assume that someone wants to be put in a category or in a group of people, you know. So yeah, I'll just stop waffling and start this thing. So the first set of questions is on approaches to languages. So the first one is: do you consider that you have a mother tongue, a first language or more than one? If so, which one or which ones? If not, why not?

**T09** [00:04:36] OK, have you come across the definition of mother tongue, as used in, as far as I know, in Singapore and India?

**Interviewer** [00:04:46] No, not really. Specifically in those places, no.

**T09** [00:04:49] Yeah. And I don't know if this is a legacy of British colonialism, but in these places, and this is embedded in the school curriculum, mother tongue means your heritage language, as assigned by the state, rather than your first language. So, I kind of. But because I'm mixed race, when I started primary school, I was essentially allowed to choose my mother tongue. Which is quite an odd concept and I think from an early age showed me the hollowness of it. So, my dad's Sri Lankan Tamil and my mum's Malaysian Chinese, and they kind of pushed me towards Malay, even though it is neither of their languages, because that's the easiest language, supposedly. And I chose Chinese, and I'm not sure, I mean, I can't fully be sure if this was my reasoning at the time because I was six, I think it was because I'm Chinese passing and I knew I would be expected to speak specifically Mandarin, in the Singaporean context. Because language is a very racial issue. We happen to speak English at home, because it's my parents' common language, because... But also, English is a signifier of privilege in Singapore and many other countries where if you speak English at home, and often if you're Christian, that automatically places you in the upper-middle class. So it's a very aspirational thing. "I came from Malaysia to Singapore" - she's very attuned to that. And in fact, the worst insult about a fellow Singaporean is "and he doesn't even speak good English". So I kind of grew up with that English is this aspirational thing and as my home language, but also feeling resistance to it, so opting for Chinese in primary school and then choosing to go to a Chinese secondary school, which my parents discouraged because, you know, English is the elite language, so why wouldn't you go to an English school. And so I grew up, I think, more bilingual than most of my generation. People tended to split along class lines into which the strongest language was, where I was speaking English at home and Chinese at school, although a lot of the lessons were still in English, because Singapore now has English as a dominant language. And I know a lot of Singaporeans who are just very comfortable saying "English is my first language" or "I only speak English, really", whereas I think because from an early age - although I did grow up using English, in many ways English is my dominant language, my native language, whatever you call it - I feel more of a connection with Chinese. And I guess that is how I found my way into translation. It was the only thing that really made sense of this disparity.

**Interviewer** [00:08:37] Interesting. I didn't know that. So it's like the common language of your household growing up was English, to communicate with each other?

**T09** [00:08:48] Yes.

**Interviewer** [00:08:48] But what other languages? So, it's Mandarin, and you said Malay?

**T09** [00:08:56] Well, this is the thing. My father speaks Tamil and my mother speaks Cantonese, because she grew up in Malaysia, and I spoke Cantonese as a very young child. And then that mainly stopped. And now my Cantonese is really vestigial, like, I was never, after the age of five or six, I was never allowed to use Cantonese to communicate with them. Because Mandarin is the elite version of Chinese, even though that's not a language they speak. So I would hear them speaking to each other in Cantonese and I would hear my father speaking to his Sri Lankan family on the phone in Tamil, but that was not... Those were not languages I had access to. And I was speaking Mandarin at school and, you know, when you are out in Singapore, depending on context, sometimes you use English, sometimes you use Mandarin. I would say if you're on a bus you'll probably hear both languages and also Malay and Tamil, Singapore has four official languages if you are educated in Singapore you're probably using English? Most schools use English, but

things like public safety announcements or national events are very conspicuously in all four languages.

**Interviewer** [00:10:19] OK, interesting. Yeah, it is slightly... Not, not really, because I come from Brazil, it's a very, in a State sense, monolingual country, but not really. But my mom's mother tongue was German and she was born and raised in Brazil, but she started learning Portuguese only at the age of 12, so... But she didn't find it was fair to my dad for her to speak German to me if he didn't understand German. So I was brought up like monolingual, kind of. But then at the same time, I have all of mine, like all the nursery rhymes, all of the lullabies that my mom sang to me were in German. I didn't understand what they were, what they meant, but... So if I were to have a child now, I think I would speak Portuguese to the child. But I think I don't actually know many, you know, children songs and stuff like that in Portuguese. I know them only in German, which is a weird thing to, like... I cannot consider myself bilingual necessarily but, at the same time, parts of my childhood are only in one language, which is weird. But yeah. So it's I think a lot of people have that kind of...

**T09** [00:11:41] Oh yeah. That kind of... certain areas of your life in certain languages. So did you study German later on that? Sorry I'm not supposed to interview you, but...

**Interviewer** [00:11:55] I studied English at uni and then my friend was actually... Really wanted to... She really wanted to learn German. I wasn't very excited about it because for me was the language of my grandparents and wasn't very, you know, cool or hip or whatever. But then my friend kind of convinced me and there was this opening for a German like the first and second semester, like it was... They were opening a group in the afternoons and then I could fit that into my schedule. So I took I started taking German at uni together with English, and then I had to change my degree, and then in the middle of that I ended up taking eight semesters of German and in German literature and translation. I could almost get a degree in German, but then I was too impatient, I didn't want to stay at uni and finish the second degree. So I just... But yeah, and then obviously the, especially the... I mean, my accent is OK in German because I heard it all my life. So my ear, like, I can identify the accent and the intonation and stuff, but obviously I make so many grammar mistakes. But mostly because my main goal with any language is just to be able to communicate. I don't really want to be perfect, you know, especially with grammar. And Germans have... In German a lot of people are like: "You know, you have to be good, you have to do that, you have to get it right all the time". So I don't like that. So yeah, that's why I like Tawada as well. So she's not very... She is very fluent, but I mean just that she kind of plays with these expectations, you know, that I find interesting.

**T09** [00:13:50] Yeah. I really like the way, I guess, exophonic writers manipulate the language. I have been very slowly reading Sharon Dodua Otoo, have you come across?

**Interviewer** [00:14:09] I haven't read it, but but I think I heard that name before. What is the name again?

**T09** [00:14:18] Well, I'm not sure if I got it right, but Sharon Dodua Otoo, she won, I can't remember the name of it, the main short story prize last year [Ingeborg Bachmann prize]. Possibly the Goethe Kunst? And she's a black British writer who now lives in Berlin and writes in German. And German is actually one of the languages I've been trying to work on, and I think possibly because she's an exophonic writer, I find her easier to access. So I am very slowly reading her work.

**Interviewer** [00:14:58] Yeah. That's why I got... When I first read Tawada in a German literature class at uni and among, like, after having read Goethe, Schiller and all those things, then came an essay by Tawada that's in *Überseetzungen*, about, like, it's a whole book about languages and translation and stuff. And it was an essay and I found it the prose so... I wouldn't... I would say easy, but it's not that, that's deceptive. It's not necessarily easy, but it's like... It was very, very clever and it would play with German language, but it would be in an accessible way. So I really... It was how I... I'm like: "I can get down with this. Can I read more of her?" And then that's how I got into this world. But, yeah, I took note of this Sharon. I hadn't heard of her. That's interesting. I thought it was another... I heard something else when you first said. Interesting. Thank you for that. Actually, I'm going to. Hmm.

**T09** [00:16:09] Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:16:11] So, yeah. Sorry. I need to go back to my... I got too excited about.

**T09** [00:16:15] Oh yes.

**Interviewer** [00:16:19] So I think this one you kind of already answered but obviously there's probably more to say about it. But, what would you say is your language of education? And is it different from what you consider to be your mother tongue or first language or your main language?

**T09** [00:16:40] I suppose my language of education is English. Although, as I say, in secondary school, I went to a school where more emphasis was placed on Chinese, and... Maybe this will show you the priorities of Singapore. It was a Chinese language school, but most of our classes are still in English, but the classes they considered unimportant, like art or PE, were taught in Chinese. Which is still quite unusual because in most Singaporean schools, all the classes would be taught in English except your mother tongue class. So in regular schools a couple of times a week, because Singapore is a multiracial society, everyone gets up and splits into their racial groups and the Chinese kids go off to learn Chinese, and the Malay kids go off to learn Malay, and the Indian kids go off to learn Tamil. And the downside of going to a Chinese school like I did is that I grew up in a completely Chinese environment, in contrast to how multiracial Singapore is. And that is an issue. So we had a couple of rogue teachers who taught in Chinese, even though they were not supposed to, like, legally. So, math and geography were taught in Chinese, even though that really wasn't supposed to happen. So, I kind of got a more well-rounded education, a proper bilingual education in that sense. But English was still dominant. And then I came to the UK for uni in a very... That's kind of the traditional pathway in Singapore, at least it was when I went to uni. This progression of: if you do well enough then of course you go to the UK for uni.

**Interviewer** [00:18:49] Mm hmm.

**T09** [00:18:50] And like, it was it was so well set that that was just a government scholarship that I could take to go to the U.K., from the Singapore government. So that's kind of how entrenched the English language is in the system. But then I kind of got to the U.K. and then felt quite alienated because the type of language, the type of English we speak in Singapore isn't quite British English. It's almost a patois. So, it's a slightly odd position I'm in, I guess, where my work language is English, but I've come to use a much more British form of English - and you can hear it in my voice - than the English I grew up speaking. And this is this thing that I'm navigating, like, it's been very useful to me in my

translation work that I have this ability to move between languages, between cultures and I've been in the States for eight years now, and I can translate into American English if required, like, I'm sure there are areas where my English is not quite British and not quite American. I shift in either direction, and that seemed enough for editors on either side of the Atlantic.

**Interviewer** [00:20:23] I was going to say, like that's one of the reasons why I was thinking of asking to interview you since the beginning. But then I wasn't sure of, you know, because obviously Singapore English is an English. And so if you are... If you grew up with it, if you are a citizen of a country that has English as one of the official languages and has its own variant of English, I find it problematic to assume or to ask like "are your non-native speaker or a non-native translator?" That's why I kind of kept back, but then obviously I saw you commenting on these issues of language and, you know, of language policy and what people consider you, because I know... It must be like... I have a friend from India who say that "well, we are trilingual, quadrilingual, but we want to be considered also as English speakers. We don't need to learn English from, you know, British people. We speak our own English, but it's it's a form of English". So that's one of the... But I know that they they suffer prejudice for that. Like that they are... Indian English gets corrected often. And so that's one of the reasons why I thought it was an interesting conversation to have anyway. But yeah.

**T09** [00:21:50] No, I mean, strictly speaking, I probably don't quite fit into the model of the exophonic translator, but it's not that straightforward. So yeah. I mean, I'm glad [about] that flexibility in your research.

**Interviewer** [00:22:04] Well, I don't actually... That's what I'm trying to find out. What is that model, if there is one? Because the interviewees are so different from each other and so, like, is there something in common? I think there is, but I still haven't found out what it is exactly that makes translators Exophonic.

**T09** [00:22:26] Yes. I don't know. Sorry, do you need to move on or...?

**Interviewer** [00:22:33] No, no, no, please, please, please.

**T09** [00:22:35] So when you interviewing Julia Sanches, that's something I've been discussing with her, that she brought up, that we've been working on a panel for the ALTA conference recently about how the metaphor of translation as a bridge is imperialist. And I think that probably is the difference that for the exophonic translator both languages are within us and the shift is internal, whereas for the non-exophonic translator the source languages are external, the source culture is external at the sense of going out and claiming something to bring back. Mm hmm.

**Interviewer** [00:23:25] Mm hmm. Interesting.

**T09** [00:23:26] So I feel that transition for me is an internal process.

**Interviewer** [00:23:31] Mm hmm. Mm hmm. I'm thinking whether there is like... Because I think of my own situation: I like to translate or write in English, but I cannot say that I grew up with English necessarily. But it is kind of a tricky thing because you can consider then the exophonic translator, as you said, you kind of created this differentiation between the exophonic translator and the non-exophonic translator. And then maybe there's the L2 translator, which is like, in my case English is my L2, by all, you know, definition. But

maybe there is some kind of internal thing going on. Well, I don't know. Maybe I'll find out. But that's an interesting comparison you made. Hmm. Yeah, I always felt that maybe the thing in common is that people who cannot easily define, not necessarily define the mother tongue of the first language, but define what is there, like, where do they feel at home and what language, or if they should feel at home at all. And there is something in common, and like, because ever since coming here I've felt that a lot of... I might need to take this out of my transcription because I might offend some people, but I found that a lot of the literary translators that I met here are, pardon the word, more like literary tourists, you know, in the sense that the British people who study the modern foreign languages degree went abroad, stayed maybe a year or two, did it in the Erasmus year abroad in Mexico and not in Spain or, like, did a whole thing in Mexico and whatever, and then now they translate all of the literature of Latin America into English. And I find that, as a Latina, a bit... I mean, it's like I studied translation all my life in Brazil, but it's we since we are in Brazil, we have a different perspective of what translation does and what it can do so and who we are as translators and how much we can speak for this other culture, you know? So I find it a bit one-sided here. Ever since I came here I just found out all these translators who are, you know, doing, like... Some of them are great, I'm not... But I find that, you know, if I were to ask them the same questions, they would just have one simple answer, I guess. Or simpler.

**T09** [00:26:11] Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:26:11] Then yeah. And my other... I'm sorry, you would say something?

**T09** [00:26:25] Yeah, no, I don't think I can put it into words that I have similar and complex feelings.

**Interviewer** [00:26:33] Yeah, I made many friends here that are that kind of translator, so I cannot like, you know, trash them or anything because, you know, it's one I like. Yeah. Like, there's that individuals and they have their own histories. But it is something that I notice more and more that, since coming here to the UK, that's a bit more pronounced, I guess.

**T09** [00:27:00] Yeah, I mean, that is a strain of that in the US as well, but maybe because the US has, I think, more immigration that's pronounced and more aware that it's a complex issue. But I mean, recently I attend to a zoom event by... An Instagram event by quite a well-known American translator. And at a certain part she was talking about translating culture. And she used the term native informant in a positive way, like she was saying, well, you have to go to the country and you have native informants who help explain things to you. And I felt like that's the term that maybe should pass out of use because of how imperialistic transactional it's not just the term, but the very idea of, as you said, going to each of these as a cultural tourist and mining it for certain things. But I also don't... I don't want to be prescriptive about this, because whilst I really like the act of translation as carried out by people who have a foot in more than one language and culture rather than a more, well yeah, tourist engagement, I don't see how much literary translation would take place in one restricted to this group.

**Interviewer** [00:28:40] Yeah, I think that's also like, in an English speaking world - whatever that means, with all its implications - it's different. What I'm saying is, like, specifically on translations into English and [from] what I can see specifically in the U.K. publishing market. So obviously this changes across... It's... One thing that I notice is that's very different from my experience is that this idea that the text should read fluently and

should be read as if it was written in English. And that was new to me because that is not what we hear in Brazil. I mean...

**T09** [00:29:21] OK, that...

**Interviewer** [00:29:25] Sorry, you were saying something?

**T09** [00:29:29] Its just that's great to hear. I love that.

**Interviewer** [00:29:33] I mean, I've participated in or read to things about translating for children and how you should adapt cultural references, you know? And at the same time I don't... I mean, I understand that this is what is expected and what publishers want, but at the same time I grew up reading translations, and I knew... For example, I knew that Harry Potter wasn't set in Brazil and that J.K. Rowling wasn't Brazilian or that, you know? I've read like... You see movies, you read books that are obviously translations. None of these were set in Brazil. They were obviously set somewhere else. But that didn't... The knowing that this was not written originally in Portuguese didn't... It was actually more enriching than anything for my childhood, I guess. Anyway, that's my view.

**T09** [00:30:32] Oh, yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:30:33] I'm thinking how to how to pose this next question, because in your case it's tricky - as it is in many cases but like... So the question is: do you translate into a non-mother tongue? If so, what is your experience of it? So, if you want to comment on that or just tell me to go to the next question.

**T09** [00:30:58] Well, I think Singapore's language are in the margins, right? So I said earlier that I don't speak what British people consider standard English. Well, I do now. But I didn't growing up. And I also don't have what people from China consider to be native Chinese, standard Chinese. So it's been really interesting talking to friends from China and Taiwan to find out which things I thought in Mandarin are just universal and which things are only used in Singapore. So if I was translating into Chinese, which I have attempted. It would only really be publishable in Singapore, or that would need to be a lot of editing before it was legible to a Chinese audience in the greater Chinese speaking world. Not "legible"... It would be legible, but um... Because Singapore is such a small country, if there is an experience that they don't understand, that it's just a different version of the language, then they feel this is wrong. And I think if I was translating from a Singaporean writer I would stand my ground and go "no, it has to be Singaporean Chinese". Just as when I translated a Singaporean Chinese writer, I do tend to use a Singaporean English register rather than... You can't see me doing air quotes, but "standard English". But the main reason I don't? Well, there's two main reasons. The first is just I live in an English speaking country. I have for the last two decades, had 10 years in the UK and now 8 years in the States. So just from the water I swim in, it's just, English just comes more naturally to me, and translating into English is just the easier direction. Like, I feel like I have to go live in China or Taiwan or... Back in Singapore although opportunities to speak chinese in Singapore are not as great as they used to be, so I would say China or Taiwan to really get back in tune with that before I would translate into Chinese. So the short answer is no, depending which, yeah. The other reason is economic. Translating into chinese just pays so much worse.

**Interviewer** [00:33:28] Yeah, OK. So yeah, it's interesting, I didn't know that you would, like... There will be a specific question about, like, the directions and what languages you...

But that's interesting. So this is kind of already touched upon, but maybe you can add to it: how would you describe your relationship to the languages you can speak, write, translate into, from? Or understand or...

**T09** [00:34:01] Contentious, I guess, I mean, I think it comes easily to me, like, I can speak English without thinking about it, whereas when I'm speaking Chinese in a formal setting I have to find myself tripping up over: is this the right term to use in this situation? Am I being too casual? Is this right slang term? Do I sound like someone from the 80s? These are the things that went on. In Chinese I feel less certain of myself. With email, because email etiquette is really different between China and Taiwan, I'm always second guessing myself: I am going to formal or not formal enough? I'm very bad at judging when to use the formal "you" in Chinese, also in German.

**Interviewer** [00:34:56] Yeah.

**T09** [00:34:56] So. English comes easily to me, but I also feel a bit alienated in it, in that... certain terms I still, I'm like oh wait that is just poor pronunciation or, you know, I used it in a slightly funny way, and I definitely feel alienated when I meet the Chinese, so I'm not fully at home in any one language. OK, but I sort of pass, I think.

**Interviewer** [00:35:24] Do you have, like, so one thing that...?

**T09** [00:35:26] I was trying...

**Interviewer** [00:35:27] Sorry. Sorry. Please go on. I interrupted you.

**T09** [00:35:30] I was just trying to learn Tamil, but it's going very slowly. I'm trying to learn both Tamil and Cantonese, but that is proceeding very slowly. And I don't know that I necessarily feel more connected just because these are the languages that my parents speak. But it's sort of something that I have been trying for some years and the lockdown has given me more time to focus on it, on them. But I don't know how far I'll get.

**Interviewer** [00:36:00] Yeah, I... My Duolingo thing is just like so many little flags and... Everyday I try to... [laughter]. So I try... As a speaker of Latin language I can already speak Spanish, I can understand a lot of Italian, I can understand a lot of French. So I was like: I should just add to it, just, like, learn properly, learn Catalan and, you know, and Galician and whatever else is there like... Romanian and you know? But it's kind of like... I don't know how to explain, when they are so close together it gets even worse, I guess, because you can't...

**T09** [00:36:42] Yeah. I definitely feel that. Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:36:47] I was thinking of your example with Cantonese. But do you think like... I added this question because I wanted to know what you just answered but also because, you know, the whole term mother tongue versus, you know, other terms or like more familial terms, like I have one interviewee who used my adopted tongue, my adopted mother tongue, my biological mother tongue but not really... You know? So this is... It can be like, you might have a familial relationship to any of them. Yeah. That's why I added the word relationship. But it doesn't have to be that metaphor.

**T09** [00:37:27] I, I thought, I mean, it's not familial, it's imperial, I think, imperialist. I mean, my parents are very proud of speaking what they call "Queen's English" and when my



mom was buying picture books for my nieces she just bought British ones. And when I was growing up there were only British children's books available in English, and now there are Singaporean ones available in Singapore, and she told me that she finds those weird because children's books should be set in England. Like, children's books should be British. That's just how it is. I was trying to interrogate that and she's just like "well, you know, that's just the way it is". And I found that so weird. She's an English teacher.

**Interviewer** [00:38:28] Yeah. So childhood only exists in England.

**T09** [00:38:33] Exactly, yes. So I grew up reading Enid Blyton. I mean, this is a very common colonial experience, right, where you are in a country where it never snows and you're reading about snow and cottages and, like, trees that you don't have, and that's just life. That's just, yeah, your cultural life. But you see, assisting in Singapore today is quite... Was quite startling.

**Interviewer** [00:39:02] Mm hmm. Mm hmm. Yeah. Well, that's that's what I meant when I talked about growing up reading translation, is that we - post-colonial subjects - we grew up reading things from other parts of the world knowing that this wasn't our experience. So why can't British children nowadays do that same thing? That's what I think. But that's a personal opinion of mine.

**T09** [00:39:27] Yeah. And I think children actually would be open to it.

**Interviewer** [00:39:32] Yes, it's definitely I think they're more open than the adults that are deciding what they want to read. But yeah, that will be another discussion altogether.

**T09** [00:39:45] Oh God, yes.

**Interviewer** [00:39:48] So this I think you also answered but you can always add to it or comment on the question itself, so: have you ever been able to express something in a language that is not what you consider to be like your first language - or mother tongue - more satisfactorily? How so?

**T09** [00:40:13] Um, well. I wrote a play that actually was going to be staged in New York this April before, sadly, the pandemic shut that down.

**Interviewer** [00:40:26] I saw that.

**T09** [00:40:26] Um?

**Interviewer** [00:40:31] Yeah, I saw that, but before the pandemic, I saw that your play is going to be out, and then I saw that you had to...

**T09** [00:40:41] Yes. Um, that play was about two thirds in Mandarin and one third in English. And I think I just... It just came naturally, that would be written... I think I had initially thought "oh, there would be some Chinese, but probably would be an English play". And then it sort of came out more and more in Mandarin. And it's about expressing the dislocation of people in language.

**Interviewer** [00:41:11] Mm hmm.

**T09** [00:41:15] And how, once you... I guess it's the safe moorings of where you sit comfortably, culturally and linguistically, you're not free, but also then you never really belong anywhere fully after that. [long pause]. I think Mandarin for me is a more... It seems funny to say a more intimate language, because it's a language that is less expressive of emotion, but I think that. And my husband complains that I'm very bad at talking about my feelings, and it's like actually that, I think that is partly cultural. I also probably need therapy, but it also is that the Chinese language just leaves a lot implied and unsaid, you know? You would never say "I love you", like... It doesn't need to be expressed in words. So, in a way, that lack of expression in Chinese feels more natural to me than what feels like overexuberance in English.

**Interviewer** [00:42:41] Interesting. So, I'm thinking now, because in my case I think we... It's not exactly a Portuguese language trait, but more of a Brazilian Portuguese language trait, that we talk a lot about... We are very open about things. And I've come across situations here in Britain in which people were expecting me to be more like... Expecting other people to just assume things are just a kind of... You know, you give a hint and the... You know? But I'm much more open with language than that.

**T09** [00:43:18] Yeah, I remember when I first moved to the U.K., it took me a really long time to realize that. [when] people said "you don't need to do this", they would actually tell you not to do it.

**Interviewer** [00:43:32] Uh huh. I think this...

**T09** [00:43:35] And I got into a lot of trouble. Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:43:37] You're teaching me this, this expression, actually, because I didn't know that this is the case.

**T09** [00:43:45] Yeah. A few times someone said "oh, you don't have to do this" and I "oh I don't mind" and I do it, and then they be like: "I told you not to." Oh, OK. [Inaudible].

**Interviewer** [00:44:01] Well thats... Now, some things with my supervisor are starting to make more sense to me now [laughter]. They would say to me "you don't have to do this". And I'm like, oh, this is just her being nice to me. I'm just going to do it anyway. Oh, OK. Good to know.

**T09** [00:44:16] Right? Yeah. That is a British thing, that's not American at all.

**Interviewer** [00:44:24] Yeah. So, um, I'm thinking how to tie... So the next set of questions is more on directionality. So I will read to you the question, but bear in mind that you can twist it however you want and answer in a tangent or something like that because I know it doesn't apply necessarily to your case. It's kind of a clustered one, so bear with me.

**T09** [00:44:53] OK.

**Interviewer** [00:44:56] What is the difference for you between both or more directions of translation in your practice? How would you describe your translation process and types of challenge, linguistic or otherwise, when you are translating into a quote unquote "mother tongue" or first language into a foreign or second language?

**T09** [00:45:20] Ha. I think the experience of growing up in Singapore is that, because so much of life is lived in English, and my home life was entirely in English, it felt - after the process of translating my Chinese lived experience into the imperial English language... Um... And it's this thing where we live in English, but the names of food would be in Cantonese and certain things that no equivalent would be in Mandarin. So... And maybe, I think... There was a possible path where I would decide to go to China for uni, instead of the UK, and possibly then I would be having the opposite experience where the Anglophone side of my life would then need to be translated into Chinese constantly. So I think because I grew up so in between, as a post-colonial subject, there is a constant process of translation. And I, I went through a phase - like a lot of people - of, I think, equivalents. Where, you know, like, oh, yeah, one tons of Chinese tortellini or whatever, you find the familiar thing and you say this maps onto this. And now fortunately, I got over that way before I started my translation practice. But it is this thing that's the temptation to make your world legible. And I think because Singapore is on the periphery, I find myself... I still, I just, if I'm honest, I feel the impulse sometimes to make it legible to both. The English speaking Western world and the dominant Chinese mainland. So it's a shifting thing, that you are always seeing things not just after you see them, but how dominant cultures see them, this kind of double awareness.

**Interviewer** [00:48:02] So from what I understand...

**T09** [00:48:06] So I think... Yeah?

**Interviewer** [00:48:07] Sorry. From what I understand of your answer, it's kind of you're challenging a little bit this kind of fixed idea of directionality? Or implying that there are there are smaller like sub directionality in a...?

**T09** [00:48:24] Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:48:25] It's like, you know, so it's not as simple as English-Chinese, Chinese-English, but what English and what Chinese and to what audience and what parts of your experience, so...

**T09** [00:48:38] Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:48:38] That's what I understand from your answer...

**T09** [00:48:43] That's a great way to put it. I mean, honestly, I don't know how coherent any of this is, because I'm working through things as I answer. And in a way, your questions are revealing certain contradictions that I've just learned to live with until being forced to be specific with them. And I'm like "OK, I don't necessarily have an answer for this, but I think some directionality is a great way to think about it". And yet, even within a language, that's a lot of, um, there's a lot of not explaining but maybe reframing. And I think, you know, as a Singaporean, there is this thing of cultural cringe, right? Which again, is a behavior that has to be unlearned, but definitely because I think I was always more sensitive linguistically - and possibly culturally, I'm not sure - but I remember being in the UK early on and seeing other Singaporeans say things and kind of having that moment of "oh no, the British people aren't going to understand that, you have to phrase it like this". And, you know, now I think: "well, that was very colonized of me". But also, it's an understandable impulse that, when you're able to code-switch in that way, you then - or I then - sort of saw that as a virtue and got impatient with other people who have code-switching properly in that way. And that's something that... I guess I'm still trying to work

out for myself where that impulse... Well, I know where that impulse came from, it came from colonialism, but why it exists and how I got over it and these are incremental changes that I don't know that I can really explain or I don't know if I'm fully over that.

**Interviewer** [00:51:08] Yeah, I mean if I...

**T09** [00:51:09] Yes, let me know if...

**Interviewer** [00:51:12] If I were to interview you in six months from now, probably your answers to this will be different. And, I mean, I'm not expecting anyone to have a fixed answer. That's the thing. I'm going to use the answers as kind of my corpus to kind of do some literary theory or analysis over what people, what translators have to say about all of these issues. Because I think we here, if we strictly take linguistics as... You know, it can be tricky. You have your own feelings that are probably not explained by - or you don't want it to be explained by - you know, a fixed thing. Well, anyway, I'm just talking more than you, I shouldn't be doing that. Yeah, but that was...

**T09** [00:52:05] I think, to go...

**Interviewer** [00:52:09] Sorry?

**T09** [00:52:09] So I was just going to say, going back to your earlier question. Maybe that's the thing that separates the, I guess the, broadly speaking, two groups of translators. Considering that one group has a very emotive connection to the languages, that makes it difficult to approach translation in the more clinical way that the other group does, to generalize really broadly.

**Interviewer** [00:52:40] Oh, that's interesting. Thank you for that. You're doing my thesis for me [laughter]. That's great.

**T09** [00:52:50] And I find it very hard to bring objectivity to my translations. I feel that objectivity is desira..., no in fact, I don't think objectivity is desirable, I think the subjectivity of the translator should be for granted. A lot of... That group of British translators you were talking, I think, place a lot of stock on the invisibility of the translator, which by definition means a very static neutrality.

**Interviewer** [00:53:21] Yeah.

**T09** [00:53:22] Which is only really possible if you have... That's not that emotional charge.

**Interviewer** [00:53:31] And that the tricky relationship or the tricky - not tricky, tricky is not the word - the complex kind of background and...

**T09** [00:53:42] Complex, yes.

**Interviewer** [00:53:42] That's a better word. Do you have any preferred genres, literary genres in this... For L2 to - like, l2 or, like, exophonic or however you going to call it - do they differ from your L1? Like, I mean, this is obviously, again for you, you have to adapt it to your own... But do you have, like, do you think the type of text makes a difference for making it easier to translate in one direction or the other?

**T09** [00:54:24] Oh. [long pause]. Well, I only... Um?

**Interviewer** [00:54:32] Just to explain why I asked this question. Is that when reading about L2 translation in translation studies and, you know, theory and stuff, a lot of them say, or I've read many times saying that "OK, you can do L2 translation if it's, like, technical translation or if it's, like, maybe a short story or something like that. But poetry you can't. Poetry you need to have, like, a complete mastery of whatever language". And I don't... I don't agree with that. But that's why I added this, because some people might say "well, I do L2 translation but only texts that are not necessarily challenging in that way, etc., etc.". So that's why I added this question.

**T09** [00:55:23] Have you spoken to Kyoko Yoshida?

**Interviewer** [00:55:28] No.

**T09** [00:55:29] She... I don't know she's still... She's a Japanese translator who goes in both directions, she was doing... She was a visiting scholar at Cambridge, but I can't remember how long for. But what she told me was that she translates prose like novels and essays from English to Japanese, but she translates poetry from Japanese to English, and she said she can only translate poetry in the L2 direction, because her English isn't colloquial but poetry doesn't need to be colloquial. So she can do these... Translate with these experimental Japanese puns into English and use whatever syntax she likes. Whereas when you're translating a novel, supposedly, the people have to sound like native English speakers, whatever that means.

**Interviewer** [00:56:40] Interesting, because I am thinking now, in my own case, I really like translating doing L2 translation, like poetry. I don't know why, but I really, in my experience, when I did, like... I translated a poem by Tawada into... From German into English, so none of them [were] my first or mother tongue, so... And that was, I loved that experience and loved it because... I don't think how... I don't know how it will work into Portuguese, to be honest, and I don't know how to explain that. It's just my own personal thing. But that's interesting, yeah, the whole colloquialism of, you know, poetry, as you said.

**T09** [00:57:32] Mm hmm. Um... Yeah. No, it's... I mean, I guess because I have like 95 percent of my translation has been Chinese to English, so I find it very hard to speak authoritatively about the differences, but in... The main thing I can think of is that I'm working at a theater where the transition or writing a thing. I'm writing for voices other than mine, if that makes sense. So when I'm translating a novel, I don't think it matters that much, like, the reader can cope. And I think readers can cope with a lot of things you throw at them. But what I found is that translating to a particular type of English or a particular type of Chinese needs to be a bit more specific because the actor isn't necessarily and probably isn't a linguist. And while the actor will cope with anything you throw at them, I think I try to bring a consciousness that I'm giving that raw material to work with. So it doesn't need to be necessarily colloquial or natural or any of these things, but I do need to bring an awareness that they have to be able to perform with it. It has to give them something they can use.

**Interviewer** [00:59:12] That's so, that's... And do you have any genre or any type of text, literary text or any other, that you'd prefer not to translate in whatever direction?

**T09** [00:59:33] Do you mean genres I stay away from?

**Interviewer** [00:59:36] Yeah, yeah.

**T09** [00:59:39] Not really. I would have said poetry, then I had a poet that I am reading and I have started to translate, she is from Macao, and there is something about... I think she feels a very similar, um, alienation to me. So even though I don't... I'm not really a translator of poems, those poems felt right to translate, so I started working on them. So I think my answer is "I will try anything". And yeah, I relish that freedom. Um... Yeah.

**Interviewer** [01:00:24] Yeah, that's... Yeah, I remember there was one interviewee where he said "the movie industry, I hate them, they are awful, they don't pay you right and they treat you badly and stuff." And it can be literally any genre. So, the next the next set of questions is about, uh, there's just two, about market and gatekeeping. So this question... Sorry?

**T09** [01:01:00] No, just... Um, go on.

**Interviewer** [01:01:00] OK. I think there's a slight delay, so that's why sometimes I hear something... Has your transl... I'll have to adapt this question as well, has your translation work been criticized, rejected or disregarded because you are not a considered to be a native speaker of the target language?

**T09** [01:01:35] Um, at this point, no, because I think my publication record stands for itself. But also, the way I went about building my translation career is, I published the first six translations I did in Singapore. Where, of course, I wasn't questioned, and then when I started approaching British and American publishers I had these six published books that I could just give them copies of that and what I'm doing. Also, well, frankly, when people meet me in person, I've got this accent and that kind of just opens doors. And the reason I've got the accent is because I trained as an actor before I became a translator. So I went to drama school in the U.K. and then sort of, I guess, did the linguistic equivalent of domesticating my voice. So I think all of these things have meant I had a relatively easy move into a publishing scene that might otherwise have discriminated against me. And certainly when I was first starting out as an actor in the U.K., there was a lot of discrimination, partly because the way you look plays into that, also partly because before my accent transitioned completely into British passing, that was a lot of "oh we don't understand what you're saying". So that's kind of a process that... Yeah, I think my voice is pretty much fixed like this now, and the way I use language has sort of... I found something that works for me, but I do sometimes look back and think about the extent to which I neutralized, maybe domesticated my voice in order to succeed in the Western world broadly defined. These terms I am using are very imprecise but these are the terms we have, that's the long way of saying: "not to my face". I don't know if there have been times when I have been excluded from opportunities because of the way I am perceived, but certainly no one has been tactless enough to tell me that they're excluding me for this reason. But I would not be surprised if it has happened.

**Interviewer** [01:04:28] This, when you commented on the accent, this reminds me of... I probably am misquoting because it's been a while since I read it, but when Tawada, in one of her many texts, talks about how accents are like the face of, like... So... She can't hide the fact that she is Japanese because it's in her face. When she's walking around in Germany people look at her. And then her accent similarly kind of denounces the fact that she's not... That she's a foreigner, that she is not from there or whatever you want to... So she kind of says that, you know, your accent is kind of your face in that sense. In your

case, your accent is, as you said, kind of domesticated. So it doesn't act as a... But then, you say your face kind of does, too.

**T09** [01:05:22] Yeah. But then at the same time, I guess because the UK and US are a little more diverse than Germany, it's a little easier to pass.

**Interviewer** [01:05:31] Yeah.

**T09** [01:05:37] And that is also a legacy of colonialism. I don't think I could pass as American like, no matter how I try to manipulate my voice or my being, I didn't think I would ever successfully convince people I was American. So I was, you know, just 19 when I moved to the U.K., and because I had British teachers growing up, it was relatively easy to just, like... I never claimed to be British, but people just assumed I was.

**Interviewer** [01:06:13] So this one you might not, as you said, it might be a similar answer to the first one. But have you ever been overcorrected on a linguistic choice or specific form that was consciously made by you? In this case, like, if you did something that was more like Singaporean English or something [like] that and someone said, "oh, that's not proper English or that's not..." I don't know... Did you?

**T09** [01:06:40] Oh, yes. I mean, a lot. Particularly when I'm translating the Singaporean text for a non-Singaporean publisher, when I try to use a Singaporean register. But sometimes it's things that I hadn't considered. OK, I remembered something. I was translating a Singaporean book and at one point one of the characters, a small child, is scolded by his mother for being too playful. "Why are you so playful?" And the British editor circle that and went: "but children should be playful, being playful is a good thing". And I was like: "not in Singapore, children should not be playful, children should study hard and do well at school". And I think that's probably more of cultural than a linguistic difference. But also, how do you tell apart the fact - I don't think I have consciously registered before that - that playful was a pejorative in Singapore, but seen as a positive in the UK? So that was something that I had to work through and then go: "you know what? We're leaving it, even though British readers might similarly be confused as to why this child is being scolded for being playful".

**Interviewer** [01:08:09] But did you think they corrected you or they circle that because they thought you just mistranslated, or... Something wrong, or...?

**T09** [01:08:22] You know, I don't know, and I think it's very hard to say. Like, there has definitely been edits where I've looked at it and gone "would you have corrected this if I was a, so-called, native speaker? If I was from the U.K.?" But then, also, would I have used this construction if I was from the UK?

**Interviewer** [01:08:48] Yeah, yeah.

**T09** [01:08:49] So it's very... Yeah.

**Interviewer** [01:08:51] It's tricky, yeah. But I was... Sorry. Sorry I keep interrupting you.

**T09** [01:08:59] Oh no. I think that is a lag. But I don't know how I perceived and I don't know which I prefer. I don't know how much... Well, I don't think I want to pass. I don't want to be treated as other, but I also don't want people to like just not consider that my upbringing is a bit different.

**Interviewer** [01:09:19] Mm hmm. Yeah, it's it's very complex. And well... Again this question is informed by Tawada because, why not? I keep using her all the time [laughter]. But it's because in her work and in... Well, there's a term that was not used by her, but by another exophonic writer in Germany, Franco Biondi, which is Obrigkeits-Deutche, so like, authority on German, so it is when this kind of thing happens to exophonic authors, in Germany specifically, but it might happen elsewhere. So, like, she was judged in this, like, poetry competition where she chose a specific verb tense and they said "well, she obviously doesn't... You know, this is wrong, this is the wrong verb tense, and this is, like, bad German", whatever. And in fact, she had chosen that to, like, she had chosen it, like, on purpose. She wanted to, you know, make a point about German grammar. And this happens. Like, some of the people I interviewed said that, well, for example, the text is odd, like, let's say, in Brazilian Portuguese it's odd to our ears as well. And then an exophonic translator translated into English and kept the oddness. And then they were overcorrecting saying "well, this is not how a fluent native speaker would write this, and this sounds odd". But then they would say, "well, it sounds odd in the source text as well, I mean"... So this is kind of, to try to and to see if there were instances of that kind of thing. But your example is good for that.

**T09** [01:11:07] I see. Also, I've hypercorrected myself, but, by which I mean, this is stirring up a memory now of multiple times that British people have said to me "oh, you speak better English than we do". And like, that's meant to be a compliment but it's really weird. And I think what that really refers to is that, like many post-colonial subjects, I speak a slight old-fashioned version of the language. Sounds slightly too formal or slightly like someone from a 1950s novel. And I think that's perceived as being "more correct". And it's just things like, I pronounce the D in the word "Duke", whereas most British people now say "Duke" [different pronunciation]. So that's the sense of me being hypercorrect, which I think... Because of that, I'm given a bit more leeway, like, I do get that benefit of the doubt if I use a nonstandard construction, I think people do give me the same benefit of the doubt that they would to a native speaker, that I must be doing it deliberately.

**Interviewer** [01:12:21] Mm hmm. Mm hmm. And you think that... That helps? Like, your English, your accent, your use of English specifically?

**T09** [01:12:32] Um, yeah. My presentation. Which probably is something that I got from my parents, because when my parents grew up in Singapore as British subjects, because Singapore didn't get independence to 1959, um... Well, it didn't get full independence until 1965, so if you wanted to get ahead in colonial Singapore you had to be as British as possible. And that's just, this... They passed it out to me.

**Interviewer** [01:13:06] Interesting. So, the next set of questions is more specifically on creative writing fluency in translation. You might like these two questions. How do you view the relationship between fluency and creativity in the languages you use?

**T09** [01:13:34] Um.. [long pause].

**Interviewer** [01:13:34] It's a tricky one.

**T09** [01:13:41] It is. I guess, um... There needs to be a certain degree of fluency, I suppose, in order to create freedom, but I wouldn't say... By which I mean, I don't think I could be creative in German because my German just isn't good enough. Like, I would run out of words. But also, some of the most wonderful writing I've seen has been by people



like Xiaolu Guo or a writer and translator Yan Ge, who is transitioning from writing in Chinese to writing in English. And, often the difference is a kind of boldness. Trying to write like a native speaker, trying to write "fluently", air quotes, then, um, that does hold you back. But if you are going "this is my version of the language and I'm going to use it boldly", then the results can be astonishingly creative and wonderful and different.

**Interviewer** [01:15:00] I'm thinking here because this... This happened in with other interviewees with around the world fluency, because I've had one that I think interpreted fluency as proficiency, and they said that fluency is the enemy of creativity. But I think they meant that proficiency, like, you know, striving for that perfection, that nativeness or whatever, would be, as you... It ties to what you're saying.

**T09** [01:15:41] Yeah, so maybe I should correct my first statement to a certain level of proficiency is necessary. Or maybe I just need vocabulary.

**Interviewer** [01:15:52] Yeah, yeah.

**T09** [01:15:56] But certainly when I'm writing in Chinese there are definitely holes in my language because I've lived away from Chinese-speaking countries for so long. And I don't find that to be a problem. I mean, there are moments when I do need to consult a Chinese speaking... Like, when I am trying to write a character from China I do need to speak to a friend from China to ask "would you say this or is this just something a Singaporean would say?" But like, that's only when I'm trying for that kind of naturalistic realism, if I'm just trying to express myself, then the level the language I have is the language I have.

**Interviewer** [01:16:50] So, this one is a little bit of a cluster again, a cluster question, and I think I know... Partly I know the answers, but anyway. I have to ask anyway: do you also do creative writing outside of your translation practice? If so, is it only in your... [sigh], in English or do experiment with other languages? How do you feel your creative writing relates to your translation practice?

**T09** [01:17:28] I see them as all of the same practice. You know, this thing that people say "translation is writing". And I found this formulation recently "translation is a very specialized form of writing", which I like. So I don't really see them as a gap, um, see a gap between them. I think they feed into each other. They definitely enrich each other. I am not sure about the word experiment, like, I think I just... Do. Yeah. It is not really "tentative" the way that it suggests. I mean, I like playing with, um... With language both in my own writing... In fact, my own writing is often fairly multilingual. [inaudible] other languages, in fact. I was translating a play - a 1930s Chinese play - recently, where one of the characters keep speaking English to show how cultured and European he is. That sounds like "well, what am I going to do with this?" And at the end, I translate all the English lines into German. Like, I just kind of did that. It's kind of great because I was like, I'm going to translate it into German, and if it's not... If I make mistakes that's OK, because this character is not a native speaker.

**Interviewer** [01:19:31] Well, that's interesting.

**T09** [01:19:40] I guess I try to abide by is if a character are creating uses of a particular language, then I try to use that language.

**Interviewer** [01:19:52] So you do... You do do creative writing? Just to check the first part of the question.

**T09** [01:20:00] Yes, I do do creative writing. I write... I've written a novel and a short story collection and a number of plays that were not translations. I've written plays that are adaptations from Chinese language works, which you could in a way be translations, but also in a way, they are original things. And most but not all of my creative writing has been in English. Some of it has been Chinese. And who knows what will happen in the future.

**Interviewer** [01:20:38] Maybe German, and maybe something like that.

**T09** [01:20:43] I mean... You know [laughter]. I am open to anything.

**Interviewer** [01:20:47] That's good. The more languages, the better. So, the last couple of questions are more... They're less expressive or subjective, but more, like, pointed. So, they're both in training and professional status. So the first one is a bit of a cluster one. Sorry, you say something...?

**T09** [01:21:19] No, I just said OK.

**Interviewer** [01:21:20] It's this lag, it keeps getting in my way. Did you have formal translation training? If so, did it include different translation directions? And if you did receive this kind of training in different directions, did it change from your training to your professional practice? And then, do you translate in both directions, in only one, or in one much more than the other?

**T09** [01:21:52] Oh, well, short answer, I have had no formal training at all in translation.

**Interviewer** [01:21:57] OK, yeah, you trained as an actor, you said, in the U.K.?

**T09** [01:21:58] Right.

**Interviewer** [01:21:59] Did you participate in any workshops?

**T09** [01:22:07] Do you mean translation workshops?

**Interviewer** [01:22:10] Yeah, or any kind of training doesn't have...

**T09** [01:22:16] When I first moved to New York, I joined a monthly translation workshop where we would just meet once a month, read out about 20 minutes worth of our translations and... You know, workshopped it, correct each other, ask questions... And that was great. It was kind of seeing everyone's different approaches and working through province together was very useful to me. Yet, you know, that is it. That that's all I've done. Well, I have done, um, one on one swaps like working, exchanging manuscripts with other translators, or discussing particular issues, or things like that. Kind of mutual mutual support. So this is a relatively informal, I guess, trainings...? Yeah.

**Interviewer** [01:23:26] Yeah. It didn't, like, include, like, translation theory and practice and stuff like that.

**T09** [01:23:34] No, and... I mean, my general feeling about this theory is that it's descriptive rather than prescriptive.

**Interviewer** [01:23:42] Yeah, yeah.

**T09** [01:23:43] So I find it useful that I'm trying to explain something about translation, but not really as a guide for my own translation practice.

**Interviewer** [01:23:50] Mm hmm. Mm hmm. Yeah. It's kind of like to empower yourself to kind of defend yourself in a way...

**T09** [01:23:59] Yes.

**Interviewer** [01:24:00] ... more than to use as a guide. Yeah. Interesting. Um...

**T09** [01:24:08] Yeah, would...

**Interviewer** [01:24:11] Sorry. Please continue. You think you're going to...?

**T09** [01:24:15] I mean, am I just using it to rationalize my choices?

**Interviewer** [01:24:22] Uhum.

**T09** [01:24:22] Like, you know... I don't know why something feels more justified just because I can put a name on it, but.

**Interviewer** [01:24:29] Well, it helps to have a back, like, you know, a name backing you up, I guess. Well, I... I mean, I'm biased because I am in academia. So it's, obviously for us, you need to back everything up. But yeah. So the last thing I need... Sorry?

**T09** [01:24:51] Uh. Sorry go...

**Interviewer** [01:24:52] No, please, please, please...

**T09** [01:24:52] No, no. Well it's going to operate on instinct, not... Yeah. Go on.

**Interviewer** [01:24:57] Oh please. I couldn't hear what you said.

**T09** [01:25:03] Oh, I just, I operate on instinct a lot, but it's sometimes nice to that is official terminology to describe.

**Interviewer** [01:25:14] So the last question is a very simple one. Is that: are you a member of a professional association? And which one?

**T09** [01:25:25] Oh, all of them. So, let's see, I'm a member of the Society of Authors in the UK. And in the US, I am in PEN America, ALTA and The Authors Guild, and also the Dramatists Guild, because there are separate bodies for prose and theater.

**Interviewer** [01:25:51] OK.

**T09** [01:25:56] I think that it's actually all the professional bodies that I'm eligible for.

**Interviewer** [01:26:00] Yeah, I would say. It's a lot, yeah. OK, so this is just out of... I added this question out of curiosity, really. Um... Well, I've reached the end of my prepared questions and, you know, I don't want to keep you for too long, but if you have any final comments, any things to add...?

**T09** [01:26:28] Um... You know, this was really interesting, I guess this has, as I said, pushed me into thinking about certain things I just been taking for granted about how I operate. And I think, although I might have sounded like I am very in between and unsettled, I also feel like I'm sitting quite comfortably in what I do. So I do feel alienated, but I can I have found a way to live with it so that when I'm translating it comes naturally, it's not something I struggle with. So it's... I guess what I'm saying is I don't want to convey the impression that it's more difficult or is an obstacle to overcome, this linguistic complexity. Which I think is something that, um... Particularly the group of translators you mentioned, the attitude they have towards L2 translators that's meant to be sympathetic, but kind of is "Oh, they work so much harder [inaudible] to overcome". And I that's not something I feel. And I don't think it's a particularly useful lens.

**Interviewer** [01:28:04] Yeah, I would agree with you in the sense that... If you, if you really, like... I had to read, like, studies about L2 translation in, like, neurolinguistic, kind of, like, they look at what areas of the brain is activated, sorry, are activated when someone translates and in different directions and they kind of prove that these are different processes, surely. But it is tricky just to claim that one is more difficult than the other, because the brain will activate different areas to kind of compensate for a specific, like a, quote unquote "shortcoming" or for any kind of... So what it means is basically, yes, they're different. No one is not necessarily more difficult than the other. It depends on what your brain can activate to do that. So, yeah, I mean, that is not my goal to kind of say "oh, my God, this is so hard. I don't know how they do it, folks". I it's kind of, like, it's... Yeah. I mean, for some people it comes naturally. I mean, it's just.

**Interviewer** [01:29:21] I definitely don't think it's your call. I just sort of thinking about how this could be interpreted.

**Interviewer** [01:29:28] Yeah, yeah, I get it.

**T09** [01:29:31] I am really intrigued now, by the prospect. Do you think...? So, what you're saying is that I could have an MRI and that could term it for granted of which is my L1 or my L2?

**Interviewer** [01:29:43] I don't know if it... I don't... I cannot say that...

**T09** [01:29:47] I was not [inaudible]. I am just really intrigued by that.

**Interviewer** [01:29:53] I mean, I should I, I mean... It depends what you consider... I mean, it depends what you would ask, because I... I read a lot of these, but I did, in my undergrad I did research on neurolinguistic translation and stuff, but it wasn't on directionality. So, it was a different kind of focus and goal. So but it depends on who you ask, if if someone was like a specialist in that area still, and does a lot of research, so they would probably have a specific answer to that. But they do... To put you in an MRI, in a fMRI and a functional MRI machine, they would have to firstly kind of define or try to like ask you what you consider to be, and they would look at your education background and where you grew up and what language you spoke like in your home and that kind of thing. I don't know how they would define you necessarily, but they they can see the difference in the directions in that, you know, and that the subject claimed, in my case, Portuguese is my L1 and English is my L2. But then again, it's tricky because depending on the area, I think I'm more comfortable in English than the Portuguese because I read more in English in that

area, let's say. But but you kind of define, and then you kind of decide what directionality is, is your...? You know. And then they can compare.

**T09** [01:31:32] Oh, yeah.

**Interviewer** [01:31:32] But it is a fascinating...

**T09** [01:31:36] So its subject [inaudible].

**Interviewer** [01:31:37] It is. I mean, I... Obviously some linguists, some more like hardcore linguists would disagree, like my mom was a professor, was a phonologist, and what she did was basically math. I mean, it was crazy. That wasn't... And maybe she would disagree with me. I don't know. She's dead, so I can't ask her. But... Anyway, that's kind of, yeah, depending on who you ask. But I find it very fascinating that you just put... They just literally put people in the MRI machine and show something in the screen, and basic... I think that most studies do that, and then basically ask them to translate in their mind, which creates all sorts of possible implications, because it's not necessarily the process of a literary translator to just stand in a weird machine and look at the screen and, you know. You don't do it like that. So... But, yeah.

**T09** [01:32:38] It's artificial, yeah.

**Interviewer** [01:32:39] Yeah. But it is it is interesting how our brains kind of make up for all sorts of things. And, you know, and some things are not explained by our brains anyway, you know.

**T09** [01:32:54] I mean, you know...

**Interviewer** [01:32:58] Sorry...?

**T09** [01:32:59] So I just thought I had when you brought that up, because a lot of this is a product of my cultural alienation and, by some tricks, it could be very straightforward English is my L1, Chinese is my L2. The end. Like, that would be the case. And the fact that I resist that is, I think, my resistance to the neat linguistic categories. But also, I think it doesn't sit right with me, but it's not necessarily a linguistic thing, it's a cultural thing. And it's a resistance to cultural hegemony, I guess, or the idea that we can be put in neat categories like that when colonialism has left me dislocated. And in some ways I use language as a proxy for that. So it's something that I'm still processing.

**Interviewer** [01:33:59] Yeah, well, this was all very interesting. I'm looking forward to transcribing this interview and adding it to the others. And I've learned so much. Thank you for your time. And yeah, I'm so excited to do this [laughter]. So I think that's it. Here I am currently melting in the heat. [inaudible]. Sorry, what you were saying?

**T09** [01:34:34] Yeah, I said I hope it cools down. Yeah.

[01:34:40] So thank you for participating and when I am transcribing this, I might, you know, if I have questions about something you said that I didn't get or because of the lag as well, it's a bit tricky, then I'll just email you. And if I have any kind of... Any follow up, then we'll be in touch anyway.

**T09** [01:35:02] Yeah, I mean, do stay in touch, because this has been really interesting and I'd love to hear more about your research as it progresses.

**Interviewer** [01:35:11] Thank you. And I saw that you're going you're going to participate in the Foreign Affairs Festival.

**T09** [01:35:19] Yes.

**Interviewer** [01:35:19] And I'm going to be, too, so we probably see each other, but yeah. In a different panel though, it's in the non-native and collaborative translation panel. Which will be fun. So, yeah.

**T09** [01:35:36] Oh, yes. Well, I sure hope to. Yes. Oh, yes. I'll try my best to attend that.

**Interviewer** [01:35:45] Yeah, well we can promise anything but, well, we'll keep in touch and have a nice end of your Tuesday there and that is it. Thanks. Bye.

**T09** [01:36:00] Yes, bye.

**Interviewer** [01:36:00] Bye, thank you.

•

## Interview T10.mp4

**Interviewer** [00:00:04] Yeah, so now it is recording. So, you are aware that the interview is going to be recorded and then transcribed, but, obviously, if you have any problems with anything, we can keep in touch on that as well. Like, I can email you. I'll probably have questions once I'm transcribing, but anyway, I'll contact you if there's any, you know, any problems, anything. Um, but... So are you happy for us to start?

**T10** [00:00:37] Yes. I am happy, thank you. Yes.

**Interviewer** [00:00:38] Let me... I'm going to have to take my other computer to open the interview questions, because this one is still opening the Word file. Sorry for that. So, the interview... The questions are pretty, like, obviously, I have to go through all of them because that's what I did with all the other interviewees. But the idea is for you to feel like this is a chat. It's not, like... There's no right or wrong answer. It's all good, you know. Don't worry about... You know, sometimes I've had people, you know, feel that "oh, my God, that's not enough of an answer, I need, you need more from me", and usually it's not that. Like, you feel free to talk as much as you want or, like, if there's a question that you are more passionate about, you want to answer it at length, talk at length about it and feel free to do that. So there's no, like, constraints in that regard. And if there's a question that is too... That is, for you "oh, that doesn't apply to me. I just won't answer that one". is that OK?

**T10** [00:01:45] Yeah, sure.

**Interviewer** [00:01:46] So the first... So, I separated my questions into themes. So, the first theme is "approaches to languages". So, the first question is: "do you consider that you have a mother tongue, a first language, or more than one? If so, which ones? If not, why not?"

**T10** [00:02:08] Um, my problem is with calling it a "mother tongue", because I certainly have one, the tongue of my mother. Um, so Spanish is my mother tongue. But in terms of my competence, I suppose, English is probably my second language, and I'm actually quite fluent in English. It might not sound like that, but I have lived in the UK for about 42 years now. So, I think that the use of "mother tongue" can be quite misleading, and in terms of my mother tongue it's quite, if I may, it's quite an interesting concept because my family escaped to Argentina towards the turn of the previous century and their mother tongue wasn't Spanish either. So what is the mother tongue? It has always been an interesting and fluid concept in my family. So, people spoke all sorts of things.

**Interviewer** [00:03:21] So they were, um... Just out of curiosity. So, they were... Also, your microphone, there is this weird sound. So, maybe you bring it back a little bit. I think is maybe the air.

**T10** [00:03:35] OK. Um, I might remove it... If you still struggle, I remove it and use the microphone from the computer. Is this better or are you still struggling?

**Interviewer** [00:03:45] It's better. Yeah, there's still some noise sometimes. but I think it's when you come closer to the microphone or like when air comes out, I don't know. I can understand it now. The problem is, I'm thinking of when I have to transcribe it, it might come as a problem. But, just out of curiosity, what language did your family speak in...?

**T10** [00:04:07] Well, my parents were both Argentinian and born in Argentina, but their parents escaped from Russia, so they speak a whole range of languages. They spoke Polish, Russian and Yiddish, so... And a part of the family had also come from France. So that was the whole range of languages that were known in the household.

**Interviewer** [00:04:38] You know, this reminds me of Ariel Dorfman, the writer. It's a similar kind of situation, which... Which one I am? I'm a Spanish speaker, grew up in...? But, at the same time, my family is Jewish from... I think his parents came from Russia, I don't remember exactly. But it was kind of a... It is a tricky situation. And I think I relate to that because my family is also an immigrant family in Brazil, so even though I'm born and raised... I'm Brazilian born and raised, no doubt about that, there is like a question of what my... Because my mom's mother tongue was German, like, she was born and raised in Brazil, but she started learning Portuguese when she was 10, so up to the age of 10, even though she lived in Brazil, she'd never had to speak Portuguese to anyone.

**T10** [00:05:33] That is quite usual for us, South Americans, it is quite a common thing that we are so exposed to so many other languages. So, I was brought up with a lot of Italian around me, so I totally understood Italian. And um, French was my second language. I studied French from a very early age, so I was actually really quite fluent in French as a child and then as an adult, so English probably is the language I sort of learned later, certainly when I was in university in Argentina. I started studying chemistry and a lot of the technical material that we used was written in English. So, again, my father used to receive the Buenos Aires Herald, so, again, English was around everywhere. My dad also worked for a company that spoke German. Siemens, so he... We had a lot of exposure to people that used to work for the nuclear reactor company, so we were exposed too... We had Japanese friends that spoke Japanese so, again, the concept of mother tongue, going back to it, is, if we're talking just about the language of my mother, my mother spoke Spanish and my mom comes from the Chaco, from the very north of Argentina. So almost quite close to Brazil with the accent.

**Interviewer** [00:07:10] Well, it's... That's why I, like... I added "mother tongue", because not all of my interviewees are like... People who study theory and also know linguistics and stuff like that. So, obviously, some people have, like, kind of create this metaphor and call whatever, like, oh, this is my "mother tongue", this is my "adopted mother tongue", this is my "biological mother tongue". So people, like, especially literature, might come up with these metaphors, but that's why I kept the term "mother tongue". But I am aware of its problems. And you are also more than welcome to always criticize and explain, like, why you don't accept these terms. Would you say that, so, at the same time you don't have a first language or an L1 per se?

**T10** [00:08:03] Oh no, no. I definitely have an L1. Is just that at a cognitive level they work differently because I left Argentina when I was 19 years old. So, all my adult life has been lived abroad. So, all my sort of emotional background, if you like, is in Spanish. My family still live in Argentina, or my closest school friends are still in Argentina, and I still have very close contact with them, but my language got stuck in nineteen seventy something. Um, so my Spanish is totally valid up to 1978.

**Interviewer** [00:08:50] And that happens quite often, like, with my grandparents German. It was kind of stuck in time in a way, like, when I was... I started learning German much later, and I remember telling them some stuff that were like I think it was the Lieblingsessen and like, like, "my favorite food". I said "oh this is my meine Lieblingsessen". And they were like "oh yeah, we don't know that construction, lieblich



something". And then I found out it's because it's a quite a more... I didn't know, but it's more recent construction in the German language. But it's kind of, like, that kind of stuff I came up against that many, many, many times, like, with my grandparents. They have an older German - even though they tried to keep in touch with... They always bought German books, like, magazines, and they kept reading and they kept, you know, updating themselves - it's still quite an old German, the one that they have, because it kind of stopped and it's stuck in time. And this happens quite often with immigrant communities and, you know. Um, so... And I asked on L1, L2 because that's a more linguistic definition, but I also had interviewees who were, like, "yeah, I don't know which one is my... There's not a hierarchy of L1, L2, like, maybe I have two L1s or...

**T10** [00:10:21] I would say for me it depends on the topic, because I worked in local government for about 30 years and my role was to write policy papers. I used to have quite, you know... Writing was a significant part of what I did, and it was always in English. So if you were to talk to me about business writing, probably English is my go-to, whereas if you were to talk to me about some aspects of literature or feelings or relationships, then Spanish is obviously...

**Interviewer** [00:11:02] ...The language that comes... OK, interesting. Um, so I think you kind of answer this one already, but I'll just ask again and you can add to it, so what is your language of education? And is it different from your mother tongue one, L1...?

**T10** [00:11:18] Well, it isn't different, it's just that my education has travelled continents, so I started at university in Argentina, and I finished my degree and postgraduate in the UK. So, I would argue that both...

**Interviewer** [00:11:40] Both, yeah. So the language of education I ask because sometimes people are... like, they have it, like, heritage language at home or... But they live in a country or they were sometimes educated in international schools in English, but lived in countries that weren't English speaking, that kind of... That sort of thing. But yeah. So you were, like, educated in both Spanish and then later on in English, right?

**T10** [00:12:08] Uhum. And French.

**Interviewer** [00:12:10] And French, yeah. You said it, sorry. So, the question... This question is kind of, you know, you'll see why I'm asking it, but... Again, don't... You can focus on the term, but I guess you know what I mean by non-mother tongue, but... So, do you translate into a non-mother tongue or an L2? If so, what is your experience of it?

**T10** [00:12:36] Yes, that is an interesting one for me, because, for my Masters, I definitely translated into English. I translated an Argentinean writer into English and I think I did a really good job of it. So, from a literary perspective, I certainly translate into English as well as I translate into Spanish. Depending on the topic I have a variant degree of sort of facility, if you like. So, depending on what it is, I translated for many years mainly into Spanish, but I feel more comfortable translating into English, because I know if it's right, I can check it because I'm living in the U.K., so I have easier ways of verifying that something is appropriate. So, I do tr... To be honest, um, perhaps I don't know if it is unusual or not and normally people translate just in one direction, but I do translate in both.

**Interviewer** [00:13:43] Oh no. I think actually it's more normal to translate in both, but out of my interviewees I've had, you know, different responses to this one. Some are, like,

exclusively L2 translators and... But a lot of them are, like, do both. Especially if you have experience in technical translation or, like, you know, business or any kind of... That is not literary, then you will have had an experience in any direction, really. That's at least my experience as well.

**T10** [00:14:14] Yes.

**Interviewer** [00:14:17] So, this one you kind of also answered, but you can... Feel free to expand on that. So, how would you describe your relationship to the languages you can speak, write, translate...?

**T10** [00:14:33] That is an interesting question, because I live in the U.K., my family speak English here, my family at home speak Spanish, um... I actually am now a TED Translator and also a Language Coordinator, so, I check people's sort of work translating into Spanish, so since joining the TED program, if you like, my Spanish has got increasingly better and I actually managed to, all the latest sort of technical stuff - because TED is sort of quite up to date - so, if you like, I had an opportunity to relearn the Spanish, to research new expressions in Spanish. So, I love languages. I sometimes don't know what I'm using to communicate. So, my relationship is, I'm not entirely sure, what I know is that I have a different voice. That my accent is... It's not that they, it's not the accent, but it's the register. When I speak in Spanish my voice is significantly lower and grave. In English, it sounds more childish. So, it's just quite interesting how that happened.

**Interviewer** [00:16:01] That is true. I see. But do you think that you have, like, different personalities in different languages?

**T10** [00:16:09] It's difficult to say. I have multiple personalities, but it isn't purely to do with a language. Sometimes I think, because, as a matter of confidence, you might actually find that depending on the subject you might not be totally, totally owning the language that you needed to discuss. So, for example, if I was to have a linguistic discussion in Spanish now, I would probably be slightly subdued, because I would be struggling to look for the Spanish equivalent.

**Interviewer** [00:16:47] Yeah, yeah. I guess... I was looking at this conference, the call for papers for a conference, and it's going to be in Portugal, but it's about it's international... It is a Translation Conference. And they said that the languages of the conference are Spanish, Portuguese and English. So, I assumed from the call that you could submit papers in any of these three languages. And I kept thinking, which one? Because obviously "oh, yeah, I can speak Portuguese then I'll just present it in Portuguese", but all of my research for my PhD so far has been in English. So, I don't even know if I would be able to have enough language, enough, like, words in Portuguese to talk about my research in Portuguese now.

**T10** [00:17:31] I had the same issue. I'm due to go to a conference in Paris in October. I don't know whether it's going to take place or not, but I'm supposed to be reading an item in translation. It's about powerful literature, and I'm going to be reading an extract in Spanish, but the analysis is going to be given in English. And I was just deciding "which language am I going to be using", you know? "Should this be done in French, given that it is going to be at the Sorbonne?" So, no, I know, I don't think I could do this in French anymore, and I don't think I could do this in Spanish either. So, it's going to be just quite bizarre that I'm going to be discussing a topic really close to my heart that I know intimately

in Spanish, but I don't have the linguistic technical background in Spanish. So it will have to be done in English.

**Interviewer** [00:18:25] [laughter] Yeah, that's, that sounds familiar to me. Um, how...? Like, so you said you speak French, right? Um... Do you translate from French?

**T10** [00:18:35] No, no.

**Interviewer** [00:18:36] No.? So it's French, Spanish and English, and then you mentioned some other languages like German...?

**T10** [00:18:43] Well, no, not German. I learned Hebrew when I was traveling, so... But again, I mean, I speak mutterings of lots of other languages. I'm imagining that this is common to most linguists, that you make relations. But I was in Israel for about a year and I learned some basic Hebrew, so I can understand basic Hebrew, and I would understand Italian, and I would understand Portuguese.

**Interviewer** [00:19:15] Yeah, it's they're all similar... Like, yeah. I think that we got lucky speaking Latinate languages, because.. We just get each other. Like, I find it so easy to understand... Well I, at least, I have a good ear for languages but I find it, like... Spanish I learned in school and I... My grandma was Paraguayan and we have... We are very, like, in the south of Brazil we're very close to Argentina and Uruguay, more specifically. So we have more exchange with Spanish than maybe other states in Brazil, but also it is like... You get it, you know, but I think sometimes because it's so, they are so close...

**T10** [00:20:04] But I think there is another thing, I think, for example, when I'm in Italy, I think I try to speak Italian as much as I can, and I understand what it's said to me and everything. And I never studied it formally. But when I speak in Spanish, they don't understand me. So I think that we have a mind that opens. It's a mind that is already open to the difference. I think that there is a bridge that has to be crossed and that you either have it or you don't. I mean, the same as, for example, talking to someone, you know, Portuguese with a Brazilian or from Portugal that I think I understand. I don't know. I mean, I would give you a percentage. But, when I was in Rio, quite a high percentage I understand. But if I speak in Spanish, I don't have the same reciprocity of understanding, I think.

**Interviewer** [00:20:56] Yeah, yeah. That, that, that can... I mean, Brazilians like to think that they know Spanish, but the majority of Brazilians know "Portuñol" and that's it. And I guess the World Cup showed us how much we needed to learn more languages. But, like... Yeah, but yeah, sometimes, because you are more open to, as you cross that bridge, you're more open to kind of this... Also, this feeling of not completely understanding everything, but being OK with it. Like, I got used to the... I'm, like, you know, learning foreign languages, I start reading in the foreign language and you would not check the dictionary every two words, you know, you just let it flow, like, at some point you understand from context and you get it, and you get it... That's how I started reading it in other languages. And that feeling of not understanding everything is something that you have if you've learned different languages. Because, if you haven't, you just... You're not used to that feeling, you know, of not understanding every single bit of. So, I think Anton Hur said that, in the foreign affairs event, that "to be ambiguous is a privilege" or something like that, he said.

**T10** [00:22:15] Yes, I think it's, I think it's a freedom. Do you know, it's really quite funny because I would say to you that I understand Swedish, for example. When I was in Israel, I shared a room with a Swedish girlfriend, and we communicated in French, but over the time we swapped languages and we now use English as the exchange language. But she now knows Spanish as well. But when I'm in Sweden, or if I read stuff, I understand it [laughter]. Um, and the more you read, the more, the more it happens. So, it is really like learning to decode, and it's that ability that you, I think, you know...

**Interviewer** [00:22:55] And to be able to let go of, um... I guess you have to have this kind of flexibility of not... Because if you are too like, you know, anal about it, like, you need to know what every word means right from the start, you probably are going to give up on it or you're going to go crazy. But if you just let go and just get into the text, you know, decode, but also live the text, understand the context, I guess it helps. I mean, I'm used to that feeling, but I know that people who haven't learned a foreign language, especially in that way, might not be used to that uneasiness, I don't know how to say that in a different way. You were going to say something, sorry, I think I interrupted...

**T10** [00:23:42] No, it's just I remember watching *The Bridge*. I don't know if you watched that. It was a brilliant sort of Scandi Noir series, it was a police... It was a series. And they spoke in Danish and Swedish. And I think that probably by the third program you just didn't ever need to read the subtitles.

**Interviewer** [00:24:07] Yeah [laughter]. I remember, I remember, I... When I went back to Brazil in December, I downloaded - because in Brazil you can download whatever you want, there's, like, I mean, it is still illegal, but no one really cares, so no one will check, no one will fine you for downloading stuff. So I remember I downloaded *The Mandalorian*, the new *Star Wars* thing to watch with my boyfriend when I came back, and I somehow downloaded episodes with embedded Swedish subtitles. And I was... He is my ex-boyfriend. He's English, so he knows some foreign languages, but it's different. Like, I'm used to reading subtitles because in Brazil that's a much more common practice to go to the cinema and see movies with subtitles. So, I'm used to paying attention to the movie itself and reading the subtitles at the same time. It doesn't affect my understanding of the movie or my enjoyment of the movie, and even though he knew foreign languages, he knows foreign languages, he's not that used to it. So, we were watching it, and as I was watching understanding what was going on in the series, I was reading the Swedish subtitles and trying to make sense of the structure and the grammar rules of Swedish, kind of comparing it to my knowledge of German and kind of... You know? So, and I kept telling "oh yeah, so the Swedish do the ikke like kein in German, oh, interesting". And then he was like, "how are you paying attention to the series and decoding everything and enjoying the thing",. Like I don't know, I'm used to it. And it was so actually it was so much fun to do that.

**T10** [00:25:52] I think it is. I totally, totally share that. Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:25:57] OK, sorry. I'm talking more about me than you, sorry. So, this one, again, I'm using "first language", but you can adapt your answer to whatever however you want to adapt it. So, have you ever been able to express something in a language that is not your first language more satisfactorily? How so?

**T10** [00:26:26] All the time [laughter]. If it is technical or business, English is always easier. But not, but not always.

**Interviewer** [00:26:39] And what about in literature?

**T10** [00:26:44] Well this is a, this is an interesting one, because I'm actually doing an analysis in Spanish. My first analysis was in Spanish and now I'm sort of translating it into English. And I like the English a lot more. Is quite interesting, because it's more polished, because it's more sort of academic. So, yeah I... To be honest, I don't think I'd like to say that I have just one option. I think is a fluid concept. I think it really depends.

**Interviewer** [00:27:18] Yeah, true. I just, I added this question because I myself have trouble when I'm, when I go back to Brazil. And I'm not bilingual per se, I'm... But, like, when I go back to Brazil and I am talking to family, or people who don't know English, I have to... Sometimes there's expressions or idioms, like, stuff that I need to kind of translate in my mind back to Portuguese, which is weird because Portuguese is my "first mother tongue", you know, in all senses, but some things I cannot... I can express better in English, even though English is my, by all means, my second language.

**T10** [00:27:56] It's like a Gestalt thing. Because it's a concept. So, if you're using a concept when you're replacing it with an icon or an image, you're having to basically reproduce that.

**Interviewer** [00:28:08] Yeah. Well, I find that, so, with some of my friends who speak English a lot, but are Brazilian, I have almost a dialect with them. If you see our WhatsApp conversations or even if you're listening to us talk, we mix in, we insert some English expressions in the middle.

**T10** [00:28:27] Right. I'm quite a purist. This is really quite funny. I think that this is partly to do with TED, that we're trying to promote the Spanish language fuller. So even though I know that people would be using a lot of English expressions, I'm trying to look at what the Real Academia Española would suggest for certain things because I want the language to grow as this technology emerges. So, actually, I would have done something different years ago, I am now sort of come around full cycle, but I'm trying to preserve...

**Interviewer** [00:29:02] The language, yeah. Well, I guess so, if you see there's all these jokes, probably in Spanish as well, that these, kind of, people who work in marketing and ads, advertising and stuff like that, they like to just keep words in English, like "oh, my *budget*, my *canvas*, whatever". They use words in English... They bring these words in English into Portuguese, but it's kind of their own like dialect. But a lot of people mock these these kind of insertions, because they are... They're kind of, like... So, they're talking something in Portuguese and say, "oh, vamos fazer, vamos bolar um budget". And so, like, they they're talking in Portuguese, and then when they say the word in English, they kind of, like, say it more pronounced, like, "budget", like they try to sound more international or whatever for words that exist in Portuguese. Like, we have "orçamento". It's good enough, you don't need "budget", you know? So, in some areas like computer science and stuff, obviously English had to be, in some cases, inserted. But, for example, Portuguese is more that... Because I remember, we used the word "deletar", which comes from "delete" and it didn't exist in Portuguese, and it was, obviously it came from the computer kind of world. And I remember I was talking to someone, some of my Paraguayan relatives, and I said at one point, I was speaking both Portuguese and Spanish and I said "deletar" or something. We're talking about a picture. And they didn't know "deletar". But I guess that's maybe something Paraguayan Spanish doesn't have. But like... So, there are a lot of cases of people like, you know, instead of using a word that is in the language already...

**T10** [00:30:56] And it's funny on that one, they probably would jump to the conclusion that you were turning on someone.

**Interviewer** [00:31:03] Yeah, I didn't think of that at the time. And then I was like, "oh" [laughter]. Yeah. So it's, yeah, it's funny how, well, I got away from the question, but yeah. But what I mean when I say my dialect with my friends is that we don't necessarily use words like, you know, words that exist in Portuguese. Sometimes it's just like sometimes you say "you know", and "like" in the middle of our Portuguese, so it's just...

**T10** [00:31:31] You know what we use in my family, for example, when it's someone's birthday, we say appio verde, which means Green, Appio is, I just don't think, this vegetable... Celery. So green celery just because it sounds. And cornflakes. We say "corn flakes to you", "que los cumplas = Kellogg's Corn Flakes to you" [laughter]. So we just sort of use a kind of play sort of, you know, with the sound and retaining the sound with different words. So that's how we play it.

**Interviewer** [00:32:09] yeah, I have many cases of that in my family as well. So, um, so the next set of questions is more specifically about directionality.

**T10** [00:32:21] Mm hmm.

**Interviewer** [00:32:23] So the first one is a cluster question, so bear with me. Um, what is the difference for you between both or more directions of translation? How would you describe your translation process and types of challenge, linguistic or otherwise, when you are translating into a first language/mother tongue or/and into a foreign language?

**T10** [00:32:49] Um, I think I am quite an analytical person, so I always do an enormous amount of research. So, I would probably look up almost everything. So first you do a quick sort of scan, make sense of it and identify the areas that are likely to be problematic. And then I would say I don't think that there is a difference between the two, to be honest, other than the technicalities that might sort of crop up. So, I might want to check frequency, you know, what would go better? So I look at some corpus analysis, so... In terms of translation solutions, that very much depends on the problem and who commissioned the job and what it is that is needed. So that depends always. And in terms of the tools, again, it depends on how much knowledge I have on the topic. And so... I remember relatively recently I had to help someone for an exam. They were taking an exam on using cranes and lifting equipment. And I had to learn all the parts of the crane machine that was equivalent to learning to sail. So it was all new language. And for that, you have to come up with a glossary that would... So... And that happens both ways. Because it's not just about being L1 or L2, it is topic, you know? Do you know that topic and what is that you need to...? So I think...

**Interviewer** [00:34:31] That is almost the subdirectionality in a way, like, the specific areas of each language or specific versions or varieties of these languages.

**T10** [00:34:44] So, for example, if I'm translating a joke from Spanish into English, I understand it absolutely in Spanish and I'm having to find a replacement in English. And again, I might come up to start with, I might do some sort of literal translation, maybe, as a placeholder. But then you have to find something that would be more appropriate and more, sort of, equivalent to the situation, because you wouldn't say it like that. So you

would be understood. So, again, it depends on who you wanted to read it and what the purpose of that translation was.

**Interviewer** [00:35:20] And do you say, like, you said before that when you translate into English, because you were living here and you have been living here for decades and you kind of you feel... You said, I don't know, I'm sorry if I'm misquoting you, but you said in the beginning, you were more comfortable, you'd say? Like, more confident in your choices into English because you can check? Is that what you said?

**T10** [00:35:45] That's right. Yes.

**Interviewer** [00:35:46] And that into Spanish, you would say you don't have the same confidence or comfort?

**T10** [00:35:53] Sometimes my family laugh at me because I would say something that is correct, but is slightly odd because is a construction that I... That is perhaps not developed.

**Interviewer** [00:36:07] OK, yeah. Sometimes it can be old fashioned or...

**T10** [00:36:12] Yeah. So, yes. I mean, I'm not necessarily even talking about mistranslations, I'm just talking about sort of contextual stuff. Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:36:20] Yeah, yeah. I was going to ask, sometimes just choosing a word that's right, but it's not the most used or the most frequent or it's kind of a stylistic thing.

**T10** [00:36:38] For example, the word Resilience, I mean, I think in English everybody knows Resilience, and it exists in Spanish, Resiliencia, and you would use it, but people don't use it very much, so if I use that at home I would probably have to explain it, so even though I am using the best word to define what it is, linguistically I am right, but it might require a bit of explicitation, depending on the context, depending on who it is that you are using it with.

**Interviewer** [00:37:09] And that could happen in the opposite direction. If we are... We speak Latinate languages, so whenever you use a Latinate version of a word, you know, you sound posh because you know... You know, I don't remember which, but you know those words, like, a lot of false friends for Brazilians, like, to say, instead of "murder" or "kill", to "assassinate". They're just translating from... But it's just words that are used in very specific context and they're more, like, seen as more educated or intellectual or whatever. Because we are speakers of a Latinate language you kind of do that in the other direction as well.

**T10** [00:37:52] Mm hmm. Yes.

**Interviewer** [00:37:54] So you kind of already answered this one, but again, feel free to expand on it. Do you have preferred genres or text types for L2 translation and how, if at all, do they differ from your L1 translation practice?

**T10** [00:38:12] This is an interesting one because I started translating technical texts probably 30 years ago, and it was mainly technical manuals and car manuals. So I translated Range Rover manuals and all sorts of really peculiar equipment into Spanish. Very highly technical. But at the time, I mean, I had... My university education had been,

sort of, I studied chemistry and then I finished mathematics in the U.K. So, my education had been mainly technical. But when it came to do the work, I ended up working in policy development and stuff like that. So, it was not highly technical, but it was sort of, you know. I suppose I still could use the skills. And now my... Now that I'm actually doing other stuff, I'm going into my first love, which is literature. So, translating... I love to translate Spanish into English. I want to bring Argentinean and Latin American texts into English, just because there isn't enough of it. So, I prefer to do it in this way. So for literary stuff I like to do it into English.

**Interviewer** [00:39:29] Do you have any preferred literary genres in, like, within literature? Do you have any...

**T10** [00:39:37] Short story. The short story form is my best... But this is just... Yeah, the short story.

**Interviewer** [00:39:42] And do you have any that you prefer not to translate, into whatever direction, but specifically L2?

**T10** [00:39:48] Um... There is a degree... It's interesting that... I like sort of quite literary stuff. If people sort of give me very casual vulgar material, I don't love it. Particularly in Spanish. Which is interesting, when people sort of use words that I don't like, and again, you know, as an interpreter - and I court-interpret, I interpret everything that you could imagine, I've interpreted in rape cases, murder cases - is not about the kind of language that you would use. But if I'm translating stuff that I consider to be a poor literary sort of quality, I'm... I prefer not to do that. I like to engage. I like to actually love the text or the material that I'm going to be translating. I like to inhabit it, if you like. So, becomes part of me, I want to do a material that is going to have challenges and, you know, that... You tend to like whatever you're working with. I think that is quite a normal thing. Just because, you know, it could be that new language or something else crops up. So, you have to find an angle, something that makes it pleasant. But, as a matter of choice, I prefer sort of more literary quality material.

**Interviewer** [00:41:11] I asked this question because there's, like, when reading on what has been said or studied about L2 translation or what people say in manual of translation studies manuals and stuff like that, they say "oh yeah, it's OK to do it, but not in... Not the translation, not poetry translation, because it needs... In poetry you need a very specific sensitivity that you don't have as a second language speaker or whatever". So I've seen this quite often, and that's why I added this question, because sometimes some people say "yeah, I do. I love translating into both directions, but I refuse to do poetry because it's too hard or whatever", you know? So that's why I added this one.

**T10** [00:41:53] I disagree. I actually love it. I mean, I prefer those challenges. And, in fact, yeah, this is a long story, but... Two years ago, for International Translation Day, I am a member of a body that's based in Argentina, but is the International Association of Professional Translators and Interpreters. And they had an event in Valencia. And the keynote speaker was Emily Wilson, who had translated The Odyssey.

**Interviewer** [00:42:21] Oh, yeah, I love her.

**T10** [00:42:23] Prior to going to the event, what we decided as an International... We had an International Book Club, so we would discuss different chapters of the Odyssey. And so we decided... In fact, we ended up sort of doing some comparative writing. But, what we



decided for the event was to suggest that everybody would actually translate in their languages the first verse of The Odyssey. So I ended up actually translating it into lunfardo, which again, my lunfardo is quite basic. **But it come out too "macho"**. I mean, it's just fantastic. I just loved the concept. And it was really poetic and in fact, it was really well received. I mean, people loved that exercise, and it was full listed with technical issues, you know? Should one respect the original Greek sort of rhythm for the oral delivery or should you actually change it and become prose? Some focused just pure on meaning and not on the musicality that the original needed to have. So, for me, that becomes a technical challenge. But again, is irrelevant of the language I'm doing it with. It doesn't matter. I'm just... I just like it.

**Interviewer** [00:43:41] I, myself, personally, love translating poetry. And especially love translating poetry into English, I don't know why. I think maybe because I read more poetry in English. I don't know. Can be. But yeah, I always think it's a challenge that I like to take on. But I know that many people don't, so... So, the next couple of questions is specifically about market and gatekeeping. So, has your translation work ever been criticized, rejected or disregarded because you are not a quote on quote "native speaker" of the target language? In this case, English?

**T10** [00:44:24] Yes, very interesting, because you feel at a disadvantage. When I did the Masters and I translated into English, you sort of have that feeling that there's going to be gaps, and that even though your translation is probably a good translation, there would be areas where people would notice that you're not a native. So, interestingly enough, I actually had a person who was an expert in my author who... Who wrote for The Guardian, and he said he'd be interested in reading my translation. And when I sent it to him, he sent it back as an editor, and with all sorts of comments and suggestions, and it was the first time I had an experience of an editor looking at my work. And he loved it! And what he had, what he was able to identify, he said "I hear the same voice". So, even though there were some areas where maybe I use more Latinate expressions, I use them because the language required it, because the author I was translating was a very, very peculiar writer. And she played with these things very much, and he recognized that. So, anyone else would have picked it up and they would say "oh, why are you using this word?" I used just because it sounds better! Because what I actually wanted to... The effect I wanted was to get someone to look at something and go "huh?" So, what I was looking wasn't so much for understanding the sentence, I just wanted to have that physical reaction. So, yes, it can be criticized. Then you have to justify it actually, you know, "I am qualified to do this" or... "Yes, I know". So... it almost forms sort of a kind of a decision. If I was going to translate, I would always sort of work collaterally with friends such as Babs... We said "oh, if we translate, we do stuff together", you know, because I would do them the first bit of the Spanish and then she could do the second bit into the English. But that is almost a lack of confidence that I'm not entirely sure whether it is warranted. So, so has the work been criticized? Yes, but not always correctly.

**Interviewer** [00:46:44] OK, yeah. I've had this similar experience where if the person knows that you're not a speaker, they might, depending on who it is, they might look for problems. I've had this... Translating Machado de Assis, one of his short stories for a publication, and it was a very odd short story, I tell you, like, weird in Portuguese. I translated with a friend, a Brazilian friend, and we were like, "man, this is weird", but we kept the awkwardness and the oddness in English. And I, I've had someone read it, who didn't know any Portuguese, saying "oh my God, this sounds odd and the English sounds odd, sounds odd". And I think, even though they meant well, they knew they, they knew

that I was not a native speaker, so they assumed it was just me being awkward and odd in English, but it wasn't the case. It can be, sometimes.

**T10** [00:47:39] Do you know? It just reminded me there was... We did a sample police crime sort of novel, translated into Spanish. And I decided that I would... Because I wasn't living in Argentina and I wanted definitely to be very Argentinean - and my Spanish is more international now, if you like, because I work a lot with the Spanish market -, so I've engaged to other Argentinean translators to actually go, you know, check my work afterwards. As co-translators, if you like. So, for example, when there were scenes relating to being in a pub and drinking beer and all the equipment around the beer and the kind of noise that the glass would make as you sort of, you know, slam the glass, or the equipment really on the on the counter, and for those things, I wanted the noises to be really, really Argentinean. So, for that reason... So, it's quite interesting that I had quite a lot of revisions on that because my Spanish was perhaps a little bit awkward.

**Interviewer** [00:48:47] Not not Argentinean or not...? It was too Argentinean?

**T10** [00:48:50] Or not. Or not enough.

**Interviewer** [00:48:54] OK, yeah. So, this ties in with the previous question, but have you ever been overcorrected on a linguistic choice or a specific form that was consciously made by you?

**T10** [00:49:10] Yes, I remember, I... A company from Barcelona had approached me to work for them and they gave me a sample, and I didn't really want to do this, but it was a legal document. And I used to teach on the Diploma in Public Service Interpreting. I used to teach the legal module. And because I worked in a legal environment, I was quite familiar with the terminology. And I got it sort of returned with quite a few comments saying, "well, your linguistic knowledge, technical knowledge, is not that good". And the kind of corrections they made were absolutely, totally incorrect! You know, I could have defended, I had sort of definitely looked that terms up. But I also I knew that my rendition was adequate, certainly didn't deserve the review that it had, and it made me come to the conclusion that I didn't want to work for that company. There's no way I was going to work for them if their approach was just to say "this is wrong" without actually even having a conversation and checking.

**Interviewer** [00:50:19] Yeah, yeah. Well so... Yeah. Huh! Crazy. I'm thinking... OK. Um, so... And in literature, have you ever come across this kind of gatekeeping of sorts?

**T10** [00:50:35] In terms of spotting mistakes, yes. Yes, sometimes you're reading something and you just say "I wonder what they, what they've done". But this is something that is happening now, is a relatively new experience to me, when I'm actually trying to guess the translation choice that has been made. So...

**Interviewer** [00:50:56] But have they spotted something thinking it was a mistake when it wasn't?

**T10** [00:51:01] Yes.

**Interviewer** [00:51:02] OK. Do you have any examples?

**T10** [00:51:05] I can't. I can't. This is something relatively recent. It happened on a really normal... I mean, I was... I would even say it could have been in Alice in Wonderland.

**Interviewer** [00:51:18] Mm hmm.

**T10** [00:51:19] When you're looking at some very old translations... Yes, I can't. I can't tell you the exact... But I think it was in that text.

**Interviewer** [00:51:28] Okay. So the next set of questions is on creative writing, fluency and translation. First one is: how do you view the relationship between fluency and creativity in the languages you use?

**T10** [00:51:46] It's interesting because the fluency, the creativity is regardless of what language you're speaking, you are either creative or not. So, if you are that kind of person with a lot of imagination and style and flair, you will, you know, it will come through.

**Interviewer** [00:52:04] Mm hmm.

**T10** [00:52:04] So I don't think that is L1 or L2 dependent.

**Interviewer** [00:52:10] So you don't think fluency or, let's say... I will use a different word, because the word fluency in itself had different responses from interviewees, like, um... I forgot the word, the "pro...", the tests that they do, the Cambridge that... I forgot the word. But there's another word, more... Proficiency! So, proficiency, fluency or anything?

**T10** [00:52:37] No, I don't, I don't think so. Because I think that you start from the premise that you, you know, that you probably will understand that, have a grasp of the material, for you to do the work. So, I'm sure that the more fluent you are, the easier it will be. What I'm saying is that even explaining something between L1 and L1 could be difficult if you, if you don't have that degree of creativity.

**Interviewer** [00:53:06] Yeah. Mm hmm. Well, that's interesting, what you said. Well, yeah, it's a... So, this one is also a little bit of a cluster question. So, do you also do creative writing outside of your translation practice? If so, is it only in Spanish or English? And how do you feel your creative writing relates to your translation practice?

**T10** [00:53:32] This is an interesting one as well, because I decided that, having been a translator for many years and also having written political stuff that was very depersonalized for many, many years, I wanted to actually find my own voice. So I wanted to do some writing. And so I started writing a story and I started writing the story in Spanish to actually reclaim my mother tongue, as it were. And it was a short story, it was a telling of an experience when I was in Machu Picchu with my, with my sister. And it was a kind of an experience, and kind of an epiphany, as we were high up in Cusco and I was just communing with sisters and that kind of thing. So that was definitely, definitely in Spanish. And I wanted to do that as a kind of an exercise to actually show me that I could still use my language.

**Interviewer** [00:54:39] Mm hmm. Mm hmm. And, um, do you do creative writing in English as well?

**T10** [00:54:49] Not as much as I would like. Yes. I'm not, yeah. I'm not a writer.

**Interviewer** [00:54:54] Mm hmm. OK. And you said you also do academic writing, which is a...

**T10** [00:54:58] Yes, yes.

**Interviewer** [00:55:00] And that you do in English?

**T10** [00:55:02] In English.

**Interviewer** [00:55:05] OK. So, the next the last set of questions is about training and professional status. The first one is a huge cluster one, but obviously, one feeds into the other, so depending on your answer, you might not need to focus on the rest of the question. So, did you have a formal translation training? If so, did it include different translation directions? If you did receive training in different directions, has there been a change in the direction that you practiced since completing your training? And do you still translate in both directions?

**T10** [00:55:44] The answer is yes, yes, yes. The short. The actual explanation is: I did my Master's in Translation with the Open University and the language was... So, the course was taught in English, and with Spanish, and it required you to go both ways. So I was assessed in both directions, if you like. So... And now I'm doing something quite similar. I'm working with... I'm working in both directions.

**Interviewer** [00:56:22] Well, I added this question because it's more of a personal experience one. But I studied my bachelor's degree... My uni back in Brazil was in translation, and we had the same amount of modules of practical translation, same amount of modules from English into Portuguese and Portuguese into English. So it was the same. No one, when I was studying in my undergrad, no one thought that L2 translation was this weird thing that no one should do, and it was seen as natural, and we were trained in both directions, but then when you leave Uni... I, in Brazil, I've done a lot of, you know, both directions. But, ever since coming here and reading what people say about, especially literary translation, this norm is much stronger outside. And you see from the way people are taught here, most of the time - not in your case, your case is a nice exception -, but I was helping teach a Master Module here at Warwick, and we were trying to make people feel more comfortable translating in both directions, where most of them hadn't tried the L2 direction or some of them were for, like, studying in the UK and translating into English. So they were doing L2. But some of the English students who are learning, who knew... They had more problems doing both directions than the others, the foreigners or whatever.

**T10** [00:57:56] Yes. You know, in fact, my observation - and that was a surprise to me - that I expected people translating sort of Latin American writers to have a very high knowledge of Spanish. And I was surprised that that level wasn't as high as I would have expected. They did... You know, they ended up getting something that because they were very good at writing, and writing in English, that the stuff made a lot of sense. And they did a lot of research. But, they... I was... Before I did my Masters, I would have expected them to have a much higher level of command of the... Of Spanish than they did.

**Interviewer** [00:58:38] Especially, like, in the literary context in the UK, literary translation context. I know some great people who translate Latin American literature into English, and I'm not trashing any of them, but I'm just saying that I noticed, ever since coming here, how it is more about an English person, born and raised, monolingual, etc., goes... Studies a modern foreign language at Uni and then spends some years maybe in a Latin American

country or Spain or... And then they are good at writing English, so now they end up translating the bulk of Latin American literature into English. Which is all fine, but the thing is that... I've had one of my interviewees who was more like an activist and she was like "we need more Latina". Like, she is from the US, which is a different context altogether, but like, "we need more Latina, non European, non white, she said, translators doing that work as well and having a space in this in this context", so...

**T10** [00:59:44] I agree, because I sometimes wonder how on earth would you understand that? It might make sense when it's translated, but it's almost like you need to have the heart of a person who lived there to totally, totally get something. So, I have seen lots of mistranslations in that... They're not necessarily mistranslations, they are not... But, if they would give the job to someone else because they appear to sound better, they might miss those subtle aspects. So, I'm not going with a show of color or... In this one. I'm not, you know, I don't... I don't know whether it is one where I would wish to discuss right now, but in terms of actually using more sort of Latin American people translate Latin American material, it actually is almost like it means so much more to me.

**Interviewer** [01:00:44] Yeah, and I... I mentioned the color, but as... Meaning that... I'm a white Brazilian, I'm half German, so I never thought of myself as anything other than white. But, coming into the UK, I realized that the moment I opened my mouth, I am no longer the white that is assumed white, like, you know, its color, but it's also culture. And also obviously in the U.S., it's a whole different can of worms there.

**T10** [01:01:13] Do you know...?

**Interviewer** [01:01:13] Because if you had like a great grandpa that was, you know... You were, not even if you'd look white, you look so... They have a different way of dealing with these kind of things.

**T10** [01:01:25] I had it all the time. You know, I used to work with politicians. You know, if you saw me, you would say "oh, well, you know, you are sort of fair-skinned, tall, you know, you pass for... Sort of, I don't know, sort of closer". But the moment that I open my mouth and they could see that there was an accent, it made it always so much harder to have my documents accepted. People would sort of, like, ridicule you, find faults sometimes. So, yes, I found that it was a stronger fight that I had to fight sometimes for my voice to be heard.

**Interviewer** [01:02:04] For me, it's been an education because any time I saw a call for translators and they are saying that they want a nonwhite, I was like "no, that's not my case, because I'm white". But I'm white in Brazil. Outside of Brazil I, like, I saw people saying "oh, white girls do that. This is so white people something, something". And I'm like... And I, and I was, like, I don't relate to that. But then I was like "yeah, because they're talking about this very specific white person, you know, that's not me". I'm white like in skin color, but in the sense of...

**T10** [01:02:37] Just foreign, you know. People say "you are just foreign", and I say, "oh, wait, you're foreign to me too". But, um... Yeah.

**Interviewer** [01:02:44] This is a very interesting conversation, I guess. But yeah, I wish there were, I think with in time we'll have more different voices. I think in Korean literature, in translation, they have been making efforts to make it less one-sided. But I do guess, like... I remember... Again, with my ex, he was very fluent in Spanish, lived in Mexico for

two years or something, but he was not... He is still not Latin American. Even though he had an experience there, that's different. So, sometimes when we went into arguments about, you know, Latin American politics and sometimes history as well, I was like "yes, you studied my continent more than I maybe have studied it, but I have lived in it". So, it is a different, it is a different experience and it brings out different, you know, references cultural, like... As a Latin American, I'm sure you agree with me, or whenever there's any kind of praise to the military, I get goosebumps.

**T10** [01:03:57] Oh, absolutely! You just... It's just... It is very funny. I mean, it's only relatively... it's just a few years now, but, if I saw a police officer I would run the opposite direction. And I am going out without having your papers, you know, like... "Gosh, they can stop you and, you know, you would disappear". And for me, this is even more so, and you're sort of very much younger. But, you know, I was from an age where people were taken and it happened on two accounts. I mean, even at University, you know, you would... The University would have people at the entrance with machine guns and they would stop your bus, you know, they would take people away and disappear them. So, no, that's, that is a very different experience of...

**Interviewer** [01:04:41] Yeah.

**T10** [01:04:41] So sometimes... I mean, I find this... again, I, when people sort of love Evita, for example, they said "oh, Evita was fantastic". I don't love her. I don't think she was that wonderful. And... So, if this is actually even a different, difficult conversation, even going back to Argentina, because politics has changed... But Yes.

**Interviewer** [01:05:11] Yeah, no. Yeah, it is... But sometimes you have a very different... So if you are translating a book that has like a police, a policeman, or something about the dictatorship, or the military or something like that, you, as a Latin American translator, you will have a different reaction to that and obviously depends on your age as well, your generation. I know that even though I'm much younger, I know that, like... It kind of is in our collective cultural memory that, you know... It's never a good thing when the military has to take... Or, not has to, but does take control of things. I never like it. So I have problems. Here in the UK when people talk about the military or "our boys" or whatever the "soldiers" are, like, I'm like no. No. Not for me. Thank you. So, the last question is a bit of a short and easy one, but maybe it's not. So it's: are you a member of a professional association? And which one?

**T10** [01:06:17] Right. I am a member of the National Register of Public Service Interpreters. I am a member of the Chartered Institute of Linguists. I'm a chartered linguist. I am a member of the Interpreters and Translators Institute. I'm a member of the International Association of Professional Translators and Interpreters. I am a member of ALTA. I am a member of the Society of Authors.

**Interviewer** [01:06:50] Yes.

**T10** [01:06:53] I think that is it.

**Interviewer** [01:06:55] A lot of associations. Do you think they... How do you think they, like... Well, some of the more technical translation business, it's... Well, it can be very, very useful to have these contacts and networking...

**T10** [01:07:10] It helps you get clients to be honest. And it does help you... I have to rethink because all of this is an expense and you just do it because it's the right thing to do, because you maintain your CPD, because you, you know, you believe in being a member of a professional body that may be subject to scrutiny by enhancing your credibility and it would show your credentials, so that that's why you do it.

**Interviewer** [01:07:45] Yeah. And it's... I think I also added this question to see how, this group of people that I'm interviewing, how they think about it, or how... And how important they think is the... The group, you know, the the community, you know. So this is also a thing...

**T10** [01:08:02] It's interesting. In terms of community, because I don't actually... When people talk about communities, I always look... This is a bit of my "being Latin American" question: what community?

**Interviewer** [01:08:13] Yeah.

**T10** [01:08:13] Yeah, so it's an interesting one.

**Interviewer** [01:08:18] Well, you know, it depends. So I feel that, for example, I went to this society of authors event in March, right before, right before lockdown. And these people... I felt so lost! Even though I knew some of the people there, I felt so lost because I wasn't part of that community. I see it in, like Twitter, on Translation Twitter, which is very active, some people... And I had some people say "oh yeah, I saw you on Twitter". And I'm like, "I'm no one. How do you...?" So there is a community that all these translators, these famous literary translators in the UK, know each other.

**T10** [01:09:00] Yes.

**Interviewer** [01:09:00] But it is a community that's not necessarily open to all society of authors members or all, you know.

**T10** [01:09:06] I'm a member of their translation group in, um, in that... But again, it's almost, for the moment, because I'm... Sort of my focus at the moment is more academic. I'm sitting in waiting a little bit more. And I, I don't love having public discussions in Twitter, for example.

**Interviewer** [01:09:26] Yeah.

**T10** [01:09:26] I'm still slightly skeptical. I think that the... There is sort of... People should be more private about themselves in some respects. Whilst I see it as an interesting sort of, yes, for events taking place or that kind of thing, there is a degree of disclosure that people sometimes do that worries me very deeply. It gives people the false impression that they, you know, they have friends or whatever.

**Interviewer** [01:09:55] We don't have a community at all, right?

**T10** [01:09:58] Yeah. So, that I think is... But, but again, this is all experiential because I used to work in a kind of governance role, being mindful of people's protection based on what could happen if you expose yourself too much.

**Interviewer** [01:10:13] Yeah.

**T10** [01:10:13] So I sometimes worry for people that might not have that awareness. They might think "oh, I was just talking to my group of friends". When though, do you are aware that this group of friends might have a follow, followers up to, you know, more than a thousand people? So what you've just said is out there and it can sort of reverberate your knowledge.

**Interviewer** [01:10:34] So I also feel that there's a degree of, like, as an academic as well, I like academia, but I also like translating. I'm also interested in the publishing market and what's going on in literary translation in general. So, I feel sometimes that, as an academic, sometimes that they have kind of this community, because some of them studied or, like, they tend to say "oh yes, translation theory is useless, I never use it for my work, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera". And it's kind of... The opposite doesn't happen. Like, you don't have translation academics who are, you know, bashing literary translation. But but you have a lot of literary translators, established ones, that kind of have this thing against academia or against translation theory, which I find...

**T10** [01:11:27] Particularly lately. It's just been interesting to to listen to the conversations. But that is what I mean. This is the bits that worry me, because you sometimes hear a voice that maybe is a lone voice, I mean, you just don't know. But because you're communicating a thought in a sort of Twittersphere, 140 characters, that isn't a proper debate and is not a balanced one. And that isn't how I like to have discussions. I think, I mean, I'm much more balanced than that. I think. I like to have the arguments for and against, and I think that just to do something for scoring points can sometimes be, you know, you might look like you... "Look at, you know, that person. Look how well they think". And I think is a bit... It could be a bit scary.

**Interviewer** [01:12:14] I read, I read a text, is... Sounded like a self-help if you read the title, but it's actually a manifesto by a UCLA professor on art and social media and Internet. But she was saying that, for example, Twitter is not the best place to talk politics, among other things, because it lacks context. You need the context to, you know... You need the back and forth. You need the time to think of an answer. You need all of those things which Twitter doesn't give you.

**T10** [01:12:45] It does... It's true. And things could be so easily taken out of context, so it's true that things are evolving. It's true that you might now have made it possible for people to have closer connections. So, for example, in sort of Women in Translation Month, I, I managed... I don't know. I got an amazing gift from a writer, an illustrator from Australia. Fantastic book. I loved it. It's been translated from Norwegian. It was written by a Malaysian woman who lived in Norway, became a widow, and she wrote this book on mushrooms and sorrow and grief. And she was learning about mycology as a method, really, to recover herself. So it wasn't a literary text, but it was beautifully illustrated and written, and it was just absolutely gorgeous. So for me, the fact that I was able to participate in something like this, you know, with someone that just by a very small exchange managed to send me a gift that was something that I would never have found. So put me in contact with some... Again, if I... I had no idea who this person was, and when I found that she was an amazing illustrator! "Oh, my God! This is just such a brilliant opportunity!" So, from the sense of opportunity and the fact that it gets you close to people that you would never have been able to get close to, is fantastic.

**Interviewer** [01:14:17] Yeah, but again, the conversation needs to be... Yeah. Need to take care of what we are saying and how they're taking things as...



**T10** [01:14:26] Curated. It's curated. I mean, again, if you look at all the Trump Twitters and stuff, you know, people have voices that have, you know, "how would you... How are they validated?" You know? You say that, but when what are you basing it? So this is what I'm missing from having quality newspapers where you would actually have commentators that were professional.

**Interviewer** [01:14:51] Yeah.

**T10** [01:14:51] Economists and historians. So you would know that you're having an informed opinion. Like this everybody has a voice, whether you are informed or not.

**Interviewer** [01:15:02] Yeah, and many times they aren't, so... Yeah.

**T10** [01:15:07] You just don't know, that is the issue. So, yeah, it's all good, but with a lot of caution.

**Interviewer** [01:15:13] Well, this was lovely! I enjoyed this conversation a lot and... Well, I've reached the end of my questions. If you want to add anything, if you want to comment on anything...

**T10** [01:15:22] Well, I would love to read it. In fact, when I sort of met you in at Warwick and I heard what you were doing and I sort of, you know... **Is almost given me strength to support that when I did translate into English I wasn't doing something wrong!**

**Interviewer** [01:15:37] [laughter] Yeah.

**T10** [01:15:37] So it's almost... It's such an interesting thing to actually even support. I mean, I'm part of... Some work that I did when people were requiring that translators needed to be mother tongue translators, I've been sort of supporting the argument that that should not be the case, that the concept of mother tongue should be removed and deleted, and it was a matter of competency. And, you know, for me, that has been always a very, very important sort of concept. So I think that what you're doing is, you know, trying to promote and move an idea forward, giving people some justification. What you did the other day at that interview was fantastic. I loved the way that you come across, and...

**Interviewer** [01:16:23] Thank you!

**T10** [01:16:23] ...and what you said and, you know, think is... I can't wait to read your thesis.

**Interviewer** [01:16:30] Yeah, I hope it comes out... You know, it meets the expectations of people. But, yeah, like, I... In that Warwick Summer School, I felt I was kind of almost like applying all of my, all my thesis because I was in partly in the Spanish workshop, but also in the German workshop. And in none of them was I a native speaker of any of the languages. Like, in the German workshop, the group was divided between Germans who know English, English people who studied German and bilinguals.

**T10** [01:17:09] You know, it's interesting that you say this because I remember that in order to be accepted you needed to show that, you know, that... In fact, they would not have accepted me normally because they wanted English speakers to be translating from Spanish into English. That was the criteria. So I had to really almost, like, argue "well, I am

good enough for this". And part of that, I mean, the people were lovely. I loved that experience, it was a fantastic experience, but I still felt a slightly second-class citizen. A citizen with a knowledge, because I would... I know what you are translating and I probably know it more than you do. But they had stronger voices because they sounded.

**Interviewer** [01:17:55] Yeah, I find that in the translation in the workshop itself, I didn't feel necessarily... Like, I felt that I was at an advantage because the literary piece that we translated was by a guy who moved to Germany when he was 11. He was Serbian.

**T10** [01:18:12] Oh, perfect.

**Interviewer** [01:18:13] And it was about him, the chapter, which was about him learning German. So it was like very, like, surface aesthetics, like, there was a lot of... In your face, this is not written by any... You know? So, I... Me knowingly being a non-native speaker of any, like, I'm not a native speaker of German or English, I had this advantage to everyone else.

**T10** [01:18:39] Wonderful. That's why, you know...

**Interviewer** [01:18:40] Sorry, you were saying...?

**T10** [01:18:41] That I had another recent experience that I think is almost uncanny and it sort of ties in with what I'm doing. I'm sort of looking at translations of this Argentinean writer that have been translated by two translators in the States. One is Suzanne Jill Levine and the other is Daniel Balderston. And they both are experts in Latin American studies. And they both have translated loads of sort of Argentinian and Brazilian and other sort of Central American writers as well. Very expert. So, do you remember, in any of the groups, where we did "Petals"? The translation of "Petals", by Guadalupe Nettel? I don't know if you were...

**Interviewer** [01:19:25] I wasn't in that workshop.

**T10** [01:19:27] Well, it's just... The thing is, the weeklong piece of translation that we did was about a Mexican writer. And it was a fantastic story because it was about a man that loved women's private smells. He loved the smells of toilets, I think, that was just this most bizarre story ever! So... Loved doing that in a group! And it was just fantastic, you know, discussing the terminology, going to the toilet and toilet smells and stains, and... It was absolutely fantastic! Totally up my street. And the... one of the translators I'm actually using as part of my investigation now. I'm not judging the quality of her translation, I'm just looking at the translations that she has carried out as, you know, just the examples in English. And she actually translated this... The Book just come out this couple of weeks ago into... Which she translated the piece that we had done in Warwick. And I thought "how amazing is this? What are the chances of that happening?" That I would be sort of meeting my hero again in such a bizarre sort of situation. So...

**Interviewer** [01:20:47] What I meant is that, like, the the summer school itself, I don't feel that it was directed to native speakers of any languages. But the thing is, the way the call for, you know, the 'apply here' thing, the way they worded that, I remember asking myself "can I apply?" Because it said, it said mother tongue level... And I remember asking my... Asking Chantal, I was like, "can I apply?" She was like so sure that I should apply. I was like, "but I'm not mother tongue level of English. And she was like "you, you shh, you are. Just apply". And I'm like "mm". But then I think it should be... I think the conversation

should change into something like if you, if you want to translate... If you feel... The thing is: if people don't feel comfortable translating into an L2, they won't apply for a summer school. It's really as simple as that. Like, if you feel that you have that fluency, you have that level of competency and ability, then if you want to do it, do it. There's there shouldn't be a disclaimer saying "mother tongue level", because no person who can't speak English well enough will apply for that, you know? I just...

**T10** [01:22:00] So, in conclusion, for me, the word "mother tongue" should be an expression that should be removed.

**Interviewer** [01:22:07] Yeah. Yeah. [laughter]. Or, or at least problematized and...

**T10** [01:22:13] Yes, of course. Of course. Yes. [laughter].

**Interviewer** [01:22:20] Perfect! Oh, this was so much fun! Thank you for joining me on this Friday. This has helped me loads with distracting myself from the impending doom of the dentist.

**T10** [01:22:33] Oh, don't be scared. I'm still taking antibiotics. So, you know, whatever you have it done, my full sympathy and good luck with that. And if you want to, I mean, I would love to stay in touch if you ever want to discuss any issues with, you know... Just happy to read it all too, you know.

**Interviewer** [01:22:51] Definitely, I'm, I'm all very up for it and we can keep talking either, as I said, not only about this interview, but about anything. If you want to collaborate on anything, if you want to write something together, if you want to edit the other, I'm more than happy to do that.

**T10** [01:23:09] Wonderful. Lovely. Yeah. Nice talking to you and... Yes. Buena suerte con el dentista. Que no te duela mucho!

**Interviewer** [01:23:17] Have a good, have a great weekend and we will talk soon, anyway.

**T10** [01:23:22] You too. Bye bye.

**Interviewer** [01:23:24] Bye. Tchau!

•

## Interview T11 part 1.mp4

**Interviewer** [00:00:03] Good. So, I have here my... I have a prepared list of questions that I have to go through because... To be fair to everyone I had, I asked the same question to everyone, but I know that some of them will be maybe repetitive to you, or maybe if you feel like you already answer the question you can just add to it or just say "no, I have already answered this" or "this is not applicable to me, etc." You know? And it should feel like even though I have actual questions to ask, it should feel like a conversation more than an interview. So there's no right or wrong answer. You obviously know that. So, shall we start?

**T11** [00:00:44] Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:00:44] OK, good. Thank you for joining me. So, the first set of... The questions are divided into themes. So, the first theme is "approaches to languages". It's a bit more ]broad. The first question is: do you consider that you have a mother tongue, a first language, or more than one? If so, which ones? If not, why not?

**T11** [00:01:12] I most definitely have one mother tongue in the sense that it's what I call "my baby language" and it's Italian. And I call it that because I started learning English when I was still a child, but definitely not from birth. So, yeah, Italian.

**Interviewer** [00:01:31] So Italian is your "baby language". I love that. I love that term.

**T11** [00:01:34] Thank you.

**Interviewer** [00:01:36] OK. So, this is also... You can expand on that. What is your language of education, or languages if you had more than one? Is it different from your mother tongue?

**T11** [00:01:51] Yes and no. I was partially educated in English in the sense that in high school I didn't only have English classes. I also... I was taught other subjects in English, as well as English language and literature. I was taught English... History in English as well. And so... Mostly Italian with quite a bit of English on top of the actual English tuition.

**Interviewer** [00:02:27] So did you...? But you studied in an English speaking country, like, you did, like... You mentioned Roehampton? So you had formal education in English as well?

**T11** [00:02:37] OK, yes. Sorry, I was still thinking about my childhood and adolescence. So, yes, I was educated mostly in Italian until I was 19. And... But at that point I left Italy and settled in the U.K., so all the further education that I've had over the past 30 years, that's all been exclusively in English.

**Interviewer** [00:03:07] OK, so you did your undergrad and postgrad in the U.K.?

**T11** [00:03:14] Yes. And lots of other courses as well. I've done everything here because, at the age of 19, I left and at that point I never went back and never did anything else that was primarily in Italian.

**Interviewer** [00:03:25] OK. Mm hmm. Mm hmm. Yeah. OK. So, this is kind of obvious since you were asked to be a participant in this study, but do you translate into a non-mother tongue? If so, what is your experience of it?

**T11** [00:03:42] Yes, I only translate Italian into English. Despite of that lovely T-shirt, I'm not one of the translators who do it both ways. Which is very sad because it's such a sexy T-shirt. I wanted an excuse to buy it and wear it. But, yeah, I... Marta has one of those.

**Interviewer** [00:04:05] I want one of those! Which T-shirt you're talking about?

**T11** [00:04:07] I'll tell you later, there was like a whole bunch of really cool translation T-shirts.

**Interviewer** [00:04:12] Oh yeah. I want one!

**T11** [00:04:15] Mine says "translators do it with their tongues"... But yeah, Marta got the "Translators do it both ways", which she totally deserves. And I don't. Because I can't translate into Italian. I have an actual phobia about it, I think. But also, my Italian is not my productive language, and it really hasn't been for 30 years. That shifted really quickly after I finished high school and I never got it back. Like, English really became - even decades before I started translating - English became my emotional language, that I used to express myself, as well as my grown-up language of, you know, education and bureaucracy and work. So... And I really quickly lost my ability to produce good Italian, whether in speech or in writing. Typing in Italian is particularly excruciating for me, and I'm not using the word lightly. So, I only exclusively translate Italian into English.

**Interviewer** [00:05:30] Yeah, I would say that about half of the interviewees so far are in the same situation as you.

**T11** [00:05:37] Really?

**Interviewer** [00:05:39] Yeah.

**T11** [00:05:39] Okay.

**Interviewer** [00:05:39] I can't say for sure because I haven't started the analysis part of it. But from from having interviewed these people so far, I realize that some... Especially if you have a background, in which you still do a lot of technical translation as well as literary translation, these people usually do both. But if people are more specialized in literary translations or if they have an experience with, similar to yours in which you've lived in an English-speaking country and you lived "in English" more than you've lived "in Italian" so far, like, you know... So, this usually is the case. And it also depends on how established you are in your profession as well. But it goes... It's half and half so far. It's like fifty, fifty. Which is interesting.

**T11** [00:06:29] Yeah. Thank you. That's, it's good, it's good not to be alone, because I do have a real baggage of self-consciousness about how poor I perceive my Italian to be.

**Interviewer** [00:06:43] But that's actually also...

**T11** [00:06:46] Embarrassing...

**Interviewer** [00:06:46] It can be your own perception, but I've seen from people and I know from experience that, for example, I've interviewed some Brazilian translators who say that they feel normally more comfortable translating into English, but they feel that they have a little bit more of a space and it's easier to get into the publishing part of it in English than in... Because the Brazilian publishing field and context is so much more closed off than... So it's... And I know that from experience I got, I got published in Brazil, but it was because I had the right connections. My supervisor kind of made that happen. And we knew Tawada and she insisted that my translation was the one published. So... Only because of that! Because by just being a translator, wanting to translate, it's really hard to get into, you know, having work into, like, published literary translation in the Brazilian book market. But... So that can also play a part. Maybe also the: if you're not in Italy right now, if you don't know exactly a lot of people in the publishing industry in Italy, it might also be harder to get into that, that club, you know?

**T11** [00:08:02] Undoubtedly it would be. However, I think my personal and linguistic difficulties with Italian predate the beginning of my translation career. If I had to say everything I've said so far in Italian, it would have taken longer, there would have been lots of, a lot more repetition and hesitation, and I would be physically exhausted by now. I'd be a nervous wreck already, like, you know, very seriously. It's yeah, it's how it is. And I'm always reminding myself not to be self-conscious, but it is something that I need to keep reminding myself not to be. So, um... It is good to hear that there are other translators who have a similar experience of their languages and that there seems to be a connection with literary translation and with - how to say this? - With where you have settled geographically. So... There's an issue of home and there's also an issue of... So there's an issue of identity and there's an issue of creativity and creative text.

**Interviewer** [00:09:35] Yeah, definitely. I'm very interested to hear your thoughts on that - and this will come up later in this interview - but I'm already excited about that part.

**T11** [00:09:47] Thank you.

**Interviewer** [00:09:48] So you kind of already talked about this, but this... Now is the time, if you want to expand on that. How would you describe your relationship to the languages you can speak, write, translate...?

**T11** [00:10:06] I only have two, so that's easy. That is another thing I'm self-conscious of, because it's like you know all these polyglots when you're in literary translation and it's like, the latest person to join ETN introduced himself as a "hyperpolyglot". And I thought "oh, for heaven's sake, do we need to hear this?" But I mean, poor thing, it's true! You know what I mean? He is just being honest! [laughter] Yeah!

**Interviewer** [00:10:28] But I know what you mean, because it's, it's... When I tell my friends I speak four... Yeah. Speak, speak, I speak four. And when I tell my friends who are not in translation that I speak four, they go like "wow, that's a lot, you are super polyglot"! But in the translation world, that's nothing. Really. Everyone has to speak four... So, we all feel this pressure to, you know, be... You know? But that's what I mean. You talk about the languages. you, you... You know, feel free to expand on them if you want.

**T11** [00:11:06] Um... So, yeah. I'm bilingual. And, in itself, that's quite a statement for somebody who began to learn one of their languages at the age of seven or eight, which is how old I was when I first had English lessons. Um... And, yeah, and my first encounter with English was with a native English speaker, which I think made a huge difference. Is

one of the things that made a difference. Um... I mean, on a personal level, I think my relationship with languages is tangled up with a history of childhood abuse, which meant that, over time, Italian, for all that it is my baby language, when you have a history of childhood abuse there's abuse kind of woven into your relationship with language. While English is very much a language that I chose for myself, the way that London is a home that I chose for myself. And that means... It's interesting. There's this idea that if you choose something for yourself, you obviously need it to be old enough to make that choice. Therefore, it's not innate, it's not natural. There are all these kind of issues of naturality around language, and because it's not natural then it's not seen as intimate as your relationship with the place that you come from and with the language you learned at birth. And I think that's rubbish! Because, actually, to choose a language for yourself, to choose a home for yourself, and a country, and a city, it means that you are very intimate with that, because you made a conscious choice to adopt that language, that city, that country as your own. So I, I feel very intimate with the English language. I feel entitled to the English language. I have gone through struggles for this language, for the right to have my work recognized in terms of... Just my writing. Not even my translation. Because I actually started writing before I started translating, a few years before. And... A number of other things that I had tried to do with myself kind of fell through, and I was in my mid-to-late 30s and I started modeling for art classes, as you do when nothing else has worked out and you're like "well, I can still take my clothes off, I suppose". I was kind of doing that and not earning very much, and and I started to write, at the point where I had painted myself into this corner where I couldn't do anything else. And then I allowed myself to write. And for me - I know that allowing yourself to write is an issue for lots of people regardless of which language they write in and when they learn that language - for me, it was something that I had wanted to do my whole life and had given up on when I moved to London and I quickly understood, as I said, that my Italian was not productive anymore and I kind of didn't have the emotional attachment I think you need to have with a language in order to write creatively in that language. And, really, the overarching message from society, from everywhere really, is almost as pervasive as the patriarchy, you know? It is that kind of degree of unspoken totality that something that was written by a person whose mother tongue is another language, that is never worth the same. So the real question of worth around, not even - translating aside - like, writing creatively in a language that you did not learn from birth and the as a way of excluding so many people, but... Making sure that their stories and the way they tell those stories are never heard. And so, when I started to write and realized that I could write and I wanted to write and I knew how to find the way to write the stories that I had, there was a really big shift for me in the sense of, as I said, this feeling, this entitlement. I'm entitled to write this down and have it taken seriously. I should also take it seriously myself. So for me, that's my relationship with English. It's an intimate relationship to do with choice and entitlements. Our... Oh...?

**Interviewer** [00:16:32] Sorry. Just, one thing that I noticed that you said that Italian is your baby language and then English, you mentioned before, is kind of your adult language. And in that sense, also, like, one thing that came up in other interviews is this kind of... We talk about directionality, meaning Italian-English, English-Italian. But there are also subdirectionalities in the sense that... You mentioned London. So, not only English welcomed you or you chose English, but London English or specifically the city of London and how it influenced your love for the language. Because, obviously, it's different. The English in London compared to the English elsewhere in the U.K., for example, or in the U.S. or in Australia, in India. So, would you say there's also a specific... Specific English that you have a more, a more intense attachment to or...?

**T11** [00:17:30] Yeah. I mean... Definitely London English and probably South London English.

**Interviewer** [00:17:41] Yeah!

**T11** [00:17:41] I have been in South London like almost the whole time I've been in London. I've been here twenty-nine years. Like, every single place where I've lived in the past twenty-nine years is within walking distance from any of the others. So it's... That's how rooted I am in this place. And at the same time I feel, I feel really safe in English, which means that if I have to find a different kind of English for something that I'm writing or translating, I just start looking around. I start exploring, I start thinking of "oh, who can I ask? Who can I run this by? What can I watch?" I'm not anxious about that. If I had to do that in Italian I would be a nervous wreck. With English, I feel... And that's because that's actually a direct result of me not inheriting this language at birth. That's... I feel that I can roam around the language, and not just in terms of regionality, but also time. So... It's something that I wrote and haven't published yet, but I have a character who's kind of quilting time. She's a woman from the early 17th century - mid 17th century, she lived through the civil war and she kind of didn't get to die for some reason - and I found it really interesting to find a language for her that would be readable to young 21st century readers, but would also have something of the time that she came from. I absolutely loved doing that! And I can't say that it was easy in the sense that doing that is always hard work - any kind of creative writing is hard work - but it was fine. It was not a stressful process. It was a discovery. So, I... While I would be wary of accepting, for example, a book length translation into US English, there would have to be a really good reason for me to accept or volunteer for a job like that, I was like "I must be really the right person for this book".

**Interviewer** [00:20:20] Yeah.

**T11** [00:20:20] You know, so I wouldn't necessarily turn it down, but I would be wary of it and I would have a conversation and I would ask for extra time, I may ask for some editorial support, but that doesn't scare me hugely, you know? And if I ever have to write, I... There's a whole issue that I know you are aware of in terms of translating source language dialects into... target language dialect. So I don't know how, to what point I would be using a particular dialect in translation, in my translation work. But if I ever have to write a character in my own writing, a character who is from a different place or time, I would just get on with it, I would think "OK, what do I need to do?" And I would find what I need. That doesn't scare me. So, there's a real absence of fear in my relationship with English that, you know, there's a... There's a degree of anxiety that is very familiar to me in terms of Italian - my relationship with the Italian language - that is absent in my relationship with the English language.

**Interviewer** [00:21:46] That's interesting. Tawada talked about this how, how much more freeing it was to be a woman in Germany than to be a woman in Japan, for her, and how she could kind of be a different -especially for women - she could be a different person if she had a different place in society, in German society. Um... Also, as a Japanese woman, and not only... A Japanese-looking woman -so this kind of also influences, but - how we can, um, yeah, we can change. I see that difference between the Interviewer I am back in Brazil with my femininity, with my, my sense of place, my sense of everything is so different to how I act in here, and I also use a little bit of... I feel quite comfortable in English, but for me, it's much more clearly a second language than for you. But it's going to be... For me it's like sometimes when I feel that someone's being rude to me, or someone... I just use the excuse of not being a native speaker. It's like "listen, I didn't get



it". So I kind of... [laughter]. I can use that to my advantage as well. So there are... Even if there are disadvantages to, like, people perceiving me as non-native, it can also, if you use it well, you can also turn it around. But that's, obviously, easier for me to say because I have all these privileges. But it's kind of, like, yeah, I get how you can twist and kind of... And the comfortable... I'm always uncomfortable with everything. I'm always anxious because I'm just... I'm, I'm anxious. But I get the whole feeling of... Um... I saw this poem that was circulating on Twitter, in Translation Twitter the other day, about how... You know all those jokes about how "life is too short to learn German", etc., etc.. and there was one going on about "I'm going to die with good German" and, and I'm like "no, you just... I don't understand that fear of using a foreign language. I think people should get used to feeling, not only feeling okay with making mistakes and having fun with the process, but also being imperfect and being, you know... Start feeling okay with having an accent, with having peculiarities, with not having perfect grammar, with not, like, trying to achieve this proficiency, this fake kind of ideal perfection. So I'm pretty used to that because of the way I grew up, like, I would watch movies with subtitles all my life and... Or read things in a foreign language. And my mom, my mother would say to me, like "listen, you don't have to understand every word to see the context. If that word is hindering your understanding of what's happening, then obviously look it up. But, you don't have to do that. It's OK to not understand every little word you read. It's OK to feel sometimes a little bit out of place, because that kind of drives you forward as well. And once you get used to that feeling, I mean, you just, you just take a weight off your shoulders". You just are "so, yeah, I'm, I'm allowed to be myself and to learn and to be imperfect in any language". But it is harder to you that if it is with your mother tongue. It is harder for me to do that with Portuguese, because I feel I have no excuse to not be good in Portuguese...

**T11** [00:25:25] Yess!!!

**Interviewer** [00:25:25] ...because I grew up in that language. I studied at Uni. So, it's kind of like "no, you have to be super good at Portuguese". And that's not the case, really. I don't know.

**T11** [00:25:38] Yeah. I mean, I had one of many moments like that just yesterday. I was reading through this really dense, fairly academic text. Well, it's not exactly academic, actually, it's too expressive and high flown to be an academic text, but it's a sample. It's a long sample from a book about the classics that I'm doing for an Italian publisher, and they need it for Frankfurt, hence the headline. But I just kind of... I couldn't understand half of what I was reading. And it was partly all the cultural references and - that were not explained, they were just kind of thrown into the text, obviously the only readers of such a book who already know this stuff about the classics and history and blah, blah, blah - but also just the way the words, the words and phrasing that were being used, and I sat there going "what was the point of me going to school ever?!" Like, like... Yeah. But I think there's something that I actually understood about my relationship with Italian when I looked back on a conversation that we, you and I, had when we met that evening, so, over wine and nibbles. And it was somebody else whose name I can't remember, and the two of you were talking about Rio, and I think you were talking about a friend of yours who find himself in the wrong... On the wrong side of the tracks somewhere in Rio and pretended he was not a local.

**Interviewer** [00:27:13] Yeah.

**T11** [00:27:13] In order not to get savaged.

**Interviewer** [00:27:16] Yeah.

**T11** [00:27:16] Like, the guys from the favela. And I thought "that's my relationship with Italian, with the Italian language". I kind of, over the past few years, obviously not people who know me, but often people in shops and stations and around when I'm in Italy, I can see - and some people have told me that's how it occurred to me in the first place, and now I can see - that they assume I'm a foreigner! In Italy for a long time and speak slightly strangely, but also has a regional accent on top of that strange Italian. So, basically, Italians assume that I am what I am in England, and partly because of the way I speak and I come across as slightly alien, I think, and also in my physical appearance, which is quite unusual for an Italian person. Italians would just assume that I'm from somewhere in Central or Eastern Europe, and Eastern European people themselves have made this assumption about me. They just think I'm from another country. So that was, like, a Polish woman in a support group that I attended for a while. When we had a chat over coffee for the first time, she went "Oh, you are Italian! I thought you were Slovenian!" [laughter]. So, you know, and certainly British people of all backgrounds, like particularly like older Jamaican men, have a thing of thinking that I must be Polish, and they just hold me on bus stops to ask me where I'm from. And then when I say "no, I'm not Polish", they say, "oh, I'm sorry, is that offensive?" And I'm like "oh, please!" [laughter]. There's something really interesting about the way I'm perceived, but what I find is that when I'm in Italy and somebody is assuming that I'm a foreigner who speaks really good Italian, I am so much less stressed, because then it's okay to be my long-term migrant self who says silly things, like she can't speak properly anymore [laughter]. So, in a way, I thought your story about your friend having to pretend that he's not from where he grew up... Yeah, to get away from rough neighborhoods without getting mugged, in a way is a really accurate metaphor for my relationship with my native language.

**Interviewer** [00:30:01] I love that! I'm going to use it!

**T11** [00:30:04] Hahaha! Thank you! Please do!

**Interviewer** [00:30:05] So, this one you kind of already answered, but you can expand on that and give examples. So are there... Sorry, I'm reading the wrong question. "Have you ever been able to express something in a language that is not your first language more satisfactorily? How so?" This is... It's kind of, you already answered this, but if you want to add to it, feel free to do that.

**T11** [00:30:31] Yeah, I mean, constantly. And that started a very long time ago. And I think... And this goes back to what I touched on in terms of the abusive childhood that I lived through, that I... When I first moved to London, I didn't write creatively for a long time, as I've also already said, but I kind of started just writing down my thoughts, my feelings and some memories as they were surfacing. And I couldn't have written any of that in Italian and I couldn't have said any of that in Italian. It is in fact like... I mean, it's kind of... It's quite painful anyway to talk about abusive memories, but in Italian it is absolute torture, while in English I can do it quite well. So... And I think, I think that my personal history is probably behind the bizarre way in which my language is switched in my head, I think, as a seven or eight year old child. The reason why English sank right into my brain and it wasn't just because I was a child, it was because I would need another language to say all those things at some point.

**Interviewer** [00:32:04] Would you say it was almost like a lifeline that was thrown... English?

**T11** [00:32:12] Um... **don't** know. I don't know. It didn't feel that way at the time. It just felt like a really nice thing I definitely wanted to do. And I was really lucky that we... My family had enough money to send me to lessons that summer, because the following summer... Well, the following year and from then on until I left home, there was no money left in my family, so I could only really ever afford State School. That summer I was able to go to extra lessons and it felt like a lovely thing and I was absolutely determined to do it. And they just... It felt more like it opens a window in my head and I was able to look out and see that there was a lot more to life, because at that point I was, I think, too small to understand the concept of a lifeline.

**Interviewer** [00:33:01] Yeah.

**T11** [00:33:01] And... Yeah, I kind of... Looking back, I realize that what happened is that my brain kind of seized the opportunity to kind of acquire another language, so that at some point I would be able to say certain things or, at least, write them down. So it's interesting because I've... All those times that I felt that I needed to justify myself - not so much as a writer, because I can't say that I've gotten very far as a writer, but - as a professional literary translator and defend my ability to do my job, considering my linguistic background. It's actually really hard to do because it is my... My linguistic competence is so deeply rooted in something very personal that I don't want to discuss with people I don't know. And... So it's... Yeah. But the more I would keep it to myself and develop elegant ways of, of not lying about my background, but without cutting people off from working with me, the more I realized that my, kind of, personal family history is at the root of my languages. And, um... I mean, English was a lifeline in so many ways in the sense that just the fact that I speak really fluent English and I operate in English gives me an automatic privilege over every other Italian I know, including every single member of my own family. So it is a massive privilege at this time in history to have fluent English. So, you know, and it also allowed me - along with immigration rules to do with my actual nationality at birth and everything else - it allowed me to settle in a country where I could plug into the welfare state, get social housing and, you know, survive over those years in my early 20s, where I really couldn't do anything because, I think, my full family history just came down to me like a ton of rubble as soon as I left home, so I was really incapacitated for a few years. And then since then - and even now, you know - I've had a relatively easy ride over the past few months because I was already receiving some benefit money. And this comes along with the English language.

**Interviewer** [00:35:57] Yeah. Yeah. [inaudible].

**T11** [00:35:59] And my nationality. But it's, like, so it is a lifeline in many ways, and I'm not even entirely comfortable with that, but at the same time, that's reality. Um... But in terms of, on a personal level, it was more like a way out. I think. A way out of, um, the, the restrictions that I've grown up with, and I took it without knowing what it was, because I was a small child and I just got on with it.

**Interviewer** [00:36:35] Yeah. Oh. Well, thank you for that. So, the next set of questions is about directionality. More specifically. Again, in this case for you, as you said, you translate only into English, but I'll ask anyway and you can just say "oh, yeah, I went through that" or you can add to it if you want. So, this is a bit of a cluster one. So, what is the difference for you between both or more directions of translation? How would you describe your translation process and types of challenge, linguistic or otherwise, when you

are translating into a first language / mother tongue or into a second language or foreign language?

**T11** [00:37:19] So, I've hardly ever tried any kind of literary translation into Italian, any translation at all into Italian other than tiny snippets, if somebody asks me "oh, how would you say this? Or How would you say that?" Or, you know... I must have looked at a couple of things that people asked me to look at, but it's not, like, really, hardly ever and never professionally. My only experience of translating the snippets of literary text into Italian came, really interestingly, at one of the workshops at the Out of the Wings Festival, last year, which was a really wonderful experience and made me fall in love with theatre and theatre translation, and... Yeah, it was a workshop about translating objects work in theatre and the workshop leader had brought a draft of a play that he was translating into Belfast English from Catalan and what he asked us to do, because there were so many different languages in the workshop, he asked us to translate a couple of lines into a language that wasn't English. So we worked from his translation draft into our non-English languages. It was a fascinating exercise. It was beautiful and I was the only Italian speaker. I was absolutely petrified. [inaudible] staring at this piece of paper and my heart was racing. And at some... I still remember and I'm sure he remembers it too, I just looked up and gave him a dirty look and said "I want you to know this is the hardest thing I've ever done and I'm going to do it, but it's not easy!" [laughter].

**Interviewer** [00:39:24] Yeah, I can't imagine it is.

**T11** [00:39:27] It was... Yeah, I always have a feeling of outrage and terror when I'm expected to do that. It was also, like, when I was at Roehampton and I was one of very few students who were working into English. The majority of my colleagues were working out of English and that was on my audiovisual MA, audiovisual translation MA. So, often the tutors would just hand out - for short exercises in class - they would just hand out English language text. And it was "you know, you can just work into Italian, Can't you? And I was just like "No! I can't" [laughter].

**Interviewer** [00:40:08] "Don't ask me to, please!" [laughter].

**T11** [00:40:14] I felt like such a drama queen. The thing is that after doing that for a whole year and biting my teachers heads off, I then found myself, last summer, doing this thing in the workshop. And it was just an immensely emotional and painful piece of text as well, it was only a couple of lines, and I almost had to tap into the emotional pain that comes with it using Italian productively for me. And I did that to try and... Yeah. To try and produce a translation of this thing, that I wouldn't... That it wouldn't kill me to read out loud. It was fine, but yeah, it was harsh. And if it had been more than a couple of lines, I would have just walked out of the room [laughter].

**Interviewer** [00:41:09] So you mentioned...

**T11** [00:41:10] So... That's how I feel translating into what is effectively my native language. I translate into English, which is all the time. I think I'm quite conventional and boring in the way I work. I produce, yeah, the first draft that hurts my ears, I cringe and it is really embarrassing. And that's a mixture of... Sometimes very close to the source text - in terms of vocabulary and syntax and all of that - in some places. So, even one text in some places will be very close to the source text, in other places it will be very far from the source text, it's almost like a kind of transcreation. Not quite, but a kind of a re-creation of it. And, and then when I do my second draft, I still work... I kind of just try to make it sound

OK in English. But then I always have to check again. I always have to have a reading that is English only. Unless there's something really sticky and then I have to go back to the source text and check, but hopefully by that point there isn't anything and I just need to clean it up and make it flow. But also, there has to be a reading where I have a substantial draft and I have to just check it against the source text. Not just for meaning, but also form and voice, and, for me, voice is really important. It's almost like it's the voice of a text that reels me in and enables me to translate, which is why I think I only really translate to create a text.

**Interviewer** [00:43:18] OK.

**T11** [00:43:21] And I can find it quite difficult to translate a text that's not a creative text, an expressive text. And that's, like, in the widest possible meaning of that category. But if, yeah, I can find it quite hard and I think [it is] because I need the voice. And so... Obviously, there's meaning, but then there's the voice, which is everything, it's, like, form and vocabulary and grammatical choices and syntactical choices and... I need, I need that, and to me, that's the creative part of the work, like, everything else that I do supports that creative phase of the work, and that's what I really love about translation. That's what makes my heart beat faster about literary translation, that phase of the work.

**Interviewer** [00:44:26] I was going to ask you... So you mentioned theatre. And my second question in that section is about genres. Do you have any preferred genres for whatever direction of translation, in this case into English, do you have any preferred genres or text types?

**T11** [00:44:47] Um, so... Theatre translation is not something that I have huge professional experience of, I am only really starting out. I just literally finished the Theatre Translation Strand at the BCLT Summer School, and I have a play, I have an Italian play that, at the moment, it's on pause because of the annoying texts and the deadlines and all that. But I... That's one of my passion projects that I want to finish by the end of this year and then try and organize a reading. So it's something quite new for me, but it's just... I feel completely galvanized by it. And in a way, it makes me smile that I fell in love with Theatre translation in 2020, when theatre is basically an endangered species.

**Interviewer** [00:45:44] Yeah, yeah.

**T11** [00:45:46] Communication, creativity, and... This is the perfect year to fall in love with it. My God, I am never going to make any money am I? [laughter] I just kind of, I have this kind of honing device for the things that are going to make me the less money, or the least money and be the most work. But yeah [laughter]. So far the genre that I've worked with the most has been long form Y.A. Fiction. That's not a choice. It come. It's come also in terms of editing jobs, like self-publishing Italian authors [ask] me to "tidy up" as people ask, you know, to tidy up their English translation of their work, and you're like...

**Interviewer** [00:46:37] And you have to redo the whole thing [laughter].

**T11** [00:46:40] I don't do that anymore, but I have done it. And also, the first ever long form literary translation that I edited was - and this was maybe five years ago - that was a Y.A. and had been translated by someone, a Colleague I know quite well, and I then went on to work with that author a lot. So then I kind of edited other work by her. English language work. But, so... The novel I'm translating now is a Y.A. novel, and that doesn't mean that that's what I want to keep doing. So my, my passion projects are not Y.A. or children's

fiction. It's more literary fiction. And that's across quite a wide range of genres, so there's the play, but there's also a magical realist political novel, and that is the novel that I fell in love with eight years ago, and I basically turned myself into a literary translator so I could translate this novel. And then I eventually did part of it for my dissertation, and hopefully at some point I will have the opportunity to get a contract to do the rest. But there's also a kind of new realist style novel from the late 40s that I would love to translate. And that's different. And so... Yeah, at the moment, the form that I have... The form or genre that I have more experience of, is Y.A. fiction. That's not choice or inclination.

**Interviewer** [00:48:42] Hm hmm. It's just experience. Hello?

**T11** [00:48:50] Yeah?

**Interviewer** [00:48:50] Sorry, there was a blip in the sound and audio.

**T11** [00:48:58] I'm still here.

**Interviewer** [00:49:00] So, yeah. Well, thank you for that. Also, are there any that you prefer not to or you refuse to translate?

**T11** [00:49:09] I'm quite frightened of translating poetry. Uh... I wonder why.

**Interviewer** [00:49:18] It is usually the case, to be honest. A lot of people are afraid of poetry in general, but...

**T11** [00:49:22] Yeah [laughter].

**Interviewer** [00:49:22] In any language.

**T11** [00:49:24] Yeah, I'm afraid of poetry. I think I allowed school to put me off poetry...

**Interviewer** [00:49:31] That happens as well, very often.

**T11** [00:49:35] I don't... I... Occasionally, I really love reading poetry, but I always feel that I'm not doing it properly. As if there was a way of doing it properly. But that's, that's my kind of... My basic feeling when I read poetry is that maybe I'm not getting it, am I not getting it? Am I not reading it properly? And I've tried to, that ridiculous thing of trying to turn myself into someone who reads poetry. It's actually quite embarrassing to say all of this, is like, it shows how much I trust you that I, you know, will tell you this and I hope that you will still respect me at the end of it.

**Interviewer** [00:50:25] Yeah [laughter].

**T11** [00:50:27] Interesting. And just, like, recently, I've heard Daniel Hahn say that he doesn't do poetry. And that was like...

**Interviewer** [00:50:38] Refreshing to hear that! Good to know!

**T11** [00:50:41] Yeah! [laughter]. It is amazing to hear Danny say that there is something that he just doesn't do. But also, yeah, that in particular... Because I think "OK, so I'm not alone". I get that feeling like "OK, so I'm not alone".

**Interviewer** [00:50:56] You are definitely not alone! [laughter].

**T11** [00:50:58] Definitely that... There's also, I suppose, there are things that are very erudite, very, very scholarly that I find quite frightening. I sort of revert to my inner teenager, which is the worst possible part of you that you want to kind of evoke when you are trying to get some work done. Yeah. Like... So this translation, this nonfiction translation sample I'm working on now, is something to do with classical myth and the way it relates to contemporary culture and I am constantly battling my inner teenager with this. I kind of... I'm having flashbacks of some of my high school teachers, I... There was another text that I was sent last month by the same Italian publisher, which is somebody I really want to continue a professional relationship with, so I eventually found him other translators and two people from the Emerging Translators Network took it on. And that was an even longer sample. And it's a book about the Divine Comedy and...

**Interviewer** [00:52:19] What?

**T11** [00:52:20] The Divine Comedy and Dante and the relevance of that text to everything that's come since, how it affected so many different... it's an amazing book! If I could read the book, I'd be a better person! I looked through the sample and and I thought "oh, wow, this would absolutely kill me. Like, I just, there is no way I can do this". So, something is very scholarly, [inaudible].

**Interviewer** [00:52:49] Hm hmm. OK.

**T11** [00:52:51] If something's very street and contemporary and slang-y, for all the difficulties that brings, I am fine with that. And maybe that goes back to the very intelligent thing that you said earlier on about the type of English that I'm intimate with.

**Interviewer** [00:53:12] Yeah, yeah.

**T11** [00:53:13] And for all that, I've developed many different registers of English and I can read academic text quite well, I can write academically quite well. I did my M.A... First, I can write, but I am most comfortable with this street-y kind of London English that I pick on my streets. And, and that's fine. There needs to be more text out there like that anyway, so.

**Interviewer** [00:53:42] Yeah. Well, um... So, just to let you know, I need to leave by 5:30, so we might do, if you don't mind, do like a second part of this interview, because I still have a few questions to go through.

**T11** [00:53:58] OK!

**Interviewer** [00:53:58] Because we talk a lot! That's the thing [laughter], if you want...

**T11** [00:54:01] Sorry about that. Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's fine. I do need to be gone way before 6 anyway, so that's probably a good thing. What do you have left?

**Interviewer** [00:54:12] So I have two questions about market and gatekeeping. Two questions about creative writing, fluency and translation - that these ones I assume that we're going to talk longer about them - and then the two last questions are about training and professional status. So, like, your training, you know, formal training or workshops, Uni and professional associations. So, the market and gatekeeping ones depends on your

experience, really, but they are a bit more pointed. So, I can ask them both now and then we leave the creative writing fluency and the training professional status for a second...?

**T11** [00:54:53] Um, yes. That will be more disciplined, more kind of. Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's absolutely fine.

**Interviewer** [00:55:00] It doesn't need to be disciplined, it's just that unfortunately I have to... At 5:30 I need to leave, but, um... So, the one, like, this next session is about market and gatekeeping as I said. So, this one is... I'm very interested in this question. Has your translation work ever been criticized, rejected or disregarded because you are not a, quote unquote, "native speaker" of the target language? In this case...?

**T11** [00:55:27] The answer to that is "I don't know". Because people are not going to tell you that.

**Interviewer** [00:55:34] Mm mm.

**T11** [00:55:36] They're just going to reject you. And there is so much rejection...

**Interviewer** [00:55:42] Yeah.

**T11** [00:55:43] ...in publishing, whether you're a translator or a writer, that you almost need to develop a whole part in your brain just to process the rejection without allowing it to impinge on your work. Otherwise you are screwed. So...

**Interviewer** [00:55:59] I ask this because some translators do say that they had an experience of editors saying to them "well, you are clearly not a native speaker", sometimes because of their name. Like, if you have a name that really doesn't sound English, you can suffer that, or sometimes, you know, just, they knew that you are not a native speaker, so they already read the text kind of with that prejudice in mind. But that doesn't necessarily happen that often, are just some... Some have experienced this.

**T11** [00:56:29] That is definitely a fear of mine. It has been for a long time. And that's why even when I started to write I wouldn't... It didn't occur to me to translate until I fell in love with the book and I just was not able to let it go. My name and surname is the most Italian imaginable.

**Interviewer** [00:56:51] Yeah, [laughter].

**T11** [00:56:54] I remember a colleague, somebody whose translations I edited some years ago, who kept her ex-husband's surname because it was an English surname, and she felt that that helped her with her work.

**Interviewer** [00:57:07] Yeah.

**T11** [00:57:07] Thankfully for me, I don't have an ex-husband and, um, and I don't have that option. Not that... I don't think I would take it. Though, I don't think she took it lightly herself. So, yeah, I'm sure that happens. And what I've noticed is that one way I get around that is by meeting people in person. I had this really interesting conversation with the admissions tutor at Roehampton, and that was in the spring of 2018. Roehampton was the only University I was interested in, and I emailed him and he said "you know what, I don't actually have that much on, come and see me". So it wasn't an actual interview, but it



was an interview. So I went in and had a chat with him and, and, after we'd been talking for maybe 20, 25 minutes, my background came up and he said "well, we would normally never consider having somebody work out of their native language, but with you, there's nothing else we could do. So, if I hadn't met you..." Basically what he was saying to me is that if he hadn't met me, he...

**Interviewer** [00:58:23] Would reject you...

**T11** [00:58:25] Wouldn't have allowed me to. But because he met me, he understood that that was the only thing that could be done. And I thought "wow!" It was really nice that he was so open with me. That was an eye-opening experience, because I realized that that's what I do. And I think my advantage is that I seem to be a social learner. I'm, um, a lot better in person. I make a better impression on people in person, and I, I am really privileged to live in London where I've had so many opportunities to attend events that all have the wine and nibbles afterwards. So even when I was so scared, I would skip my dinner for the bus fare and then I would just have dinner off the wine nibbles after the talk I... I could do that. You know? And so many of these events are free or they're cheap. And when we had Europe House, I attended these amazing things and chatted to people, and people come up to you afterwards and say "I really like that question that you asked" or "tell me more about what you mentioned", et cetera. That kind of networking, I am really good at. So that's how I get around the problem.

**Interviewer** [00:59:43] Yeah.

**T11** [00:59:43] But I wonder if I've got so good at that because I need to make up for how foreign my name is and how unconventional my language background is.

**Interviewer** [00:59:56] But you do sound very... You know. When, when I started... I first heard you talk, I couldn't place you. Which is a good thing, I guess. I like not being easily placed in a country, in a language, in a whatever. So it's... Yeah. So, it helps when you have a... Yeah. But sometimes our names kind of get in the way.

**T11** [01:00:17] Yeah. When I first heard you speak I thought you were from Belfast. I just remember it. Like, literally, when you first opened your mouth "I thought she's from Northern Ireland".

**Interviewer** [01:00:29] [laughter].

**T11** [01:00:29] Yeah.

**Interviewer** [01:00:29] That's interesting. I never, I... I've heard all sorts of possible origins for my... But not Belfast [laughter]. So this, I'm going to use this as the last question of this of this first part. It's related to the the last one. So have you ever been overcorrected on a linguistic choice or specific form that was consciously made by you? And how so?

**T11** [01:00:58] Um... Not in my translation. It's happened in my own writing. A few years ago, I won a free read for the first draft of my unpublished novel. And when I read - although it was overall a really valuable experience - when I read the editor's report, I realized how many times her judgment had been guided by my name and the assumptions that she was making. And because of my name that she was making about me, because of my name. So it's not something that I've noticed as a translator, because I think my translation work has grown out of a very tight network of people. So, I joined ETN at the

very beginning. I joined ETN towards the end of 2012, which was the first year that I had started trying to translate this very literary novel without knowing what I was doing. I immediately went to International Translation Day that year, and then I met the Emergent Translators Network and I joined and my work has grown out of that. So actually I've really only worked with people who knew me. And the interesting thing is that I started editing other people's literary translations before I started making translations that other people would edit.

**Interviewer** [01:02:42] Oh, OK.

**T11** [01:02:43] This is going to be the first time that I get an editor and the editor seems to have a similar background to mine. So I think I'm really privileged in this way because, again, it goes back to me being a networker. It's almost like I built up an environment where I could thrive.

**Interviewer** [01:03:03] Yeah. Well, that...

**T11** [01:03:03] Then try to gatecrash an environment that was trying to reject me or where I would have to prove myself. I still feel that I have to prove myself in quite a healthy way, I think, I want to do well, I want to impress, and I want to do my best for the text I'm translating. But I don't feel... I rarely feel the pressure to be someone I'm not in terms of my language background because of the environment in which I operate.

**Interviewer** [01:03:35] Well, that's, that's... Oh, I'm so excited to transcribe those interviews, because... So many gems coming out of this! So, unfortunately... Sorry, you were saying...?

**T11** [01:03:45] You can go on.

**Interviewer** [01:03:48] Oh, we need to cut it short for today, but we can schedule a second one for you. It can't be too far apart, I guess, because otherwise you will forget the first part of... [laughter]. You know.

**T11** [01:04:02] I'm getting my diary as we speak. And so... OK, so... Um...

**Interviewer** [01:04:12] Let me just stop recording, otherwise...

**T11** [01:04:17] Yes.

End of part 1

---

## **Interview T11 part 2.mp4**

**Interviewer** [00:00:04] ... of scheduling, but I am glad that you got your doctor to call you early so you don't have to wait for hours.

**T11** [00:00:11] Yeah, that was really nice of her, so... But now I need to go in. So, I'm sorry that we had to change things around, but we still have worked out. So, yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:00:24] It's perfect. I have been running around like a headless chicken, so I'm just glad that we were able to book another, the second part.

**T11** [00:00:34] Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:00:37] So let me just go straight to the questions before... So the second to last set of questions is about creative writing, fluency and translation.

**T11** [00:00:52] Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:00:52] So this one you might like more than any other. The first question is: how do you view the relationship between fluency and creativity in the languages you use?

**T11** [00:01:09] They completely go together for me. And my, um, creative writing and my literary translation have been feeding into each other, and I mean, obviously I was writing first and if I hadn't already been writing my own work, I don't think I would have got into literary translation the way I did, because... I think I've mentioned already that my first professional jobs in literary translations actually were as translation editor, and I could never have done that without a very clear sense of how it feels to construct my own text, but also to keep searching the language for ways of expressing what I wanted to say, when and how I wanted to say it. So, definitely the fact that I had been doing my own creative writing for a number of years enabled me to enter the professional world of literary translation through translation editing. And then when I got to actually translating longer texts for myself, by myself - rather than just attempting things as passion projects or translating shorter snippets of text - when I actually got into the nitty gritty of longer text translation, all my creative writing and my editing experience came into play, I really felt that I had those skills and that awareness to fall back on. But at the same time, what I noticed is that, going back to my creative writing, I had a different... It was, I wouldn't say it was easier, but I felt almost like an increased sense of belonging in the process of writing creatively, if that makes sense. I was more at home in my own writing, more comfortable experimenting, more confident generally.

**Interviewer** [00:03:33] One thing that... I usually wouldn't do that, but I'm interested in seeing because... Because this came up in different interviews and I am interested in how people react to this question, because one of the first people I interviewed said that he thinks fluency and creativity are enemies in the sense that the more fluent you strive to be, the less you can be creative because you kind of want to abide by the rules of the language or whatever. But I think he understood fluency as proficiency or, like, this kind of official recognition that you are fluent or whatever, like, you know, with, with tests and Cambridge and IELTS, and TOEFL and all that kind of stuff. And then other people have said what you said, that without fluency you can't, like... That they go hand in hand, right? But I was interested in asking you, like, what do you think of that opposition? You know, because people say... I do agree with the person who said that they are enemies in the sense that sometimes, with exophonic writers, like, sometimes it's it's best to free yourself from these shackles of being... But as L2, or non-natives, or whatever you want to call that, you kind of don't get... You still want to prove yourself all the time a little bit. So... It's hard to free yourself from that.

**T11** [00:05:07] Um! That is fascinating! I think you were right when you said that there are different understandings of the word fluency. I even think, like... The fact that the word fluency might refer to my competence, my English language competence, didn't even cross my mind. To me fluency is something that we have in a language, regardless of when and how we learnt it, fluency is command of a language. I don't necessarily feel that it's connected to a language acquisition background.

**Interviewer** [00:05:52] OK.

**T11** [00:05:54] So I, I kind of understood it in that sense, that kind of... Not even "ease" of using a language, I'm always wary of using the word "ease" in this context, because none of it is easy and none of it should be. But, um, the kind of flow of the language, you know? And I don't... I understand how many people who are exophonic translators feel the pressure of having to prove their command of English. I don't anymore. I... I've been through that, I had already been through that by the time I started my M.A. and probably by the time I started translating eight years ago, when I started in my own time. I... Yeah! I don't. I mean, in a way, **I do think of myself as an exophonic translator.** It means a lot to me because so much of my own personal story is tied up in that identity, and many of my skills, and I think the advantages that I feel that I have, the strengths that I feel that I have in literary translation come from being an exophonic translator. Which is fair enough, because that's what I am. But I also don't kind of sit there thinking "oh, I'm an Exophonic translator doing that, therefore I like to do this or that". I think about the text I'm translating and about my target text and who it's for and what it has to express. So it's interesting, because this came up in my dissertation last year. It's the sense that... I talked a fair bit about the domestication/foreignisation debate and how it applied to the particular text that I was translating, which is a story about working class people fighting the system and history repeating itself, and... It's very much a proletarian story and it's a people's fable, as the author described it. So I got into a whole discussion about how if you foreignise Italian in English translation, what happens is that the English text that you come up with sounds very posh, because of the whole history of Latin and French being used in the education of the English upper classes. So it is nothing to do with fluency, with having to prove that I can write English or whatever, or whatever kind of English I want to prove that I can write. It's about what a particular type of translation that is maybe closer to the original text, does to my target text, and how that changes the text. It kind of warps its message. So I... Yeah. It's not about me. It's about the text. And, and maybe I speak from the privileged standpoint of somebody who speaks English the way I do, and who looks like I do - even though there is a whole contrast between the way I come across and my actual skills and my name, which is my calling card to an extent. So, you know, I, maybe I can afford to say "oh, it's not about me, it's about the text", because I have these advantages that other exophonic translators don't have. But I also feel that it's... While literary translation does a lot for me as a person and as a writer, it has to be about the text. Ultimately. To me. And that's it. In the end. Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:10:31] Yeah. Well, I... The idea to interview people was to kind of... Because I could go and analyse all these texts produced by Exophonic translators, and I will to some extent, but at one point you decide that you don't want to see in the text necessarily where the exophony lies. That's why I wanted to ask the people behind these texts. But, obviously, every translation project, every translation of every text will be different, and you will slightly, you know, have to adapt your approach every time. And it's, it's OK to do that. It's, like, many other interviewees said that this always depends on the text, really, but... Yeah. That's interesting. Thank you for that. That was lovely. I thought you would like that question. And the both... The second one you already kind of answered, but you can add to it anyway. It's a bit of a clustered one, so three questions in one. Do you also do creative writing outside of your translation practice? If so, is it only in your first language or do you experiment with other languages, second or third, whatever? How do you feel your creative writing relates to your translation practice?

**T11** [00:11:53] Yeah, I mean, I do feel that I have answered all of that in the rest of the text. I only write in English creatively. I even have trouble writing a work email in Italian and I have been known to draft it out in English and send it to my little cousin to translate [laughter].

**Interviewer** [00:12:14] OK, all right [laughter].

**T11** [00:12:16] Yeah, and um... Yes. And as I was saying, my own original writing has grown enormously and benefits enormously from my literary translation work. The problem is that I rarely have time to do both.

**Interviewer** [00:12:36] Yeah.

**T11** [00:12:36] So that's what the problem is. Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:12:39] That's nice. But they do relate to each other...?

**T11** [00:12:42] Hugely.

**Interviewer** [00:12:45] Yeah. OK. So, we reached the last couple of questions. So, they are about training and professional status. The first one is clustered again, so bear with me, and obviously, one question depends on the question... The previous question, so... Did you have formal translation training? If so, did it include different translation directions? If you did receive training in different directions, has there been a change in the direction that you practice since completing your training? Do you still translate in both directions? - This one I know, but, you know.

**T11** [00:13:29] I've only been trained in translation, in English. I only translate into English, I've never translated the other way, so, in terms of directionality, I am really boring and I got professional training at postgraduate level after... Several years after I started translating. And I'm really glad I did it that way, because I had the time and headspace to explore what translation meant to me, what I found hard, what I found easy. And in the end, when I did my M.A., I did audiovisual translation. I didn't do literary translation, and that's also something I'm really happy about. It worked for me. I learned things that apply really widely to my work that I wouldn't have learned if I had not done that particular M.A.

**Interviewer** [00:14:26] Yeah. So, but... But did your... What was your undergrad in? Just as a curiosity.

**T11** [00:14:32] My undergrad was something completely unrelated. It was a health science degree and complementary therapies. And it is very old. I graduated in 2004, but by then a number of things happened in my life that meant that I couldn't practice the therapy that I had trained. And even before I did my undergrad, I went to university when I was 30, so then I gave the whole thing up, and that's when I started modeling because I couldn't think of anything else to do with myself.

**Interviewer** [00:15:01] Yeah, I was just curious to see if... To see if the people I interviewed... That if, you know, there's a wide variety of... Especially in the undergrad level, there's all sorts, and then people would like go and do maybe a masters like you did or something a bit more... But sometimes, it doesn't have like... Some of them were all... Like, because I studied languages and translation. So that was my undergrad. But I know that not everyone that... Who comes to literary translation... In fact, like, less than half of

them are in the same situation as me, like, language or literature students turned translators, but people from all walks of life and with all courses like law, biology, health sciences, all sorts come to literary translation in the end. So that's interesting to see.

**T11** [00:15:58] Theatre translators, just to say, I've noticed that theatre translators often have an acting background.

**Interviewer** [00:16:05] Yeah, well that's... Yeah.

**T11** [00:16:06] They also have languages and then they start writing and then they start translating and then they fall in love with it and mostly do that.

**Interviewer** [00:16:13] Oh yeah. But I've been, I find it very interesting to see the very varied background that the interviewees so far have. And yeah, that's fascinating. But I added this question because I, in my Uni back in Brazil, we had translation, like, practical translation modules, like workshops and stuff, and we had four for each direction. Like, we had four modules for Portuguese-English and four modules for English-Portuguese, so the same amount of, you know, credits. And for any... So, back home, the whole thing of L2 or this whole rule that you should translate into your mother tongue wasn't really a thing. And if you work in technical translation, if you do a good job, no one asks what your mother tongue is, really. Or, like, it's rare. And I did both directions. And then when I came here I started reading more translation theory, more anglophone translation theory, and then I came across this norm, especially in literary translation. So that's why I added this, because sometimes in your training it might be that you had the different directions, but I feel that here in the UK, from what I've seen so far, people usually do one direction and it's, like, a lot of the time is students who are English and then they learn a second language and they translated that into English for the modules. But then, also, if they're international students, they will translate into English because then everyone could read then the target text, or the... The professor, the tutor, could then correct and give feedback, if it's into English. So that's, I just find it, this is part of the... Of, like, translation teaching and stuff, I find it interesting how directionality comes into play. And you said yourself that in that workshop in summer school you had to do into Italian and it was like a very, um, interesting experience for you...

**T11** [00:18:23] Yeah, it was quite distressing, I would say. It was also interesting and very fruitful, but yeah, I was distressed at the time. But I think directionality was, as I mentioned yesterday, a really big issue in my, kind of, M.A admission. It was... It would have been the sticking point for me if I hadn't been able to meet the admissions tutor in person and chat to him in person, and at that point he completely accepted and spontaneously admitted that he never would have considered accepting me as an Italian-to-English student, but that, having met me, he couldn't think of anything else that he could have done. So... And I hadn't even realized that that kind of happened to me. And I thought "oh, well, it's lucky that I was able to attend then, huh?" And, uh, so, yeah. Directionality was a big issue for the University, it was a big issue for me, I mean, for us, because the student body on my course and all of the courses of the School of Media and Communication, they were so international, there were so many languages represented, with most working out of English into those languages. And the faculty staff was also very diverse in terms of languages. Obviously, our work had to be written in English, but there were two grading system. So there was a grading system for students who were working into English, you know, that were working with English as a second language; and students who were working with English as their first language. So I was basically one of the few "English as a first

language" student. Which amazed me. But there you go. And that was it. And yeah. And, and...

**Interviewer** [00:20:19] You know what I find funny, is this insistence in... So, in the Warrick Translation Summer School that I took part in, I'm not a native speaker of English by any definition of the word and I... But, in the call for applications, they added that the people who are joining the workshop needed to have a "native level of English". So, I was like "why do you need to add that disclaimer?" Because, if someone is going to pay that much money to participate in a weeklong literary translation workshop, they feel comfortable enough translating into whatever language or, like, speaking in English or doing whatever! So why do you need to add that disclaimer? Because... I don't...

**T11** [00:21:08] Yeah. It's almost like this kind of construction, the insistence on nativism in translation and directionality. It is almost, like, this construction that is beginning to crumble and there is a lot invested in it. So I think all of this language and these **provisors** that you notice, and I notice, and that we invent very creative ways of getting around in our professional lives, they are all kind of like scaffolding.

**Interviewer** [00:21:44] Yeah, yeah.

**T11** [00:21:46] And, you know, and I just think it's all to do with bolstering up this construction so that it doesn't crumble too fast, because then there's a sense that we won't have anything to replace it and we won't know what's happening. And... The English, the anglophone translation world is going to be overrun by foreigners who speak with funny accents. I actually think at the bottom of all that, there is this kernel of fear that, if we lose this standard, what are we going to replace it with? And I am being facetious. I mean, there is a bit of bloody foreigners in there, sometimes, in some people. But there's also a real sense of... Just calls so many really deep things into question, like, what is mother tongue? For example. And, and, you know, what is identity? Who identifies with what? Who is entitled to identify as what. And I think it's interesting that the creative text is the battleground where these battles are being fought. It's not technical text. It's not... To an extent, it's... I mean, advertising text, yes, because a transcreation is a big deal in terms of how you need to have native insight in order to be able to transcreate a promotional text into another language. But yeah, there's a sense that creativity is as far as you go. That's where foreigners should stop. You're not allowed to be creative. It's almost like your emotional life, your creative life and ability has to be limited by the languages you learned at birth.

**Interviewer** [00:23:34] Yeah. And also that you should control the arts. Like, yeah, you can maybe do some shitty, like, technical translations that we see memes about online, about bad translations for signs and for manuals and stuff, but... But we need to protect literature from this attack or something and... Well, it's funny because, in the summer school itself, I was talking to another person who also took part, also an Exophonic translator who took part in the summer school, and we were agreeing that in that week, during that week, we didn't feel excluded or prejudiced against for not being native speakers of English. But it was funny that in the call for applications, that was a disclaimer. So... And again, we were talking like: who would apply for that if they didn't feel they had enough English to translate into English? I mean, it doesn't make sense that they would add that. So, anyway, that was funny.

**T11** [00:24:36] It was funny. And I think, yes, it is very sharp of you to point out. I think I kind of glaze over a little bit when I read things like that. For me... And I think that actually

ties into something that is very personal for me, this **blagger** persona that I had to inhabit and become very comfortable with throughout my adult life, like, from the end of my teens, actually the whole time that I've been here, and the sense of like not lying about what I am, but having to duck under the foreigner radar of gatekeepers like people who handle things like social housing and welfare benefits and this and that and the other, so that I wouldn't get the foreigner treatment that I could see other people getting. And Italians, other Italians, and... And in a way, passing is very mortifying, because you think "I'm only not getting that because of the way I speak, the way I look". But also, it is just nice to be able to survive and to get the things you need. So I've always had this kind of gatecrasher thing, and maybe that's what I've done in literary translation. It's just that I am now saying "yes, I gatecrashed, and lucky you I gatecrashed this world and here I am and I'm doing it". And... But, yeah, maybe there is a real sense of me just having to duck under those lines that are just kind of... There. For most of us to trip over. And maybe that has helped me. You know? And maybe that's what helps me, maybe that's why I don't sit at the computer thinking about fluency and how it limits me. Just think "what works in this text?" And, and I think... Sometimes I actually think "hey, I rock! I'm really good at this". It's mostly when I manage to bend a source text to my will, like, [laughs] what happened that I am suffering on at the moment, **I was weighing** about yesterday and I think, since we spoke, I kind of found a way into it. So though I might be cursing the author for being so insufferably pretentious sometimes, I have also found... I know how to make it sound. So I'm getting on with that. And and that's when I think "oh, yeah, well done". So maybe that's because I am a **blagger at heart** and that's how I deal with life [laughter] and literary translation.

**Interviewer** [00:27:25] It's a great way of... Yeah. Well, I'm going to... I need to do more of that. I need to be more secure in my... Obviously I don't have your... I mean it's hard. I've been living here for two years now, only two years. So I can't just say "oh, I've been living in this country for decades", you know? It's not the same. But I think we all need to be a bit more... I just put my foot in the door and just, like, listen, I'll come here. And, in the end, the summer school was a great thing because in the German workshop I had... Everyone was either German or English, and I was the only one who wasn't a native speaker of either of those languages. And we were translating for the literary part, for the fiction, the more literary fiction part, we were translating an exophonic text from, you know, written by a Serbian author and in German. And the chapter that the tutor chose was especially about him being 11, coming to Germany for the first time and having to learn that language. So, it was very in the surface that this was written by an... So my position helped, actually. Immensely. Because I was the only one who knew exophony, who studied exophony, studied how to translate exophony, and also, I understood his... His situation. Like, the narrator and even the author, because I had lived a little... I have that experience that that's living so... So in the end it was an advantage that I wasn't native.

**T11** [00:29:01] Of course.

**Interviewer** [00:29:01] Yeah. But obviously I had to just, you know, insist on that and, you know. Well, sorry. Um... So, the last question is a very simple one. So, are you a member of a professional association? If so, which one?

**T11** [00:29:21] The Translators Association, and this is my second year, so last year, while I was a student, I realized that I could become an associate member as a student. Before I published a long form translation and so I joined for the cheaper fee, they really helped me with my contract and everything. And... So, this is the first year that I paid for proper members fee, and I felt very grown up when I did.



**Interviewer** [00:29:55] I might do that next year. but I feel... Yeah. I don't know where I place myself because I'm... I have a published book, but in Brazil, and I don't know if, I am emerging, obviously, but also I have a lot of experience, but also I'm emerging in this market... I don't know, I never know where to place myself. And yeah. It's been... Am I doing that...

**T11** [00:30:19] But you're a student! You're a student, so you can definitely join as an associate member, as a student.

**Interviewer** [00:30:26] Yeah. Yeah.

**T11** [00:30:27] And then see where that takes you. Like, you don't actually need to have published anything in English, because I hadn't when I joined as a student.

**Interviewer** [00:30:35] Do you think it helped you? Like, to have joined or to be a member of...?

**T11** [00:30:38] Yeah, hugely! And particularly, with everything that happened this year, I felt so immensely lucky to be part of a society of authors and to have access to all those lovely events that they organized. And, through those events, I got in touch with... Out on the page, was literally on the comment feed of one of the Society of Authors events, I can't remember which one now, that somebody from Out of the Page, which is a UK network for queer writers, posted about it. And then I attended one of their kind of online get togethers. And I thought "oh, this is really lovely". And I then ended up on to more online events that were more specifically to do with certain genres. And so, I feel that it's a good organization to be part of because it's already allowed me to link up with another network that I knew nothing about. Like for me, that's probably my litmus test for an organization that is good for me to be part of. If it allows me to spread out and, and, and contact the other professionals and other networks. For me that's what a network needs to do. You need to keep networking. So, yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:32:05] Yeah, that's good to know. I am gonna join once my... Once my scholarship comes into my bank account.

**T11** [00:32:13] Yeah!

**Interviewer** [00:32:13] Okay. So this... We've reached the end of my prepared questions and I don't know if you want to add anything else, or if you...

**T11** [00:32:26] No, I think I've talked enough, don't you? [laughter].

**Interviewer** [00:32:30] We both did. I talked a lot as well. So, like... Whenever I'm transcribing and my talking part starts I am like "oh, my God, there you go again Interviewer!" and I have to transcribe my own thing, ugh! Anyway. But it was lovely. It was... so many gems, as I said before, like, it is going to be lovely to transcribe this interview. Yeah, I'm looking forward to it.

**T11** [00:32:52] Thank you so much. I have really enjoyed it, not just because it gave me a perfect excuse to stop translating for a bit while I also working, but also because it's... When I am asked these questions I formulate things in my mind that I really wouldn't have otherwise, because it just kind of creates headspace. And at the moment in particular, any headspace that goes into questions other than "what is going on in the world and how

that's going to affect things", my God, it's such a... Yeah, a blessing almost. And also, yeah, it's useful. It's good to know how to say these things. It's good to be able to see myself from the outside and, like, see, for example, how I relate to the whole issue of fluency. I hadn't really thought about it. So, yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:33:44] Yeah, that's going to be an interesting one to, to analyse. I am looking forward to that. And yeah, I also love these interviews. They're saving my mental health throughout these months. But anyway, if I ever, if I am able to go to London again in the near future, I'll let you know. And we can, if you want, we can meet up and...

**T11** [00:34:06] Absolutely! And and, you know, my offer of a bed for the night is always there. At some point I will hopefully move house, that's one of the things that came out of lockdown for me, I need to get out of here because a nasty ex of mine remembered where I live.

**Interviewer** [00:34:26] Oh, yeah?

**T11** [00:34:29] They made the lockdown worse. I got [00:34:31] [inaudible] [0.0s] the end of April, when you really thought it couldn't get any worse, and then I thought "oh, no! No! Why did I have to change, it was really nice!" So, I need to get out of here, and that might happen the next few months, it might happen next year. But wherever I go, there's always going to be room for house guests because that's an important part of my life. So, you would be welcome if you need a place to stay in London. So, yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:34:57] Thank you! Thank you, that's lovely. But yeah, we'll be in touch and I will email if I have any questions or if any follow-up things come up, and have a lovely day, good luck at the doctors and I'll talk to you.

**T11** [00:35:13] Thank you. So, see you soon Interviewer, have a nice weekend. Bye!

**Interviewer** [00:35:15] Bye!

•

## Interview T12 Part 1.mp4

**Interviewer** [00:00:03] Almost forgot. OK, yes, yes, good, Interviewer. Good thinking. So the first set of questions is, like, the questions are more like general, but about approaches to languages. If you're okay, should I start?

**T12** [00:00:19] Yeah, it is up to you. Go ahead.

**Interviewer** [00:00:19] OK, cool. So, the first question is: do you consider that you have a mother tongue, a first language or more than one? If so, which one or which ones? If not, why not?

**T12** [00:00:36] So I was born in Sweden, into a Swedish speaking family where everyone's mother tongue was Swedish, and so is mine, in the sort of traditional sense of this was the language I was born into and the first one that I learned, both speaking and reading. And I have come to live my life mostly in English. In Sweden you start learning English very early, when you're sort of seven or eight in school. And I think because, because we sort of import a lot of primarily American culture and we don't have TV shows and things like that, there's a sort of high level of English in the population, and also you are kind of... It's a country where you are immersed in English to a surprisingly high degree, I guess, even though it's not, you know, it's not our main language. And I think I just kind of discovered fairly early on that, like, this was the language that I would fall in love with. So while I would say, yes, I have a mother tongue in Swedish, I also take issue with the specific wording "mother tongue". I know I'm not the first person to have this thought, but it struck me recently that the phrase "mother tongue" is also, you know, very peculiar and very, sort of... You know, it makes all kinds of assumptions, like why could we... You know? We need to queer that phrase. I think we need to think about, you know, like people have more than one mother. Like, why do we...? You know.

**Interviewer** [00:02:21] Yeah. Yeah. Well, I just just as a disclaimer, I should have said that before. I added these terms, because I don't... Like, I have this pool of interviewees and some people have experience with linguistics and have studied all these, like they know all the troubles with all the different terminology that is used and I also don't like the term mother tongue, but I know that some people who are more, like, on the literary side or haven't thought that much about it, or for some people it's a really strict, straightforward thing, "oh, yeah, yeah. That's my mother tongue, whatever." But you can always, you always feel free to criticize any terms that you find in this interview or, like, I'm interested in what you think about these terms as well. So, please do.

**T12** [00:03:08] I don't necessarily assume either that when people use that phrase or that term, um... That they would approve of it or think that it's very useful. But it is so... You know. We do live our lives immersed in these ingrained phrases and terms, so, you know, it's useful in the sense that, you know, that's the term that I think most people would use about their first language. But yes. The short answer is, Swedish is, I think, what you would call my mother tongue. But I, I mostly live my life in English, both professionally and personally. And it's also, frankly, I think, the language that I am most comfortable expressing myself in. This is a slightly funny aside, but, you know, like when you you're rehearsing difficult conversations? Perhaps in the shower or something, like you're going to have a chat with your boss or with your parents or whatever, and you're like, "okay, I need to just think about what I'm going to say". I'm always rehearsing it in English, even though I might have the conversation in Swedish.

**Interviewer** [00:04:15] Yeah. Yeah. Well, in my mind, I always I have that thing - when you are like learning a language, obviously - like, when you're showering and you are imagining you, like, you're a famous person, you'd be interviewed for TV, and then your English is perfect [laughter]. And you're so eloquent and you say, like, these amazing things and these very quotable things. And then when I open my mouth, in reality, I see that it's nowhere near my, like, mind language, my, my, my fluency language level. But yeah, but I get what you mean, like it's... I do that as well with English sometimes, but obviously English, I'm not as fluent in English as you are, but it's kind of... I don't know, it's an exercise as well, but it's like how... I mean, I don't know, and you must know this better than anyone, like, when you argue with your boyfriend or with someone, like, how do we do that? In what language do you do that in? Is... For me it was very weird to argue with a British boyfriend, because at some point I got nervous and I started like, you know, stuttering and, like... And I got one pronunciation thing wrong or something wrong, and he pointed that out, you know, like "you're not allowed to use my accent against me!" I was like...

**T12** [00:05:34] That's really, really interesting that you say that, because I wouldn't say at all that I am, like, it's very sweet of you to say that I'm more fluent or something, but I wouldn't say so. I mean, also because - and I've been thinking a lot about this lately -, the the kind of question or the issue of accents, because I think... Well, partly there's the kind of non-native speaker's anxiety. Like, I am terrified that people are going to think I'm stupid because I say something that doesn't sound right in English. And I would say that in Sweden while the level of English in the population is very high, like, my partner has actually never been to Sweden. He was supposed to come this year, but we kind of [inaudible] we spent time in Scandinavia, though. And I was trying to explain to him that, like, you could easily move to Sweden without speaking a word of Swedish, as long as you have English, and get by. Like, it's rare that you encounter a person who won't be able to communicate with you or understand you and be fine speaking English. So people wouldn't judge you for that. But I think in Sweden, people judge... So, taking people whose mother tongue is English out of the equation and thinking about basically any other immigrants, people judge you quite harshly if you have an accent in Sweden. So if you speak Swedish with like, I don't know, you know, a Greek accent or maybe a Spanish accent or, you know, any, like... Any middle eastern accent or whatever, any accent basically except for English, people would judge you quite harshly. I think they think less of you. Maybe think that you're a little stupid. And... I'm exaggerating slightly here, but I think in countries where English is the main language, like, native speakers of English have a higher tolerance, not just... Tolerance is the wrong word. They, I think they judge you less harshly if you have an accent.

**Interviewer** [00:07:45] This might be... Because... This is just me thinking aloud, might be because they are more used to having their language being, like...? One thing that happened to Portuguese, for example, it's not a language that we, Portuguese speakers, are not used to having people wanting to learn our language, so when, like, in the 80s, late 90s, when people started to have, like, you know, the Portuguese certification, like kind of, like, you know, the TOEFL, IELTS, whatever, equivalent in Portuguese, they kind of didn't know how to teach. How do you teach your own language to a person who is learning it as a foreign language? And that was a very shocking thing. I know that a lot of languages have gone through that process. But there was this famous article on The Economist many years ago about... it was this British woman reporter who lived in Brazil. She was like saying that "Portuguese is the best language to learn because, especially Brazilian Portuguese, because they will never correct you, they will always smile, whatever you're trying to say, they're going to welcome that". And it is kind of... it's good and bad at the

same time, because no one will ever correct you. You can you can spend years in Brazil speaking very broken Portuguese and no one... You will never, like, evolve in that way. But at the same time, for us, it was, like, it's so surprising that someone's trying to speak our language that you get so excited about it. But obviously different languages have different approaches to this. Like, I know that the French are not very happy...

**T12** [00:09:15] Yep.

**Interviewer** [00:09:15] When you, you know? And but I noticed this in Germany that people are, like, when... I'm half German and have a passport and everything, and I look more German than the average Brazilian. So, when I go to Germany with my dad, my dad has a... His German is not as good and he has, like... But he can speak German. But he is clearly a tourist or a foreigner, whatever, when he's trying to buy stuff and to talk to other people and they treat him so much better than they treat me, because they assume that I should know better [laughter]. I should know some things because I'm German, after all. And I'm like "no, I'm also not. No, I wasn't brought up here, I don't know what you... I don't know, like, the social... rules and everything". So, it's very, like, I think in English is because they're more used to being a global language, I guess... But it's just a hint, I don't know.

**T12** [00:10:06] Yeah. No, I was... You know, as you say, there are cultural differences too, like the French. I mean, that's that's a big language. But... And still, I think they seem more conservative. But I would say that I'm only now... So I am twenty seven - I guess that's not super old, but - I'm twenty seven. I've been living outside of Sweden in English speaking countries since I was nineteen, so up on a decade soon here. And, and I've worked as a translator since... Also... it's almost five years and it's only now that I'm beginning to, sort of, think that this anxiety I have around having an accent is actually... Like, is this really something that I want to let go of? That I'm ready to let go of? Because it doesn't say anything about anything.

**Interviewer** [00:11:07] You know, like...

**T12** [00:11:09] I think my... My partner is the first, is really the first native English speaking person who has ever really said to me that he can hear my accent. And, I don't know... I mean, like, that makes sense to me. The first time he said it I was a little offended not offended, but, like, concerned and worried and felt like, oh, that's not good. But actually, the more I think about it, the less I think it's a problem or, you know, the less... Why would it be?

**Interviewer** [00:11:46] Yeah.

**T12** [00:11:47] And and the reason... I think my accent is is quite subtle, relatively speaking. Probably people don't tend to pick up on it if I just have a quick conversation with them, which is probably because I learned English hearing it a lot. So, on TV and, and that's part of, like, the way you learn a language. I know, for example, that a lot of Chinese students that I studied with, I feel like, you know, they have quite a strong accent, and when I talk to them, I realize that they're learning very much written language, they weren't focused on the speaking and listening part. And those things really matter, I think, or they have a strong influence. They're going to determine how strong your accent is or what you sound like. But that doesn't have anything to do with comprehension, really, you know?

**Interviewer** [00:12:39] I was going to, I was going to say, like, obviously I said that you're more fluent than me because I know that you've been... You did, like, your... This is tied to the next question, but anyway, that you studied your University Degree also in an English-speaking country, and I just came to an English... Like, two years ago I moved to England. So, it's kind of, like... That's why I said it, but it is weird how, like, you mentioned Chinese, I had a Chinese flatmate. And even though I'm speaking it as a foreign language and I make mistakes or whatever, and I'm, like, I'm constantly thinking about accents and, you know, all these issues, I kind of assumed - because her English was kind of broken English and, you know, sometimes she couldn't express herself properly - it's weird because I didn't realize that I was assuming that she didn't have that rich of an interior life, internal life as I thought. It's ridiculous. It's prejudicious and ridiculous.

**T12** [00:13:38] Yep.

**Interviewer** [00:13:38] But, we went to a movie theater. We went to a movie theater on campus, and it was Jurassic Park: The Fallen Kingdom. And, as we were last, the movie was beginning in the name of the movie appeared on screen, she turned to me and she was like, "oh, so it's like the United Kingdom then?" She made a joke! And I was surprised that she made a joke! Why wouldn't she? I mean...

**T12** [00:14:04] Yeah. You know, I think all of these things are subconscious. You know? Like some people probably don't really... You know. I'm sure that, you know, reflecting on these things hopefully make us more aware of them. But even if we do and even if we are people who consider ourselves very much immersed in language and thinking about language and, you know. Still, I... It's taken me so long, what, almost a decade, to realize that I like this accent thing. Yeah. So... Anyway, this is a long-winded answer.

**Interviewer** [00:14:45] Yeah. It's my fault as well, because I...

**T12** [00:14:49] What, did we come... What was the question?

**Interviewer** [00:14:52] Yeah. Oh yeah. That was a simple one. Like, how you consider that you have a mother tongue etc.? Then you said yes but you have a problem with the term and...

**T12** [00:15:00] Yeah. And I think, just just to tie it together, what's the, what's the word I'm looking for? I mean, basically, just that term "mother tongue" I guess that's been around for a long time and it just, you know, builds on a certain assumption of what your family looks like and the relationships we should have, like, we should have one mother, and obviously there are a lot of people who... For whom the experience of having a language or living in a language or multiple languages just does not fit that. And I also, you know...

**Interviewer** [00:15:37] Yeah. It's a very monolingual biased idea of the family structure really, or the relationship between the language you speak with... in your household versus the language you speak in society. And for many people, that's not a straightforward relationship.

**T12** [00:16:01] No, I, I think it's important to think, yes, for many people, they don't have that, kind of, straightforward relationship to like one language. But also, you know, we need... Personally, I think, we need to, kind of, maybe start, you know, clearing some of these very old ways of thinking about, you know, sexuality and gender and relationships out of our... You know.

**Interviewer** [00:16:30] I find that to be especially tricky for me, because my mom... My mom passed away a few years ago. Her mother tongue was, by all means, German, but she was born and raised in Brazil and she only started learning Portuguese at the age of 10. So you imagine, a child could spend 10 years in Brazil without needing to speak Portuguese!

**T12** [00:16:54] Oh, yeah, of course.

**Interviewer** [00:16:56] But I only started learning German at the age of 19, so...

**T12** [00:17:01] I mean, speaking [00:17:03] [inaudible]... [0.0s] Yeah, because I just realized: so... My family, like, I am, genetically speaking, very Swedish and I grew up in Sweden, I didn't live anywhere else when I was a child. But my mother, when she was little, moved to the States for, like, a few years. And English, American English, was actually her first language that she ever properly learned. And then they came back to Sweden, and in Sweden, you get taught British English in schools. And now it's a little more, like, people won't correct your pronunciation. But her pronunciation and spelling, she was, like, nine when they came back. They were gone for a few years. And the teacher would correct her, would correct her spelling and her pronunciation. And so she got really shy and just went quiet and didn't speak at all for like a year, and lost her English entirely and kind of started over with Swedish. And if you meet my mother now and speak to her, you will hear a woman speaking English like... Swedish is her, you know, her main language, I think she would consider it her mother tongue, and her English is... You know, she has a very strong Swedish accent. But yes. So, I guess my... You know, if you think about mothers, because that was really interesting what you said about, you know, your mother and her tongues...

**Interviewer** [00:18:38] Yes. Like, my mother's mother tongue is not my mother tongue, which can be, you know, what is... At the same time, I did grow up with, like... At the same time, it's very weird, because if I had a child now, I wouldn't be able to, like, I would speak Portuguese to it, I think. I'm pretty sure. But I would... Like, all the lullabies and the nursery rhymes I heard in German all my life, even though I didn't know what they meant. But my mom would sing that in German to me. But she didn't... I didn't grow up bilingual, per se. But it is weird, because then my child would speak Portuguese, but all of the lullabies and all the, like, mother-child kind of, like, joke with language and stuff, it would be in German. So that's... it's weird.

**T12** [00:19:22] And that's interesting because, obviously, the sort of mother tongue term assumes that there's one tongue that you have the strongest relationship to that kind of birth view. But often people have, you know, in one particular area of their lives or just one, you know, like... They might have a language that they feel more comfortable being intimate in, or being intimate with a child, like, you know, having that kind of close relationship. Or... I mean, this is a silly example, but I think in terms of my academic work, I'm much more comfortable speaking about it in English than Swedish. I always feel like I just stumble and don't know the words, and I'm like.. But speaking about cars and, like, parts of cars and things... Like, I got my driver's license in Sweden. I can't make any of, like you pop the hood, And yeah, I can talk about, like, I can be like "oh, there's that, that, and that" in Swedish, but in English I'm, like, completely lost.

**Interviewer** [00:20:17] Yeah. Same... I don't know any of the terminology for cars and any of that in English [laughter].

**T12** [00:20:25] And that makes sense!

**Interviewer** [00:20:26] Yeah. Yeah. This is related to the second question, which is... You kind of already answered but you are free to, like, like, add to it. But what is... What do you consider is your language of education? Or, if there's more than one, obviously, is it different from your first language, your mother tongue or L1?

**T12** [00:20:48] Um, so... I, um... Up until the age of fifteen my education was entirely in Swedish, except for, of course, my English classes, and I also did French and Spanish. But from the age of fifteen, like, the last three years of secondary education or high school in Sweden, it was sort of, I don't know, two thirds of my classes were in English and then the rest in Swedish. And then I moved at nineteen and the rest of my education has been entirely in English. So... Now I would say that English is the language, has been the language of my education. But that's mostly because I think when you talk, like, when I think about my education now I tend to think about the sort of second half.

**Interviewer** [00:21:43] Yeah. Yeah, true. Yeah, that's why I ask, because sometimes, as you said, like, if you did all of your higher education in English, let's say, you have all these like technology and the way your academic writing and everything will be obviously dependent on where or what language was used in your, like, higher education or whatever degree you're taking. So it's kind of, like, it ties more to that than to, like, what is exactly your first/second language, I guess. As I said, some things you can say in Swedish and some things you don't know, you're not very comfortable in English. So it's kind of, like, it really depends. It's kind of a niche thing. Like if you if... You did all of your literary and scholarly and academic education in English, then why would you not feel comfortable writing in English, I guess? That's one of the things that I think about.

**T12** [00:22:38] Yeah. Well, so... I can say also, I... It's getting a little better. But I had a... My experience of sort of moving to the U.K. and studying, like, going to Uni in the U.K. and sort of developing, I guess, my academic persona and interests in English has been a little... It's been a little tricky to come home and have, like... When my parents ask me "oh, so what do you do? Like, what are you studying? What's your dissertation about?" And I have a very hard time explaining these things without occasionally having to use a word, like, throwing in a word in English because I simply don't know it in Swedish. And to me, when that happens, it's an experience of a lack or an insufficiency like I don't actually know how to say hegemony in Swedish.

**Interviewer** [00:23:41] Mm hmm. Yeah.

**T12** [00:23:41] And so... And so for me it's like, oh, I have to kind of fall back on grabbing that word in English. And, you know, my parents are both, their English is really good and their comprehension is very high and... So that's not a problem per se, you know? I guess, maybe I tend to assume that they know words that I know just because to me they're, you know, they're everywhere, because I'm in a particular, I am immersed in a particular environment where they're very common, but it's actually a bit of a jargon. Well, I mean, not a jargon obviously, but...

**Interviewer** [00:24:25] Yeah, yeah, I get it.

**T12** [00:24:27] But I think my parents, and especially my my mother, I didn't realize at first, but we had to work through a lot because I think she felt like I was being very snobbish



and kind of... That that was me being, you know, a little little too good for Swedish. Like, I was trying to be so smart and so clever and use these fancy words. So we had, like, a complete opposite experience of the same conversation where I felt like I was struggling so hard to explain something, I felt really stupid that I just couldn't put this idea that I knew into words in this language that was supposed to be my mother tongue. And for her, it was an experience of her daughter coming home and using all these words in a different language that she didn't necessarily know or feel comfortable with, and she felt like I was kind of, you know, lording it over her, perhaps.

**Interviewer** [00:25:32] Yeah.

**T12** [00:25:32] And it it took years before we actually sort of thought that through. She was "excuse me" and I'm like, "actually, mom, I just I don't know these words". But that has been an interesting experience.

**Interviewer** [00:25:48] This happens to me because, I didn't study in an English, like... I studied in Brazil, but I studied English at University. And then all of my classmates were very proficient in English. And up to, like, from a certain point, like, most of the week, all the classes, and we have a very, very heavy... our workload in Brazil, like, we have a lot of time in the classroom. So we just... I was speaking English mostly, like, at least for half of my hours, like, a week, speaking English to other people who were also Brazilian, but very fluent in English. And I have a lot of friends who also studied English or live here now or traveled abroad or lived in... Um... So, sometimes when I talk to people, like, with family, with my Brazilian family, I sometimes realize that I'm using... I'm just sprinkling some English words here and there without realizing. And you have to kind of... I have to... Because I, in my way is just like that. It comes out naturally because usually my closest friends understand me in this like code switching of sorts. But, obviously, people who... People might think you're, like, a snob and... I notice my dad. My dad is, like, he can understand a lot of English, but he's not a super proficient English speaker. But he was talking to his brother and telling a story and he was obviously speaking Portuguese, but then in the middle he was like: "E daí eu fiquei tipo: whaaaat?" [laughter] He, like, in the middle of Portuguese, he just said "whaaaat?", like, you know, like his reaction was like, what? And his brother didn't, like, call him out on it. But I was watching them talk and I was like, "oh, my God, even my dad is now, you know, sprinkling some English here and there". And it was so funny to see because it's, like, if you see my conversation with my friend - who is Brazilian and lives in London and her partner is Irish, so she speaks English daily to him and his family - and if you see our WhatsApp conversations, it's mad. We code switch so often in the middle of a phrase so many times in Portuguese and English it's just so crazy.

**T12** [00:28:06] I have a friend who, it's amazing, we got to know each other because we found out that we were both Swedish and had the same PhD supervisor at UCL - she just finished hers - and it turned out we also grew up like ten minutes by car from each other. Like, it's mad. In Stockholm. And but so she, like me, you know, she's had a similar history of where she's lived and her languages, and she is the one person who I truly feel comfortable just, like, speaking the way it comes. Because we can, like, code switch in that way, and the thing, you know, our WhatsApp messaging thread is like... This a lot more than, like, she won't... She understands. We've had a lot of conversations actually, and she's also like "yeah, no one else really gets it when you use a word in English when you're speaking Swedish and it's because you don't know the Swedish word, and that's actually a source of anxiety for you as a native speaker, because you're like I'm losing my mother tongue...", you know. and this is a very, very peculiar and singular experience that,

you know, is shared by some people, but then not by anyone. And it causes misunderstandings and misinterpretations and also, you know, misreadings of intention. But also, obviously, you know, something like you and me. We can share this right now and talk about it and be like "oh, I recognize that", you know? It's an interesting thing. Anyway.

**Interviewer** [00:29:47] Yeah. Oh, my God. This interview will be like three hours long [laughter]. I'm going to have to transcribe this later. So that's going to be fun. Yeah, but this is great so far. So, this third question is kind of obvious, but I have to ask, so bear with me. Do you translate into a non-mother tongue or non, like, a quote unquote "non-mother tongue"? If so, what is your experience of it?

**T12** [00:30:17] So, I would... As I said, I would say that Swedish is my mother tongue and English is my second language and I translate both ways. I translate mostly into English, which is part accident, in the sense that, like, it wasn't planned, and it has to do with... There's a, there's a bigger... I think there's a bigger need for translations out of Swedish than there is the other way around in general. But I'm not just talking about literary translation. Actually, that's probably... So I would say, overall, because obviously, as a literary translator, I also do other work, like many, many literary translators, like what you would call commercial or knowledge translation. And in general, Swedes are very comfortable reading English, so other types of texts, like, I don't know, instruction manuals and... Not that I do many of those, but other types of texts, there isn't a great need to translate those necessarily into Swedish. Swedes are happy to read things in the original English. I would say, obviously, that if you look at the... If you look at the amount of books, the proportion of the books published in English that are in translation, it's much, much smaller than if you look at the books published in Swedish which are in translation into Swedish.

**Interviewer** [00:31:46] Yeah.

**T12** [00:31:46] But I... So... But I mainly translate into English partly because of accident in the sense of I didn't plan that, but there seems to be a greater need, and also I started translating when I lived in the U.K., so it just kind of happened that way. It wasn't something I consciously made an effort to do. But I also would say that I find it more exciting, more fun. I enjoy it more and... Yeah. So it's also something that I want to do more of. My experience of translating into my second language has generally been very good. Like I know there is a... There's a kind of golden, the golden rule of translation that you should be translating into your native language. And historically that has been, at least in English, that seems to have been the case often. And it's different, I guess, with other cultures, and in a lot of cases, you know, there might just not be translators who can do that. And... But no one... I have never been in a situation where anyone has said "no, we won't hire you for this project because it's not your first language".

**Interviewer** [00:33:10] Yeah.

**T12** [00:33:10] And I've never been sort of called out on or, you know, told that my English is not sufficient or that it's not idiomatic. I am very sort of worried about things like "oh, am I mixing Americanizations with British English" or like...

**Interviewer** [00:33:32] Yeah.

**T12** [00:33:34] I can, I can tell some of them apart, but sometimes I'm just not quite aware, it's really subtle, and some words sometimes just take me by surprise. Like I had no idea until quite recently that "dumpster" is not a word that British people use.

**Interviewer** [00:33:51] [laughter]. Yeah.

**T12** [00:33:51] I was very shocked. I used it in a review. So I reviewed a book that only exists in Swedish and I reviewed it in English for the Swedish Book Review. That's kind of what we do. We write reviews so that like, you know, an English language publisher could read the review and be like "oh, I'm interested, that book might be something I should buy the rights to". And I used the word "dumpster" in the review and the reviews editor, who is this very experienced translator working for the European Union and she translates from a wide variety of languages - but she's a very British lady - [00:34:31] [inaudible], [0.0s] she queried the word and she said "I have never heard this word or I don't know it". And she must be late 50s or 60s, and I was just astounded, like, because I don't know another word for it!

**Interviewer** [00:34:54] Yeah. Now that you say it [laughter].

**T12** [00:34:55] It's dumpster in the sense that you dump stuff in it. But anyway. So that's a digression, a little tangent. But, so my experience of translating into my second language, my experience of the way I have been received and my work has been received by editors has generally been good. I, I can't say that anyone has ever made me feel like I can't do it because it's not my first language, although I have plenty of those feelings on my own, like, I don't need anyone else to do that.

**Interviewer** [00:35:34] Yes. I too... I feel like I'm my worst editor, I am my worst critic. And so sometimes I feel that... It's weird, but sometimes I feel that people that don't criticize me enough or don't give me harsher feedback or who say that it's good enough like this or something, I am like "are you dumb?" Like, "why can't you see my mistakes?".

**T12** [00:35:57] Or, like, just being protective of my feelings, and that's not helpful.

**Interviewer** [00:36:04] Yeah, exactly.

**T12** [00:36:04] I think this is something that I talk less about with other people because... In the sense of, like, I guess I realised... Or just because I've never felt criticized for not being a native speaker by other people. If anything, my experience was kind of like coming into this sort of, I guess tight, or just strong community of Swedish to English translators. We have a group called SELTA, Swedish English Literary Translators Association, which is a lovely community. People know each other. We have meetings usually at the Swedish embassy in London where I also worked for a little while. And... I'm currently the acting secretary of SELTA because my colleague is on maternity leave. But my experience of coming into that group - that was, like, me coming into the translation community, kind of - was very much, like, I'm pretty much the only L2 translator in my group. All the others are native English speakers, almost. I mean, there are a few, but I was also, you know? I come to a lot of the meetings, I am present there, and my experience was very much people were like "oh, here's this young, quite young person", like, four years ago when I started going to their meetings, they were like "who is this quite young person whose English, like, that's her second language and she's translating, she's already translated a book and thing", like, they just made me feel good about it! So I think I let go of worrying

that other people would criticize me for it. But that doesn't mean that I don't worry about it personally in my world.

**Interviewer** [00:38:04] Girl, can I tell you, like, you're answering all the questions already! [laughter] You're answering, like, I mean, I... it's going to be so repetitive [laughter].

**T12** [00:38:18] That's good, because it means, like, we arriving at where we're going.

**Interviewer** [00:38:21] Yeah!

**T12** [00:38:21] I remember... You know who Boyd Tonkin is? Yeah. Yeah. So he came to UCL and did like... I did my master's in comparative literature at UCL and then I'm doing my PhD there. And this was, like, I think my first year of my PhD, so 2017. I'm doing mine part time, and I also took a year out, so, you know. The timeline is a little funny, but... He came and did a little talk and then afterwards you can ask questions and then there was some wine and whatever, and during the wine and whatever part, the reception, I talked to him a little bit and I asked him what his opinion was on non-native translators, so L2 translators. And the thing is, like, this was when I was still worried that other people would judge me or would think I wasn't... Or that I wasn't allowed to do it. And I just asked him, you know, as an important voice, an authority on literature and translation and everything, and also being, I guess, of an older generation, you know. I wanted to know what he thought. And his answer was basically like "well, I mean, if the translation is good, then who gives a shit? And that was really refreshing to hear, from a white man in his - I don't know how old Boyd Tonkin is - because, like, you know, you kind of...

**Interviewer** [00:40:00] Yeah, yeah. You would think that he would be like, you know, "oh no, you should translate into L1" or whatever. But he was very open minded in that sense.

**T12** [00:40:10] And yeah, I mean, not if... I don't know how conservative or progressive Boyd Tonkin is in his politics.

**Interviewer** [00:40:16] Oh yeah. Same, yeah.

**T12** [00:40:19] It comes to things we assume about each other and when I heard that I just realized like I am holding on to this and no one else is. Or at least no one else I need to worry about. And also I would say that I have published one, two, three, I think three or four translations into English? I'm on my... I think, fifth that I'm working on. I do about one book a year, generally. And, and I published one translation into Swedish. And the Swedish was... I did two books the same summer, my two books, one into English and one into Swedish, and I would say that my one in Swedish just might be the worst translation I have ever done [laughter]. That probably has to do more with the fact that the thing I constantly struggle with is, like, knowing how far am I allowing myself to go from the original? And there's a constant question of, you know, being faithful and what that means. And I've gained some, you know, I think I'm being... allowing myself to be bolder in a good way now. And I think when I started out I was very concerned about staying faithful to the original, which meant that I... Partly that first book I translated into Swedish, it wasn't... the English original was not... Just the prose, it wasn't... It didn't shimmer, if you know what I mean. And I didn't, like... I didn't feel like I could take any liberties. And when I talk about taking liberties, they are really quite small. But English and Swedish, they're so similar. I mean, they're different, but they're much more similar than like, say, English and Russian or English and Japanese. And you can really, like, replicate a sentence and keep the syntax and pretty much do a literal translation. Either direction... You get, you get like a,

you get a sentence that works. I mean, it probably doesn't sound, you know. You can play around with it a little more to make it exciting or beautiful or whatever you're going for, but... So it's sometimes easy, and I, in the beginning of my career as a translator, I definitely think I stayed... I was so... Yeah, I didn't feel that I had the authority.

**Interviewer** [00:43:05] Yeah. I think I relate to that because I remember, I took part in the Warwick Translation Summer School because, you know, that year I was living on campus and it was easy and there were bursaries that were being offered, and I... It took me a while to apply for the summer school because on the website it said that you needed to - I don't know why they felt that they needed to add that disclaimer, to be honest, and I interviewed one of my colleagues, one of my classmates from the Spanish workshop, and she was like, "I don't get it either", because - so in the website they said "you must have a native-like or a native level fluency in English". So, like, why do they need to add that? Who, like, why would a person whose English is not good enough to translate into English would just pay five hundred pounds to take part in a week of translation workshops? I mean, if they did, then maybe they just wanted to learn more. Like, it's also, like, why would that be a problem for starters? But, I mean, why the need to necessarily put that? Obviously, people who are going to apply feel confident and comfortable enough to at least try this direction, you know?

**T12** [00:44:24] And also when you think about that, I mean, it's one thing if you're really... you're trying to... I guess it depends on what kind of group you want to put together, but when you think about it, like, they are offering... They're offering a course, which is really... Ok, I hate, like, the whole commodifying of everything, but they're offering, like, a product or something to give to you in exchange for your money.

**Interviewer** [00:44:49] Yeah. Yeah.

**T12** [00:44:50] And if you, if the person who is applying is someone whose English wouldn't be... I mean, you obviously, you know, your English is obviously at a level where you are a very suitable person to be there. But even if you're kind of someone whose English is quite broken or... Does that matter? Should that person not be allowed to think about things and to translate? And it's one thing, like, it's not a human right to get published. But, like, even if my English was at a much sort of, if it was not near... Even if I wasn't fluent, why should you stop me from, I don't know, writing poetry in English? Like... I don't know.

**Interviewer** [00:45:42] But I got insecure and I asked my supervisor, [00:45:47] **Chantal**, [0.0s] and I was like "I was thinking of applying to this, but and I saw the disclaimer and I'm not a native speaker of English, so I couldn't apply, right?" And she was like "no, you can apply, shut up". Like "shhhhh". So it's kind of, like, I was like "oh, okay". And then in the actual workshop, in the German-English workshop that I took part in, I was the only non... Like, it was divided between German native speakers and English native speakers, and some were bilingual, but, like, a majority were either one or the other.

**T12** [00:46:18] And you were kind of neither and in between, yeah?

**Interviewer** [00:46:23] I was the only one who wasn't native to any of them. And, actually, we ended up translating a book by a Serbian writer who moved to Germany when he was 11 after the war.

**T12** [00:46:33] [laughter].

**Interviewer** [00:46:33] And my position, my position as like a non-native speaker of either of the languages was actually really advantageous, because, in one way, I was able to feel this... Because that chapter that we were translating was about learning German. So, about his all his mistakes learning German at school and, like, trying to navigate that new language, that new culture and, like, and missing home and, you know, being 10, 11 and like having all this, like, change in his life. And I being... I learned both English and German as a foreign language. So I was more used to that experience than any of the people in there. So it was, like, it was actually really good that I was there, because I helped.

**T12** [00:47:21] That's really interesting, also particularly in terms of the choice of text, I, I would say also that my experience of being that person who's the odd one out in these settings, like, in SELTA we do a lot of CPD events - I guess it's Continuing Professional Development, maybe - so, like, you know, a workshop where we each, like, translated an excerpt and then we kind of compare, we talk about them. And I've also I, I do kind of... I have a few colleagues that I try... One in particular who's a native English speaker and who, like, we talk, we exchange work, we talk about issues. Now we started doing this thing, which we called a mentorship, but it's kind of more of a buddy system thing, I guess. And my experience - and we've also co-translated samples - and my experience in these situations is always that I feel like yeah, like I have a different perspective to contribute. I mean, obviously I'm learning a massive amount from my colleagues, but I also feel like I have something to bring to the table. And I would say that my experience from those settings is that: it surprises me how often, well it used to surprise me, how often these colleagues of mine who I have a great deal of esteem for and, you know, just their work is really inspiring, but how often I would see someone I really look up to misinterpret or misread something that was, like, something like it was just clear to me because I grew up in Sweden. And, you know, something like that might be caught.... Maybe because, you know, you're in a workshop setting, it's not like you necessarily polish something to perfection, but I realized that there was a strength. Like, I have, I have, I don't have to fight to understand what the text says, and I regularly have colleagues calling me and being like "I have this sentence I don't understand it. Is it because the original doesn't make sense or is it a misreading?". And sometimes it's, like, a really common turns of phrase but that means something quite specific that is easy to misread. And well, I don't... I mean... [00:50:00] **[inaudible]**, if anything I feel like I'm trying to catch up with my colleagues because, you know, is the kind of, you know, English not being my first language. But there I try to also remember that there are certain things that I can bring to a project that that someone else wouldn't. And I think that when you have these different, people with these different perspectives in the same room and you talk about a piece of work together, like, that's when it gets really interesting. So like, ideally, you'd work on a book and you'd be able to share it with these different colleagues with different backgrounds and talk about it? But obviously, there is never time!

**Interviewer** [00:50:42] Yeah. And people are busy and... Yeah, but it's, yeah.

**T12** [00:50:45] And also because, you know, translation work, well, it's all right. I mean, especially literary translation doesn't really pay that well considering how time consuming it is.

**Interviewer** [00:50:56] Yeah.

**T12** [00:50:56] But, you know, there's always that.

**Interviewer** [00:51:00] So, this one you... So, I have two more questions in the first section - so we are still in the first section [laughter].

**T12** [00:51:07] Sorry [laughter].

**Interviewer** [00:51:07] Oh, no worries. That's fun. How would you describe your relationship to the languages you can speak, write or translate?

**T12** [00:51:21] I would say that English is my language of choice and also, yeah, I really think about it as the language that I fell in love with and, like, it excites me, like, when I'm working on this book right now, for example, I have this experience often of reading other things and there's a word that glimmers, and I'm like "that word", like, just the way my own vocabulary is being expanded by the task of translating this text into English and - I mean, my English vocabulary - like, that just makes me feel things [laughter]. It just kind of makes me feel alive, I don't know, this sounds ridiculous, but there are really two things in life that make me feel that way. One thing is, like, hiking mountains, and the other thing is translating something into English [shy laughter]. Is something almost... Yeah, I don't know. It just... Yeah. It makes me feel things. And I wouldn't say that I feel that way, um, with my translation into Swedish. And perhaps it is because it's my first language, but there's less excitement there. There's less of the unknown, I suppose. So, to me, Swedish just kind of feels self-explanatory, I guess. There's less mystery and less sort of a... I have less of a desire to explore because I feel like I've seen it all, which is not true, of course. But there's that... The translation I'm currently working on, the titillating search for the exact translation of a phrase, a sentence or a phrase that occurs in the book that I'm translating. And obviously there is no such thing as "the exact translation of a phrase", but there's that titillating search for, like, understanding. And when I think I've really succeeded with the translation is when it's... It reads as if I didn't write it.

**Interviewer** [00:53:49] Uh huh, uh huh.

**T12** [00:53:51] So when I sort of edit my own work, I feel pleased when I'm like "oh, I couldn't have written that" or "I didn't write that" in the sense of, like... You know, partly that seems right to me because I'm translating someone else's work. Like, I am translating this author into English. I am not writing this book myself, even though I do think of translation as a writing practice. But also, because, I don't know, somehow that's when I feel like I've succeeded. When I used the words, for example, on a very basic level: when I've used words that I would not have used prior to working on that book. That's like an experience where I feel like I have succeeded in some way.

**Interviewer** [00:54:47] Do you have... Do you speak other languages apart from Swedish and English?

**T12** [00:54:52] So it's a bit like... I guess it's a little cheating, kind of. But in Scandinavia, I guess that's a little bit like Portuguese and Spanish. Well, like Norwegian, Danish and Swedish are very, very close and I think I can speak. I mean, I speak neither Spanish or Portuguese, so maybe I just have a feeling that it's similar and that means we can speak with each other and understand. There are differences. And sometimes the words are like "what does that mean?" But mostly, it's very similar.

**Interviewer** [00:55:26] So you would say you speak... You would understand or at least have some kind of passive knowledge of Danish and Norwegian as well?

**T12** [00:55:33] Exactly. I can't speak Danish or Norwegian, I can't make that language come out of my mouth. But I can understand and read both of those. And I am fluent to some degree in French, and my Spanish is much weaker. But I would not translate in and out of any of those other languages. Potentially Danish or Norwegian. I know a lot of colleagues would work primarily out of Swedish into English, but also dabble in Norwegian and Danish into English and... Maybe as a native speaker of my source language I feel like my grasp of Norwegian and Danish, while I do understand, you know, and I understand a great deal, there might be subtle nuances that I would miss. You know? Like little jokes or, play on words or...

**Interviewer** [00:56:24] Things specific to these, like, to Norway or to Denmark...

**T12** [00:56:29] Exactly that. And I actually think I have, like, I probably have a very, very high... Yeah, I set a... I set the bar very high in terms of how well I want to understand the original.

**Interviewer** [00:56:44] Mm hmm.

**T12** [00:56:46] Probably. You know. But that's just based on my own... Because, because I usually work out of Swedish, so...

**Interviewer** [00:56:54] It's more of your experience, yeah. Well... Um, yeah. So, can... So, I'm drinking so much water because I am recovering from a cold and I really need to pee [laughter]. So can we pause now? Because the next section will be about directionality more specifically, so you can keep talking. I'm just I'll be back in, like, five minutes.

**T12** [00:57:18] I will stay here and browse Twitter.

**Interviewer** [00:57:23] OK, cool. See you.

End of part 1

---

## **Interview T12 Part 2.mp4**

**Interviewer** [00:00:03] Just before I forget. So... Sorry for the interruption. Let's just see what... Sorry. So do you want to add anything else or should I go to the next part?

**T12** [00:00:19] What was the last question again? It was relationships...

**Interviewer** [00:00:22] Yeah, to the languages you speak...?

**T12** [00:00:26] Yeah. No, all I would really say is that personally Swedish is... Yeah. To me it's the source of language from which I work, but also the language I speak with my, you know, my biological family as... My family and my partner. So those are really the spaces they occupy, the languages, occupy in my life.

**Interviewer** [00:00:49] Good. Well, that's been very interesting. Thank you. Well, the next part is about directionality and the first question is kind of a cluster question, so bear with me. What is the difference for you between both or more directions of translation? How would you describe your translation process and types of challenge, linguistic or otherwise, when you are translating into a first language and into a second language?



**T12** [00:01:18] OK, let's do those. What was the first part of the cluster question?

**Interviewer** [00:01:24] What is the difference between both directions of translation?

**T12** [00:01:30] Yeah, so I think we've touched on this already. For me, I would say I feel equally comfortable translating into both languages. I would say I feel more confident about some of the things... So, some of the things I have anxiety about when I translate into English, like "oh, am I using this word wrong? Is that going to sound like a non-native speaker?" Those things I don't worry about when I translate into Swedish. But I would also say that I think I just genuinely feel more excited about working into English and I am more interested in playing around and getting to know new expressions and... So I think that my translations into English are probably better, because I think that shows, you know? I think my craft is just more inspired into English.

**Interviewer** [00:02:42] And the process, like, in between the different directions, is the process different when you translate into Swedish or English? Or do you think they are similar, just, like, some of the challenges are different?

**T12** [00:02:54] And I think the process is very similar in general. I mean, we are speaking primarily about literary translation, I suppose. So I would say that my overall process in terms of, like, drafting and editing are very similar. I play around with it a little bit between books in the sense of... In the beginning I worked very much, like, you know... I did a quick draft from beginning to end, and then I did a sort of editing beginning to end, and then Polish beginning to end... But now it's much more like I wake up and I'm like: what do I feel this book needs to be like? And what I do today, what am I... you know? Do I do some more? Do I do a rough... Do I work on the rough drafts if it's not finished or do I start polishing?

**Interviewer** [00:03:55] You mentioned... Sorry. You mentioned this insecurity that you feel sometimes when translating into... But you don't know if it's going to sound native or not, like, into English, for example. Do you feel like, when you translate into English, do you feel like you need to have more readers or, like, you need to have an English native speaker read your work more than if you translated into Swedish? Or do you think that at this point in your career, in your life, you don't necessarily need? Because I noticed that when I translate into English I feel like I need more readers of my drafts before I submit something, because I feel more insecure about the... This different, like... I was wondering if you... If that's part of the process, like, how many readers and how many drafts you have, I guess? For...

**T12** [00:04:42] Yeah. Well, so I think in general I wish that I had more readers overall. I always, I think... Yeah, yeah. The reason... There are multiple reasons why I don't have more readers than I do on my projects, one being time, you know? Like, generally I don't really finish with that much lead time to do that. But, obviously... So, one thing that... I mentioned that I have a colleague I share my work with, like, [inaudible]. So, one thing we might do is, like, you send over a thousand words of something and then you talk about that in depth. And I think about those issues that we've discussed when I work on the whole thing. But it's partly a question of time, partly... Less so now, but for a while it was definitely a question of, like, worrying that these readers might be like, "this is really crap". [inaudible]. Because that's why you have a reader telling you what works and what doesn't. But, you know, we're just talking about these anxieties that we have. And also, thirdly because, yeah, I think it's a question of, like, sort of money maybe? Like, I would, if I had... You know, it's hard to find someone who I would be like "yes, please take 20 hours

to read this book and send me back, but I can't pay you". You know? It's tricky. And also because I think, really... While I do talk about things and I discuss my work with others and I think that's really helpful, I find it I am trying to get to a place where I can tell myself: "T12, you are... Your task is to try to translate this text into English and render it, you know? Render the voice and, you know, bring this work into English. But it's not your job... Like, you're supposed to deliver something of publishable quality – that's a term that often recurs in the contracts –, but it's not necessarily your job to, like... There's something that happens after you finish – finishing, you know, [inaudible] – a translation, you deliver it... And publication. Like, the best experiences I've had publishing books and translations has been when I've had an editor who is really involved and who really engages and who really comes back to me. And so, I think that some, you know, some publishers when you work with them... I mean, my experience has been very varied. My first ever translation of English was copy edited or like, you know... Lightly. It was like a few words here and there. It was basically all... One thing where the copy editor didn't think it sounded good in English, and I was like "well, that's why it's [inaudible] in Swedish". But then I've also had the experience of translating something and the editing being really in-depth and I... Heavy. And that was really, really good, such a good learning process and I think, you know, the editor is really supposed to be that leader, you know?

**Interviewer** [00:08:20] I'm bringing in a question from later on, but I think it ties with what you just said. Have you ever been overcorrected, like, on something that you made it consciously, but someone thought it was a mistake because of nativeness or whatever you want to...? Or was it just regular correcting, like feedback?

**T12** [00:08:45] I... It's hard to know necessarily. So, when I think about that, with that first book I did in English, there was one word that I had... I had just really done a fairly literal translation of the original in that particular little phrase and the copyeditor thought it didn't sound good, but I wouldn't say that it sounded better in English than it did in Swedish. Like, it was a slightly awkward phrase, but it was also something quite specific. Like... And so I remember that experience and I remember saying... At the time, I think I defended it and was like "well, it's what it says in Swedish, like, this is what is said in the original and I rendered it into English, and it's, you know, this is as close as we're going to get". Now, I would probably have said... Especially, this was a nonfiction book and like, you know, the language was it was sort of journalistic prose. And...

**Interviewer** [00:09:57] I think I read that one. Was it the one about the Holocaust?

**T12** [00:10:00] No. This was one on menstruation and human rights. But did you read...?

**Interviewer** [00:10:05] Yeah, I read. I read the Holocaust one. Well, because it's, it's my... Any work by an L2 translator, even though you are like... You know. We talked about whatever mother tongue, whatever it means. But like, I've been reading translations by my interviewees, because it's all part of my *corpus* for my thesis, so... Yeah, I read that one. It was really... Like, obviously not an easy light read because it's about the Holocaust, but I read it on the plane and it was just, it was, it was nice to read, I don't know. Like, I felt it was a nice read. I don't know how to explain it because it's a taboo topic, but it was, it was fun. Yeah. I liked it.

**T12** [00:10:51] I'm glad you enjoyed it. That is really, really lovely. That's really nice. And it's also nice to hear someone say that they've read it, I guess. I don't know. It's not necessarily... I mean, it is aimed at, like, young readers, so I guess it's aimed at, like, sort of, you know, teenagers and up. But obviously it's a book that can be read by adults too.

But I just, I don't know. I don't think I've ever talked to anyone who said like "oh, I read that" unless someone that was involved [laughter].

**Interviewer** [00:11:24] Yeah, I read it. And I was an interesting point of view because it was... I mean, I had never read something about the Holocaust by a Swedish... Or from the Swedish perspective. Even though they're like foreigners in Sweden, it's still kind of... It's a different perspective than usually. I read a lot of Holocaust, like, I read *Maus* and all of the...

**T12** [00:11:49] Yeah. This is a different, I think... The international Holocaust canon, this is a different book. And so... That was actually the book that was quite heavily edited or, like, I hadn't been as heavily edited as that one for. And I think that was when I really, like, it opened my eyes to sort of, like, T12... Because my editor was Molly Slight who is now editorial director, maybe, of Scribe. She was when John's was at the time the commissioning editor or whatever the title is. So he... Philip was the one who decided on the book and also said that he wanted me to translate it, but Molly was my editor and it was a really, really good experience. And that was, yeah. I think it opened my eyes, kind of. Being in... Trusting my own instincts in English and, like, worrying necessarily about... Like, being a little lighter in my touch when it comes to, like, you know, faithfulness to the original. But another book I was thinking about was the book on menstruation, *It's only blood*. It's a great title! [laughter]. What was I thinking? Oh, anyway. At the time, I think I defended my choice. This was 2016, it was my first book, yeah. But now I would have just said – especially seeing as it's nonfiction and it wasn't like a stylistically super important choice, I think, to the identity or the characteristic of the book – I would have, today, I would have just like "oh well, if it doesn't sound good let's just change it to something that creates the same image but sounds better to you".

**Interviewer** [00:13:45] That's good to hear, that this was your experience. It's a nice... I mean, it's a good... It's a very positive experience, which I would say not all of my interviewees had. But it's good to know that, you know, some people that you worked with, like, understand very... Like, good editors which were also very understanding and very approachable, open minded about, you know.

**T12** [00:14:13] I have to say that I think, like... Because, obviously then, there's the... You know, editing, can be a specific sort of instances of editing, thinking about different things, typos, things like "oh, that's not the right preposition for this particular phrase or whatever", or directional. And in those cases, like, I feel like I've always been treated, like, a native speaker in the sense of [inaudible] just being like "oh, it should be on and not in here". And it's not like... [inaudible] could do. In terms of, like, heavier editing on questions I'm asked about the Holocaust, there I definitely felt like Molly was not at all... And never felt like she implied that my English wasn't good enough, but I think what she was trying to tell me, what the editing was all about, was saying "you know, T12, while this is correct English, that wasn't the issue, it was more like. How can I... Like, is there a way, you know, are there ways of making this better?" You know? The difference between 'correct' and 'better', and what 'better' is. Is subjective, obviously, but how do we make this? I really like the word "shimmer", but how do we make this shimmer in the way that the original does and how can we deepen something here? And so the discussion is not at the level of like policing language, it's at the level of craft.

**Interviewer** [00:15:57] Yeah, well, that's, that's great. That's how it should be in general, I guess. I this, in the sense that... You mentioned, the human rights text. Do you have like a

preferred genre or text type for L2 translation, specifically literature, and does it is it different from your L1 translation practice?

**T12** [00:16:28] So in general, I sort of think of myself as specializing in slightly vague field of literature and human rights. So, in all of my work, I generally, these days, don't take work at all that doesn't have... That isn't either literary or has a human rights dimension. And I like it when they when they coincide. It doesn't matter actually which language I'm working into or out of it. I've gotten to a point which I'm very privileged in the sense that I get more work sent to me than I can take, which means I have the luxury of saying no to things like reports on how golf courses are fulfilling the EU's environmental standards. You know, which is... It doesn't... You know, those things are very interesting and you get a lot from those kinds of projects too. I sounded a little snobbish, I realize that. But, but I just prefer.

**Interviewer** [00:17:34] Yeah, yeah. It's your preference. I'm asking about your preference, so you have the right to not... Yeah.

**T12** [00:17:40] Yeah. So literary, fiction or nonfiction... I don't work a lot on poetry, partly because it's less of an interest of mine, I think, you're less comfortable there...

**Interviewer** [00:17:52] But would you say that you...? Like, so are there any genres or text types that you refused to translate at all, like, or prefer, like, strongly prefer not to translate? Would you say poetry? Is poetry one of them?

**T12** [00:18:06] I would... I don't seek out poetry. I am occasionally sent things. I will look at it, and if I feel comfortable with it – which means that it's not like very complex in terms of meter and rhyme and free verse around the **iambic** pentameter –, but I do kind of try. It's not something that I seek out. I prefer, I think, I would say I prefer fiction and nonfiction and in both directions. I mean, I prefer working into English, but I would do either into Swedish as well.

**Interviewer** [00:18:47] Would you also prefer not to do poetry into Swedish?

**T12** [00:18:51] Yeah. I, I love reading poetry, but I actually really don't necessarily want to write it myself. And I think I also... That ties in with... It links, you know? I have no particular great desire to translate poetry and I think that is linked to the fact that I don't have a great desire to write poetry either.

**Interviewer** [00:19:12] Yeah. And it's... I think, like, I... So, because... I had this question because reading on L2 translation or, like, explicitly and implicitly in translation studies text, some say "oh yeah, it's okay to do L2 translation or translating into a non-mother tongue, into a second language, whatever, but poetry is something else. You shouldn't translate poetry into a second language". And I don't necessarily agree with that. I think it's more to do with your own preference of genre. If you don't feel comfortable writing poetry, it doesn't matter what language, what direction, is really, like, about preference, right?

**T12** [00:19:50] That's a very. Yeah. I mean my spontaneous, excuse my French, but my spontaneous reaction is like: "That's bull crap! What?!" Because I go so much on feeling, and I... like, of course I've translated books that I didn't necessarily have strong feelings about either, but I mean, the main thing I'm trying to look for is, like, "do I feel something for this text? Like, do I love it?" And that doesn't mean that I think everything about it is great, but like, "does it excite something in me, does I have some kind of passion for it?" I

think that's when it gets really good and really exciting. That's not to say that I wouldn't translate something, like... For example, I mean, I'm a translator from Swedish and I've never done a crime novel, you know? And that's not because I turned them down, it just sort of hasn't really happened. I think I've done a sample here and there and I've been considered for a project, but couldn't, you know, the timeline didn't work out. And I have a colleague who I love, because he's so pragmatic. Like, he just he approaches all of this and he does a lot of crime novels, like this his main source of income. And he's very like, "yeah, you know, it's straightforward and it pays the bills, and I'm like..." I feel like his attitude is quite like "Wham bam. Thank you, ma'am". And he likes it. He's the kind of person who says, like, talks about bashing out of translation. And it's very refreshing that he has such a, like... And that's not how I relate to work [laughter]. I'm really much more the trouble, the trouble... Staring at their canvas for five hours and then like... So I really, really value talking to him and getting he's kind of, like "well, you know, don't overdramatize things, T12, just start, one word after the other".

**Interviewer** [00:21:55] Yeah. My mom would like that. My mom was a professor and she had this kind of outlook on, and she figured out she was the best person to talk to if you were stuck and you needed to write because her answer was always... Actually, my cousin came to her... She died of cancer, so she was in the hospital and she was like, it was a week before she died. My cousin came to visit her and he was talking to me while the nurses were doing something. And he was like: "I need to write this for my upgrade thing" – like for his masters or for his, I don't remember – "and I don't know, I can't because I have this and this, I'm thinking of this and I need to do this before I write, and there is all these problems", and my mom just turned and said, "just start writing". And he's like "no, but I need to..." And she was like "no, just start". Easy, simple, but everyone, like, kind of... Whatever she said it. And he was like "OK". And he started writing right away. And then he said he wrote like 20 pages that night after what she told him. And it's so simple. I just said sit down and write. But it's hard sometimes.

**T12** [00:23:00] But this is something my supervisors tell me, because I definitely struggle with perfectionism and I work getting away from that kind of those thinking patterns or those thought patterns, because they're very unhelpful. So my supervisors, they're aware of this and they like to tell me "but T12, just write something and send for us, like, doesn't have to be perfect and never will be, nothing is ever perfect." And that's with the translation as well. I like that about this little art, how her whole... You know, she has that kind of... And it's not, I mean, because obviously she thinks a lot about being responsible for the work and everything and in relation to the [inaudible] who offered it. But she also has this, like, I think kind of practical... It is a job, like, you sit down, it's something you do, put one in front of the other kind of thing. But I guess this was just kind of roundabout way digression on the on the around the notion of like... I like translating texts that make me feel like I fall in love with them a little bit, like I really want to show the world the brilliance or, you know, the idiosyncrasies of this text. And I would say that, you know, your average Swedish crime novel probably wouldn't necessarily make me feel that way, because I tend to be very... For me, it tends to be very much about language and style, and often those texts aren't necessarily... That's not where they sparkle.

**Interviewer** [00:24:54] Yeah. Shimmer.

**T12** [00:24:54] Exactly. But that's not to say... I do... you know. You probably know what it's like [inaudible] big project. It's going to come along and I didn't know before I did the books I have done that I would be going in this direction necessarily, and I hadn't discovered the things I discovered. So I tend to... If a project fits in, the timeline is good

and it pays, I will take it. If it feels like something within my range. And I feel, and I always discover and learn things. But that said, yeah, I prefer text that are... I want to move into fiction more because it's... My first few projects have generally been nonfiction, not by choice, just by [inaudible]. And fiction, you know, there's more range in fiction when it comes to style and language, I think, which excites me. But it's also challenging in different ways and... Yeah. But so, for example, yeah, my first book into Swedish was a book about a Syrian refugee, a woman who fled from Syria to Sweden and her journey. So that was a clear human rights dimension. And my first book into English was about menstruation and human rights. And then there was the Holocaust book and the only book – but it isn't literary, I don't think – that I've done that it doesn't have a connection to the sort of human rights area is... I did a book on... It's like a DIY book about knots, like knots ties that you can use it in like... It's fun. That was exciting [laughter].

**Interviewer** [00:26:45] So you have a big range of, yeah, you've done different things and...

**T12** [00:26:50] Yeah. And then there's... The current thing I'm working on is a novel, it's about a post-pandemic world. I think many people would classify it as a dystopia. And the first thing before the novel opens, the first thing is this page which is the Treaty of Continents, and it's basically like reading the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But it's written like it's got that form of treaty [inaudible] world declaration, and it's actually written in the future when this pandemic ravaged the world, and it's got these different clauses and the language... And I just when I saw this, man, I was like “okay, yes, this book is thinking about the world in a way. Yeah”.

**Interviewer** [00:27:42] It's checking all your boxes, right? [laughter].

**T12** [00:27:49] Yeah. So I'm very fortunate in getting to do that. And that's where I want to go in my academic research. Is on literature and human rights and specifically speculative fiction and human rights. So that's kind of, it all, somehow things have come together.

**Interviewer** [00:28:11] I was going to... So... And I'm a bit confused because I messed up with the order of questions and some of them you already question... You already answered really well. So I'm not going to... So I'm going to step into the next section that has only two questions, but I think you might like these. The first one is: how do you view the relationship between fluency and creativity in the languages you use?

**T12** [00:28:40] Um... Maybe... [laughter]. I would say that's [inaudible]. I was thinking, my, just like, first thoughts, not as a translator but just as a person making assumptions about language, you know, my kind of subconscious was like “oh, but, you know, you can be more creative in the language you're more fluent in”. But actually, for me, it's the opposite. It's what I was trying to say about the excitement and the inspiration and the mystery. Like, I am much more creative into English, I think – or I try to be – than I am into Swedish because... I am much more aware that my English vocabulary and terminology and like the way I tend to express myself is specific to me. It's specific to the expression that I... The instances, the accumulated instances of expression that I have been exposed to. Like, I've learned English and I picked up certain phrases and there are certain phrases that, like, my partner would use that I'm just, like, that would never fall into my mouth naturally. So I'm aware that my vocabulary is limited and then I constantly need to expand it and that, um... So I'm constantly kind of looking for words that I wouldn't use when I just open my mouth and speak.

**Interviewer** [00:30:28] So we have one... My first interviewee, who I think you... I cannot name names, I don't think, because it's an interviewee, so I'm not... [inaudible], but one of my first interviewees said that he thinks that fluency is the enemy of creativity. What do you think about that statement?

**T12** [00:30:54] Oh yeah. It's interesting, because, you know, when I think about the work I do into Swedish, which is not that much anymore but, like, the other day, yeah, we're doing... We were revamping the SELTA website, and because some of our clients are like literary agents in Sweden, my... Our chair thought it would be a good idea to have part of the site be available in Swedish too, and have it written by me or translated into Swedish by me, because then it would sound good. So we would sound like we really need both languages anyway. Yeah. And so that's the last time I did, and it was just like four hundred words or something. But the experience of that, of translating into a language which I would say that I... Whatever fully fluent means but, you know, it is my mother tongue or my first language, I think is a better word. Yeah, the experience of that is very much like the more I look at the... I look at the source and then I think "okay, how would you say this in Swedish? And something comes out and it feels... I don't question it. And I don't think necessarily, I mean, I do question it, but not to the same degree. I question it last, and I think less about like "well, are there ways that other people would express this?" or like "how could you say this in other ways?" You know. I do less of that sort of quick kind of parsing through my... Through the phrase, like, through everything in my mind. I also do less research. Like, if I translate into English, I would say I have Googled like 60% of the words in my translation at some point, and I've looked at... I use resources like religiously, all the time. And I also do this thing where I try to read relevant or vaguely, you know... Things like, right now I'm translating this book into English. I've come quite far. I wouldn't have started by doing this, but now that I've come quite far I am... She has once been translated into English before by a colleague that I really admire. And I'm now reading that translation into English and I'm discovering like "Oh yeah! That word". I haven't read the original Swedish of that book, but I've sort of seen, you know, recognized patterns and I'm seeing, like, words where I realized that the original is probably "that word" that I've been struggling with. And I see how she's... But I also read other texts and I'm like "wait, they've used the word here in English that might fit in this translation I'm doing". And I do that much less into Swedish. Into Swedish it's just more of the "wham bam, thank you ma'am" That's right. Let's go with that. And maybe that's more instinctual. I think it is. It's more instinctual and there's less questioning and less uncertainty. And I think questioning and uncertainty, like, we can't have creativity without those things. You need to be open to more possibilities and more perspectives and more options and alternatives and...

**Interviewer** [00:34:21] I think also, like... This person, this interviewee who said that they are enemies, some other interviewees said, you know, it's seems like it's the opposite of what he said, but it's actually not. Because they said "oh, yeah, without fluency, you can't be creative in a language", but they meant... I think he meant more, like, he understood fluency to mean more like proficiency or this striving for perfection that people feel, like... I mean, there is all these jokes about learning German and how life is not... Like, there's not enough years in your life to learn German. And it's all a joke and, yeah, but I would like... Listen, you don't have to live striving to be perfect in a language. Just live in the language. Just use the language and make mistakes and be happy and go to Germany, go to Berlin, go to whatever, like, have fun and talk to German people, make all the mistakes you need. Like, you know? I'm not... I'm a perfectionist, but I sometimes think in language you need we need to be a bit more... And I think in that way, yes, there are enemies because this striving for a point in which you can safely say that you learned all you could in that language. That's impossible, right?



**T12** [00:35:35] I know all the words! All the words! [laughter].

**Interviewer** [00:35:38] Yeah. Oh yeah. I know everything. I don't need to learn anymore. Yeah. That, that doesn't, that doesn't match with being creative, really.

**T12** [00:35:44] I mean, perfection and creativity are definitely... Like, perfection is the enemy of creativity... I would find, I would put my name to that any day. Yeah. You know... Yeah. What gets interesting here is, like, what do you mean by fluency. Because... Yeah, I guess it's true that you probably... It's helpful. It's hard to be creative in a language if your level of proficiency isn't, like, you know, you need to get to certain point to be able to sort of see the patterns and to be able to use the tools and to expand your own vocabulary and all that. But, you know, when you're talking about the difference between a native English... Like, when I think about my colleagues in SELTA, the native English speakers and me, or between any native English speaking translator and you, like, it becomes... You know, we reached a point where it's like... It doesn't, I think, the level of fluency doesn't necessarily, I don't think it affects the work. I mean, it does, but not in the sense of... Again, it is like, it's become... It should be a question of craft and not roughness. But because, again, like, anyone can correct a typo, but not everyone can be much... [laughter].

**Interviewer** [00:37:21] Yeah. And I know learning German, I had classmates who were... They were like, at ah like seven or eight semester we had to like learn all these verbs that have... It's the same root of the verb but then there's, like, different prepositions that change the meaning of the verb, like *aufstehen*, whatever *stehen*, like, whatever, like, there's like *stehen*... But there's, like, 37 verbs with different prefixes that change the meaning completely. And it's like it's a whole list that we had to, like, not necessarily memorize, but be able to use it. When we had this call, a classmate who was, like, great, I think he study like four hours at home and knew how to... You know? And it was just me and him because at the 8th semester everyone kind of already gave up on German. And I wasn't as good as he was in grammar, and I didn't remember what *aufstehen* meant or what whatever *stehen* and whatever. He knew it. But like, the lecturer tried to... Sometimes she made jokes or made cultural references and he was completely, like, he didn't get anything. And I got it. With my broken German I was able to communicate anyway and to have fun in German and that was good enough for me. But it was like, for him, like, oh yeah, he was great at German, he probably would have passed all the proficiency tests, like, you know? Have a great grade at them. But he wasn't able to actually be creative or be a bit more loose in the language and use it more in that different way. So I feel like this is... I feel very strongly that that these things should be a bit more. Yeah, that they are enemies in a way.

**T12** [00:39:10] Yeah. Just, personally, in terms of two different languages I would say that there is a... For me... But I guess... Yeah. I mean, I would just say that I think I'm more creative in English because of the, yeah, because of the constant questioning and the greater awareness that, just because I am... Just because I feel, like, I would say this in a certain way, doesn't mean that that's the only way of saying it. And I'm very interested in all the different ways of saying it and learning the nuances. Well, in Swedish, because it's the first language I learned, I think I have a more intuitive and instinctual sense of how would this be said. But that is also [inaudible], and I have a harder time then to see the fact that the way I would say something is a very tied to me being, you know, white, blond, born in the 90s, a woman... You know. To me it just sounds right, and I'm like, "well, so that's right". This is a little simplified, but I think I'm less aware of my own position as a Swedish



speaker than I am of my own position as an English speaker and the reasons I would express certain things in certain ways. Because ultimately, I don't want my translations to read as if I wrote this book in English or in Swedish. I want them to read as if the author wrote this book in a language they wouldn't write in.

**Interviewer** [00:40:51] Yeah. And then... I, yeah, that's how... I'm all up for it. I hate when people say, like... It's more, it's way stronger in the English speaking world that the thing you need... Because I grew up with translation all around me, reading translation from an early age, and no one had to shoot me from the fact that, like... Even, like, when you discuss children, translation of children's literature here, in an English speaking environment, they all, like, there are all these rules, they have to adapt like cultural references and, like, whatever. And I'm like: "why?!" I read Harry Potter as a child, and obviously we don't have, you know, I mean...

**T12** [00:41:35] It was Professor Sprout, we didn't change it! [laughter].

**Interviewer** [00:41:35] We, like, I mean, the characters complain about the rain, they went to a castle in Scotland, Hogwarts, and they wear like, well, you know, coats, raincoats, and they talked about... I mean, it's not a Brazilian reality, but I didn't have a problem with that. I don't mind like it. Also, I grew up in a culture that doesn't have a problem with translation being visible. We know that this wasn't written by a Brazilian and this doesn't affect... Yeah. So I think, I think I am a big defender of translation as a genre, like, in literature. I read a lot of translated fiction from all these languages that I don't speak or don't read, like Korean, Japanese, all sorts. And I read it knowing that it's a translation and trying to enjoy the fact that is a translation and the fact that it's a work of fiction, literary fiction. But yeah, I read it as a genre and I find it's okay to do that. I mean, I don't know. I don't know. I'm going on a tangent here, again [laughter].

**T12** [00:42:40] But this is really interesting. I mean, I was just thinking I've been walking around mulling something over in my head. This is like a very basic example where you might smooth something out and, you know, deforeignize it. So, in Sweden, you know, like, in I think most English speaking cultures – I mean, at least in the UK, in the US – when you're sort of hoping for something you would cross your fingers. You know? Like, I'll cross my fingers and it'll happen. In Sweden you hold your thumb.

**Interviewer** [00:43:26] Mm hmm. *Drück die Daumen*. Yeah. Like in German.

**T12** [00:42:40] And it means that thing like, okay, I'm really hoping and it's like a little kind of, like, a little prayer or something, you know? I'm holding my thumb this will happen. While to cross your fingers in Swedish means that you're lying. If you cross your fingers behind your back while you're saying something to someone, like, in a movie you might say, okay, it's like a way to signal that the character lying, but the other person doesn't see the thing.

**Interviewer** [00:43:50] Oh yeah! That's the same in Portuguese! Yeah. I never thought about that. Sorry.

**T12** [00:43:56] No, no. It's just that in this particular book that I'm translating now there's an instance of her saying, like, "I was holding my thumbs that there would be enough of this thing", the harvest had been for that year, you know. And she's at the market and she... Yeah. And in my first draft, I was like, I changed it to "I crossed my fingers" because I was like: yeah, the English speaking reader is not going to understand what hold your thumbs

means. But, then [inaudible] because I think I am moving in a way, like, I'm moving in a direction towards like: yeah, but I think we can we can we can ask a little more of our English speaking reader. Like, they're not stupid, they can deal with things being a little different. And they also need, like... We need to be faced with difference all the time. So, I don't know [if] we should curate the world of this, like, in all other cultures you also cross your fingers just because you do that in English. Like, why?! So I've settled where I'm leaning towards keeping them to say, like, just to face it in such a way that it's obvious what this gesture means. Like, I might change it to "I was holding my thumbs for good luck". You know? Like that's obvious. The reader is going to be like, "what does that mean? Oh, okay, something you do..." Like, I think that's a way, I'm realizing, like... You know. I can introduce these things in a way that makes sense to an English speaking reader. [inaudible] keeps... That doesn't, like, domesticates the text and kind of flatten it out. And so... But that's also a confidence thing. You know? I think you gain in time. Because in the beginning, yeah, like, yeah, I was so concerned about... In the beginning I think I confused correctness, like, the correctness and the craft thing. But there's a difference, you know? Because I read, like... What's the name of the woman who translated the same book you translate? But she translated it...

**Interviewer** [00:46:01] Bernofsky? Susan Bernofsky?

**T12** [00:46:05] Yeah. I feel like when you read... At least when I read *Memoirs of a Polar Bear*, I was like "this doesn't read, this doesn't read like any other book I've read in English". That doesn't mean that I read it on like "this is bad, this is not good English", it's just not like any other book I've read in English. Because it wasn't written in English! And also, you know, there are also other reasons why it doesn't, because it's like, well, the style is different. But I don't think that difference... You know. Difference is not the same thing as wrongness or...

**Interviewer** [00:46:42] Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's not, it's not a... Yeah. I get it. I get it. Well let me just see what I have, oh I have another question on creativity...

**T12** [00:46:56] Can I ask if we can have a quick...? I just need a quick bathroom break. Really.

**Interviewer** [00:46:59] Yeah. Yeah, yeah. Okay, cool.

#### **Interview T12 part 3.mp4**

**Interviewer** [00:00:03] I've been I've been stopping the recording so that I have so that the files that I generate are not too big, so I can have like smaller bits in here. So I'm just... So, you know, like, we are approaching... We're right through to the end of the interview. So the question is: do you also do creative writing outside of your translation practice? And if so, is it in English or in Swedish? And how do you feel that this relates to your translation practice?

**T12** [00:00:40] So, the short answer is that I wouldn't really say that I do. I want to. It's more an issue of, like, writing a PhD and working as a translator and... (laughter).

**Interviewer** [00:00:57] Yeah, I feel that. I feel you.

**T12** [00:01:02] But in my... I came into loving literature, as a child and as a teenager, as someone who wanted to write. And I wanted to write fiction. And I have a strong desire to

write. And I think of my translation practice as a kind of writing practice. And the sort of desire to write also increases when I'm inspired by the work I'm doing. So, at the moment it's particularly strong... I'm, like, I really need to write a speculative novel. But... Well, there isn't time in my day and in my week really. And I guess I'm [inaudible] the time to write, for creative writing. I would say that... But it's still kind of part of my identity and the way I think about my work. And I would also say that I would most definitely be writing in English. There's no doubt about it.

**Interviewer** [00:02:05] Mm hmm. Mm hmm. Interesting. That's the feeling that I have as well. Um, well, the last session is very short. It's about training and professional status. The first question is a cluster, but also it depends on if you're... Like, there's many sub questions, but they relate to your answer to the first part. So, did you have formal translation training? No? OK. That's the simple answer [laughter].

**T12** [00:02:35] The answer is no, because I never took a course that had the term translation in the title. I have never even studied actually translation. I never [inaudible] translation studies, which is... You know, I want to! It just wasn't how I came into it. I actually fell into the translation sideways, just kind of saw a job posting that I was like "oh, well, I could do that, I need some money, so I'll do it." But, um, no, I came into it as a native speaker of another language in English. So I have another language to a higher level. And then I studied literature and... Yeah, I mean, I did my undergraduate degree was a BA in English and related literature, which meant I had a [inaudible] in there, but it was English literature. And then my M.A. was comparative literature. But that was like all my... You know, that could have included translation, but I didn't choose a translation modules because I had other stuff I was interested in and all the books I read were that for that degree, they were in English. Many of them were in translation. But, yeah. And I have taken... Like... I would like to do one of the BCLT or the [inaudible]. I haven't gotten around to it. I was actually planning to do it this 2020, but....

**Interviewer** [00:04:14] I forgot. I missed the deadline, actually. I was going to apply but I forgot. Pandemic and lockdown and everything happening and I just missed the deadline. So I when I saw I was like, "oh no!"

**T12** [00:04:26] I was actually I was sort of on the fence about it because the BCLT, they often have, or they have had, the Swedish strand. And I thought, "that's great, I want to do that". And they didn't have one last year, which is why I didn't do last year. And they didn't have one this year either. And I was like, "well, should I do the [inaudible] one? Now, actually, I'm starting to think I really want to do the [inaudible] one, because I'm realizing that the things I struggle with have nothing to do with my source language. It's all about how I think about the target. So, yeah. I do want to do it and I will do it maybe next year or when you can do it in person, I think.

**Interviewer** [00:05:11] Yeah, I know it would be nice to go to Norwich and Melbourne...

**T12** [00:05:22] Yeah. It seems lovely, but yeah. I'm interested in doing it. And I've done workshops, like CTB workshops with SELTA and stuff like that. But those, obviously, is like, you know, half a day or whatever.

**Interviewer** [00:05:34] Yeah. I wanted to see the connection between formal... Like, I did had an experience, I studied translation in my undergrad and obviously I come from a very different educational system as well. It's... But we had both directions. So I added this because some people did receive training in both directions. But then in the real world,

outside of the training situation in context, there's more demand for one direction than the other, or there's this norm that you shouldn't translate into one direction. So that's why I added this one.

**T12** [00:06:14] I would just add that I looked at, you know... You just sent me a general indication of like these and the topics we'll discuss a little bit. And I looked over this last night, this morning before the chat. And I was thinking about that question of, like, do I have any formal training? And I'm like, "no, no, I don't". And I also thought about the fact that, like, you know, since I'm in UK, I haven't actually taken a degree that says, you know, like... I haven't chosen a degree in translation studies or... Of course, so that makes sense. But I was thinking about the way I learned English in school as well back in Sweden. And I'm like... I don't really think that it involved really any great amount of translation work either. Like, I don't think... There are obviously – and I don't know much about this –, but there are obviously a whole world of, like, pedagogy and different schools of thought on language [inaudible], and I'm sure, you know... Yeah, I just I don't know much about it. But I would say that I think the Swedish way of learning other languages and especially learning English is very... Yeah, there's not a great deal of translation involved in that, is much more like... Maybe that's because generally you get exposed to English to such a great degree. By the time you're, like, 10 and you start remembering what your classes were like, you already had a decent level of English. So, like, the classes, you try to speak English in the classroom, it's not like you... You're always trying to do everything in that language rather than do it from Swedish into English.

**Interviewer** [00:08:11] And rather than translating, like, in your mind.

**T12** [00:08:14] It's more "like let's watch this documentary that was made in English and talk about it in English afterwards. Today's homework is about your vacation in English". It's not... Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:08:30] I asked this also because, I mean, not all established literary translations of in whatever direction have a, like, interest in or want to get in touch with translation theory and translation studies. Of course, you don't have to do a degree in translation to get in touch with these things. But I want to... Because I had this training and I had a lot of heavy theory of translation and I always thought, "well, I'm never going to use this". And in fact, I do think that it's always at the back of my mind whenever I work. I don't think like, "oh, now I'm going to use this theory of translation" or whatever, but I am always... It informed my decision in a way or the way I see myself. And I think, I personally think it's useful because you get to defend yourself better if you know... If you have something to back you up like, oh, yeah, I'm following this author or whatever. According to this person, this is whatever, whatever. So I guess this is also related to the to the translation training, but, yeah, yeah.

**T12** [00:09:43] I have thought about like I would very much like to do a master's in translation studies at some point because I'm just very, very interested and like to study. Like, in terms of my academic work, I'm a theory girl! That's my... If anything, my supervisors I like, "so when are you going to actually do a close reading? Can we see something or are you just going to talk about these theories forever?" [laughter].

**Interviewer** [00:10:14] I love theories also. I don't see a problem that.

**T12** [00:10:18] No, no. I think the way you describe the relationship between theory and practice in a way, like, it kind of being in the back of your head and informing choices and

also... It's like, tools for thinking... This resonates with me. I have an interview... I was moderating a panel for one of our... Actually it was one of our SELTA's CPD events in the spring. We do usually two meetings a year and each meeting has a committee, but then also we do [inaudible] and the one we did the spring was the panel that was, like, on different routes into translating Swedish literature. I was moderating and our three panelists were native English speakers of various different backgrounds and working in the UK or in the US. And one of my colleagues, Rachel Wilson Broils, she is American and based in Minneapolis, I think. We were talking, and she said... So lovely. She's an academic, but also a translator. And she recalls kind of being early in her career and just kind of starting to do some translation work. And she had studies taken. She was going to [inaudible], but also translation studies. And she remembered being kind of a student studying to be a professional translator and going to a panel debate where one of our other speakers, that was much more sort of senior and further into his career, was speaking. This was years ago, and she asked him... [inaudible] and she said, "so now what kind of theories, like, what kind of theories do you use when you translate? Like how would you, like, apply? How to apply theories?" And the people on this panel, one of them our speaker, they kind of laughed and looked at each other, but like, not in an arrogant way, you know, in recognition. And they were like, "well, you know, when you sit down to translate a book it's not quite like you choose a theory and you apply it. It's sort of more you just move along, you know, we put one foot in front of the other and..."

**Interviewer** [00:12:56] And just go, yeah.

**T12** [00:12:59] And, you know, we all laughed when she told this anecdote, because you know what it's like. It doesn't work like that. It's not like you put on a pair of glasses and then you do everything in a particular... In line with a particular theory, that's not how it works. But that doesn't mean that it's not useful or that it doesn't inform your choices and everything. I mean, it's just how she asked that question and how, you know, just... Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:13:35] Yeah, I find it... It kind of builds your approach of translation, like, it will influence your reading of the text as well, I think. So it's also... You know. I think it's like an awareness thing.

**T12** [00:13:48] I think it's like an awareness thing, maybe. Most the theory helps... It opens my eyes to things. Things like, I don't know, a basic example might be, like, queer theory and the notion of queer language. Like, before I read more for queer theory, I don't think I would have thought about the term "mother tongue" as problematic. And that's just the way, like, it's opening your eyes to a different way of looking at the world. That doesn't mean that you see the whole world as tainted in a certain color.

**Interviewer** [00:14:20] Mm hmm. Yeah. And it's kind of like... I am a big believer in the idea that every translation is a reading. So it's your reading, and your reading is influenced and informed by what you've read, whatever it is. So, yeah.

**T12** [00:14:38] Yeah. I agree with you that a translation is the closest form of reading. To me translation is close reading, but, you know, [inaudible].

**Interviewer** [00:14:54] So the last question is very simple, straightforward. I know the answer already, but I have to ask, are you a member of a professional association and which one or which ones?

**T12** [00:15:08] Yeah. So I'm a member of the Swedish English Literary Translators Association in U.K. I am also a member of the Translators Association in the U.K. And, I don't know, I think it still counts, but the Emerging Literary Translators Association as well. That's less formal, it's mostly a forum, so I don't know if it counts as an association or no.

**Interviewer** [00:15:35] Yeah. It's like to see just how you connected to other, like, with peers and...

**T12** [00:15:39] Yeah. So, Emerging Literary Translators Association with the first one I joined. Oh, and then SELTA probably and then the Translators Association? I'm not sure which really was the first. Maybe the Translators Association first.

**Interviewer** [00:15:59] Yeah. But you are in like in touch with your peers and you are part of a community. You feel part of the community.

**T12** [00:16:05] Yeah. And also that is very, very important to me. Sometimes I get a little bogged down in my work and also being a person who has a slightly fragmented and fractured life, geographically speaking. Like, I have family in Sweden, I live in the UK, I visit my partner like... Last year I spent three months here and now I'm spending another three months here in Colorado. I move around and I don't necessarily see people in person, but having a... Always having a dialog with trusted friends and colleagues and fellow practitioners whatever is very important to me. Like, it greatly influences my work and also my enjoyment and creativity and... Like, I regularly spend like an hour or two hours on the phone with a colleague just kind of talking about nothing and everything. Because, I mean, part of me is stressed out like, "oh, Jesus Christ, workday's have so much left to do", but I have to always remind myself that those conversations are so important and they really make a huge difference. So, for example, doing this with you, for me, it's like... You know, you thank me for taking time to talk to you and I'm like, "no, I need this. Like, I'm helping out. But it's also really good for me".

**Interviewer** [00:17:41] Yeah! Oh, that's good, that's good to know. So we reached the end of my prepared questions and we are clocking in at over two hours. So this is... I'm looking forward to have all these gems from this conversation because I think there will be nice things to add to my thesis. But do you have anything else you want to add to close up with?

**T12** [00:18:04] I don't know! We talked a little bit about everything, I guess. Yeah. I don't know if it's anything in particular that you feel like we didn't cover very well. I'm just bringing up something with some general...

**Interviewer** [00:18:21] Oh we covered... We pretty much covered everything, I guess. Um, let me see if there's anything that I missed. Yeah, I think we covered all of my questions. That was a very thorough interview, very good! I'm glad!

**T12** [00:18:38] I really quite... I tend to digress a lot and everyone, like, my partner and family, they're always making fun of me for never getting to the point. And it's just it's like a stunning broken line... That's Swedish. Um... It's a recurring joke in my family that, like, you should never ask T12 about the plot of a movie because you will skip the whole movie and... You know. I am like that as well.

**Interviewer** [00:19:08] I am like that as well, so I relate. But I liked it. There's so much so much to unpack and I think it's going to be a great addition to my thesis.

**T12** [00:19:20] Yeah. Feel free to reach out if there's anything you want to...

**Interviewer** [00:19:26] Yeah, I might, I might reach out when I'm like transcribing this. So if there's a word that I don't get, so...

**T12** [00:19:35] In like two years' time you're like working on polishing, I don't know how [inaudible] you are, but I'm just... You know, especially being a part time student and also taking time out. I'm like, I'm still working on things [inaudible]. If at any point, there's anything that you really... You just feel free to reach out and I...

**Interviewer** [00:20:02] I will. And we can still talk about other things that aren't necessarily related to my thesis or my interview, but we can still keep in touch. And I hope you have a good time there. And I hope everything works out for you, too. And you can be safe anywhere you like to be. I don't know.

**T12** [00:20:22] You too. And I mean, like, I hear you when you worry about, like, "I'm not sure I can take another lockdown". I am going back in November and going back into a house and not being able to... It just... I don't.

**Interviewer** [00:20:35] Yeah, but if you need anything also, if when you're back if you need anything, just give a shout. And thank you again for talking. It was lovely to have you.

**T12** [00:20:49] Well thank you. It was a good chat. So yeah. Good luck with the project and everything and we shall speak soon.

**Interviewer** [00:20:57] Yes. Same. Thank you. Lovely to talk to you. Bye bye. Bye.

## Interview T13

**Interviewer** [00:00:03] So just record the audio.

**T13** [00:00:05] Okay, no problem.

**Interviewer** [00:00:07] So just to explain the email, I was rereading the email I sent you. It's not a fixed time for the interview, like, it depends really on you for how long it will take. For some people I interviewed it took 20 minutes and some people were talking for two hours. So it really depends on how, how much you have to say, how much you digress, how... You know, it's... But it's supposed to feel like an informal, relaxed conversation. Not, like, there's no right or wrong answer, all that kind of stuff. I will, though, just, you know, that I will, like, transcribe these interviews and obviously not going to... You know, I'm going to focus on the specific information or the specific things that you said that come out of the interview, but all of this will be transcribed anyway. Just so you know.

**T13** [00:00:59] Absolutely fine, no problem at all.

**Interviewer** [00:01:02] And one other thing is that, for example, you see that the questions sometimes have some terminology like "mother tongue", "first language", et cetera, et cetera, and I've had interviewees in the past saying "oh, I don't like that term", and that's... Just to say, you're more than welcome to comment on the terminology used in the questions themselves. Like, if you want to say "oh, yeah, I wouldn't say that is a mother tongue" but, you know, you want to use other words, you want to not define yourself. It's all fine. But obviously, since I have a broad... I have very different subjects, very different people being interviewed, I had to, like, use more like common words rather than... You know, that. Anyway...

**T13** [00:01:49] Absolutely, no problem.

**Interviewer** [00:01:50] OK. So, we can, if you are OK, we can get started.

**T13** [00:01:55] Absolutely. Yes.

**Interviewer** [00:01:59] Cool. I separated my questions in, like, by topic. So the first one is a bit more broad, it's on approaches to languages. The first one is: do you consider that you have a mother tongue or first language or more than one? If so, which one or which ones? If not, why not?

**T13** [00:02:25] It's an interesting question. Well, I do have a mother tongue, which is I mean, I'm struggling to separate that from... You know, it's kind of set in stone in my head, your mother tongue is whatever you speak when you were born, the family you were born in. So, say, my, my "first language". I always call it my first language, actually, I don't know why. I call that my first language is Bulgarian, because I was born to Bulgarian parents, grew up in Bulgaria, but I started learning languages from the age of 12. I went to a German language school where for two years we were only allowed to speak German. So it was a full immersion into the language. So all subjects were in German and then... Yes, there we go. Does that answer the question?

**Interviewer** [00:03:08] Yeah. Yeah. So just to ask really, if you... Because some people don't consider they have one, or they have more than one, et cetera. So you would say



that it's, like, even though you use English a lot, your English is very proficient, but it's still... You would say that you have one mother tongue that's more clear in your mind?

**T13** [00:03:30] I think. I don't really quite... I find them at the same level. Does that make sense? Because of the way I use English and the way I use Bulgarian. I often find myself it's easier for me to express myself in English. And I would, I suppose, because I worked so hard twenty something years ago to leave Bulgaria and to leave everything behind, I struggle to nowadays, particularly if it has to be... If I have to express myself in a more creative way, I find it difficult, it... I finish first of all, I think of it in English and then I'm finding myself translating myself. Does that make sense?

**Interviewer** [00:04:13] Yeah, no, that makes total sense. Actually, a lot of the interviewees have a similar situation to yours, so... But yeah. But it's just to know, if you, if you... Because some people I interviewed have like very, very tricky backgrounds with language. They had like very multilingual parents, they grew up all around the world, so that's why I decided to ask, you know... And also it's interesting to see how this very thing that you just said, how you relate to, you know, even you use the word, the term "first language" instead of "mother tongue", and you talked about how... If you were more comfortable or more at ease with English. That's all very interesting to me. Well, the second question is... You kind of answered it a little bit already, but it is: what is your language of education, and is it different from your first language or mother tongue?

**T13** [00:05:05] Well, I can say I have two, because I did a degree in Bulgaria, but then I did a degree here in the U.K. as well. And I went through, because when I first moved to the U.K., Bulgaria was one of those obscure countries that was not in the European Union, so, as far as U.K. education was concerned, I had no education. Nothing were recognized. So, I had to... Even though I did have a degree already, I had to start from more or less the bottom. So I had to do the... In order for me to qualify, to even go to University in the U.K., I had to first do this Access to Higher Education Course, I don't know whether you are familiar with those, but the GCSE crash course, if you know what I mean. One of those things, so... So yes, I have... My primary education was in Bulgaria, primary school and secondary school. But then, because I had to start from sixth form here, in a way, to be able to access the higher education system, then I would say, you know, both. I don't know whether that's actually correct to say.

**Interviewer** [00:06:18] No. Yeah. I was gonna say, also, you mentioned the German as well, so that would also act as one of your... You were educated in that language.

**T13** [00:06:28] Yeah. Yeah. Well, the German, I was in a German language school, which in those days in Bulgaria, they were very, um... A school where you completely getting most into the language you are learning. So, for the first two years, apart from Bulgarian Language, Literature, Russian and Math, everything was in German. All the subjects.

**Interviewer** [00:06:48] Interesting, OK.

**T13** [00:06:51] All by German teachers who didn't have any Bulgarian whatsoever.

**Interviewer** [00:06:56] OK, so you had to... It was really immersive then.

**T13** [00:06:58] Yes. Frightening when you are 12.

**Interviewer** [00:07:03] I can imagine, I can't even... So, this is a kind of an obvious question if you're one of the interviewees, but I have to ask anyway: do you translate into a non-mother tongue or second language? If so, what is your experience of it?

**T13** [00:07:18] Well, I translate into English, so... I prefer to translate, translating into English than into Bulgarian because, as I said to you, it gets me really angry when I translate into Bulgarian. It brings flashbacks, which... I know I have to be very grown up about it and face the realities, you know, accept it as a professional language. But yes, I translate into English, so... I find myself, particularly when I do more creative texts, that I need to, and I've set myself a challenge to say "can I put this from German?" And I translate from German. And if I say "oh, can I put this now into Bulgarian?" And I would struggle. So, in English, it just rolls off the tongue. Not obviously, as you know, every translation takes whatever revision, but that's why is challenging. That's my experience on a personal level.

**Interviewer** [00:08:16] Hm hmm.

**T13** [00:08:16] And then in terms of professionally, I am yet to convince people that I can translate into English, because of the stigma around translating into your mother tongue. Interestingly, I do get jobs to translate from Bulgarian into English, but not necessarily from German to English, and I think "what difference does it make?"

**Interviewer** [00:08:38] Yeah, yeah. I guess it's a different level. I mean, I remember translating from German into English and there was, like, both of them were my second language and it was crazy. But, it's possible, and I don't see how people... Well, it really depends on also the languages involved. If maybe Germans are more... I don't know. I know for a fact that English, especially literary translation, they are much more protective of their... Of this norm of the L1 translator, but in other languages that's not that much of a thing.

**T13** [00:09:12] Mm.

**Interviewer** [00:09:13] I don't know. Are there many people, are there many English native speakers who can translate into Bulgarian at all?

**T13** [00:09:23] No, I haven't met many.

**Interviewer** [00:09:25] Yeah. So that's kind of a... They're not used to the opposite direction, so they just assume that the norm, the natural way is one. That's what I found, at least.

**T13** [00:09:38] I think I will have quite a steep, um... Climb to climb when it comes... Because I would like to specialize, I'm doing my masters at the moment and I'm doing my masters from German to English at the University of Bristol. And I would like to specialize. I would like to become a literary translator. So, it's interesting, but I guess the bridges I'll have to cross for that to happen. However, saying that, I've had feedback on my work from German to English, and nobody has ever mentioned that there's a flaw with the language I have used.

**Interviewer** [00:10:15] So, yeah, well, I have a specific question about that. But you mean that they didn't point out, or they didn't blame your non-nativeness or, how everyone... ?

**T13** [00:10:25] Yeah, yeah. There was... Obviously, when colleagues critique your work, there will be many things that they can pick up. But I've been very careful and observant, you can see "has anybody suggested that this is not a very native way of expressing yourself?".

**Interviewer** [00:10:40] Mm hmm. Mm hmm. So, that's... Yeah, that's good to know. It's a positive experience. Do you... How would you describe your relationship to the languages you can speak, write, translate?

**T13** [00:11:00] I... If we start with Bulgarian, I guess. Bulgarian it's where I have a little bit of a difficult relationship, because I left for reasons political and economical, etc. I was just furious and I still am. Sometimes I read the news and I try not to... in Bulgarian and it just gets my blood boiling. But I can, I can enjoy the language, because I used to be a top literature student when I was back in school in Bulgaria. It was one of my favorite subjects, so I love literature. And I find myself finding refuge. If I, if I get myself angry and I think "oh, no, you need to stop here". So I find myself... I find refuge reading prose that came before communism, if that makes sense, which is, you know, it has nothing to do... Because every language, the way it's been used in a day-to-day basis, it's shaped by social cultural factors as well, and political factors. So I find myself that if I am working with the text which is from before the communist era, so to speak, I am quite happy with it, in that way. But I, I mean, I avoid speaking Bulgarian. So when I move to the U.K., I purposefully made sure that nobody knew I was Bulgarian, because I didn't want to have contact with anybody from Bulgaria.

**Interviewer** [00:12:26] Yeah.

**T13** [00:12:26] [inaudible] [laughter]. And then I spoke to my son only in English. I would not speak to him in Bulgarian at all, and if we were in the shop and he spoke to me in Bulgarian I'd just completely ignore him. Even now, if we, if we are traveling together, he's now 25, but if we're traveling and we just detect Bulgarian - because the languages you speak, you can always detect them around you - so, as soon as we detect we straight away switching to English if, God forbid, we were talking in Bulgarian.

**Interviewer** [00:13:00] Yeah.

**T13** [00:13:00] My relationship with German is... I really enjoyed the language because it's orderly. The culture is orderly. That makes sense?

**Interviewer** [00:13:11] Mm hmm.

**T13** [00:13:11] I like order [laughter]. I like things to make sense [laughter]. I'm a big fan of German grammar. Again, that transfers to the way the world is organized. I also enjoy German literature and... When you have my personality being slightly OCD - I call it slightly but my husband thinks it's not just 'slightly OCD' - that I like that order in the language. But again, it's, you know, it's a beautiful language, and I was completely immersed into it. But for me, if I have to be... German is the language that gave me the passage for a glimpse into another culture during communism. Because I grew up during communism in Bulgaria. I grew up in the time before the wall came down. The wall came down when I was my late teenage. So, a little bit of different worlds opens. I never dreamt of being able to travel, because I came from a non-communist family. So, even getting to the German language school was a massive shock to my parents that I was accepted, because that was a school for Communist Party leaders' children in those days. It was free, but it was very well

known who goes there. For me, German is the language that allowed me to have a glimpse in another culture and to travel. And the same for Russian, because we had to learn Russian compulsory. That was the compulsory second language in Bulgaria when I was growing up. So, again, Russian was very much the language of the Communist Party, so to speak, but then when I... So, I didn't really do a lot of Russian, but then when I went to university I had to choose a Slavic language and the choices were between Czech, Polish, Russian, obviously the languages of the communist bloc, if you know what I mean. So... And I remember looking at a Polish writing and I thought, "no, there's no way I am doing this" [laughter]. I stayed with Russian. So, you know, in those days, Russian meant getting through the degree I wanted to do. But also, I love Russian literature, arguably from the czarist period, if you want... You know, all before the communist period came in. Afterwards, I'm not very interested. So, so that's my relationship with Russian. I think it's a beautiful language in terms of richness, hasn't somehow been **stained** by anything else in my head anyway.

**Interviewer** [00:15:54] So the fact that it was also the language of that, like, political... Of communism as well, like, the Russian as, like, the pen...

**T13** [00:16:07] I think it... No. I think it's interesting because I don't really have those negative feelings about, you know? Maybe the reason I don't is because I genuinely indulged in Russian all of the literature, of Russian literature. We're talking Pushkin and Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. So, really, didn't have much to do with after the great... After the revolution. It was all about... I mean, this... Russia is a very complex culture and very complex characters and there is many different peoples is there. They're not all pure Russian so to speak, if you know what I mean. That's not a term I should be using, but they... You know, you have all these different cultures of Kazakhstan, I mean, all these different republics that used to exist before, and...

**Interviewer** [00:16:58] Yes.

**T13** [00:16:59] And I find myself, at the time I found myself... Because all the books I cherish explore the soul of a human being. And they could be Russian. They could be in Pakistani as far as I'm aware.

**Interviewer** [00:17:12] Mm hmm.

**Interviewer** [00:17:12] Do you know what I mean? They are... So I don't really have a negative relationship with the language in the way I do in Bulgarian, maybe because it didn't really harm me that much.

**Interviewer** [00:17:21] Maybe it's also because in a way, it was a *lingua franca*. And it gave you access to other, as you said, other cultures, other opportunities, right?

**T13** [00:17:31] Yeah. It gave me access to other cultures. And then English is the language I chose to emigrate to. So I love the language, it was, you know, a language to aspire for. And I chose to emigrate into that language and to adopt it, to become an adoptive daughter of that language, if that makes sense.

**Interviewer** [00:17:52] So English is your adopted mother tongue?

**T13** [00:17:56] Yes, mother. Yes, my adoptive mother tongue, definitely. I don't even know if I've got the right to say so.

**Interviewer** [00:18:04] Well, I had an interviewee saying exactly that. So I find it interesting to find patterns, and I've had people say similar to things like "oh, I've felt like I was adopted, welcomed, or like, you know, accepted by this other language"...

**T13** [00:18:19] Yeah, welcomed in... I mean, welcome to the language. If you talk about the language, the country, etc. is where all of a sudden I was free to work hard and to achieve my dreams. That was no... full stop, there was no chicanery, there was no... You know. I mean, of course, English society has corruption as well, it would be naive not to think so. But if you have come out of a noncommunist family in a communist Bulgaria, then then you are really able to appreciate the freedom.

**Interviewer** [00:18:59] Yeah.

**T13** [00:18:59] The ability to talk at home without thinking "oh, can I say that? Is somebody listening to us?" You know, simple things of... When I first came to England, we didn't have mobile phones as such in those days. Well, we did, but we still had stationary phones which were.. [laughter].

**Interviewer** [00:19:15] Regular ones, yeah.

**T13** [00:19:18] Yeah. Just like a normal telephone. But it was the freedom to be able to pick up the phone and talk to people without having to always think what are you saying. Because at home I couldn't do that.

**Interviewer** [00:19:33] This is a question that's, actually, I haven't... It's not part of my script, I just find it interesting. Do you find that being a woman, that's... That... You felt more... You felt freer in this other language or culture as well?

**T13** [00:19:49] Yes. Absolutely. Absolutely because, I know it's a bit of a stereotypical view, but it is... I mean, to this day and age, I don't understand some of... Some of the customs, you know? It's like "why don't I make cakes?" Well, because I don't want to make cakes, but that makes me a bad housewife, you know? I'm judged on it and all these things. I found it liberating to be able to be me.

**Interviewer** [00:20:13] Mm hmm.

**T13** [00:20:14] Yes, I had to work hard, and of course there was... I ended up, when I came to the UK, I ended up in Cirencester - I don't know whether you even know where Cirencester is - but it's about ten miles from Prince Charles's residence in the Cotswolds. So it was a town with hardly any immigrants when I first moved. I was the only person in college who was not English. I was the only foreigner, so there was some more prejudice, I think it was because of lack of understanding. But I was home now there. I know I have just come to France, but if we're talking about the U.K.... And I was able to work my way up to everything I wanted to do because my, my life before deciding to become a translator, I used to work in Hotels, I was a hotel manager then, I worked in a bank, I was a manager in the bank, and... Then I became a teacher, teaching foreign languages. And... So that's my journey with a few turns and roundabouts, but sometimes in life you have to earn money [laughter].

**Interviewer** [00:21:25] Yeah, well, that's more than...

**T13** [00:21:28] You have to have to earn money to feed your family. I mean, we can be idealistic as much as we like, but there we go. That that's the way it is. So yes, English is the language where... Which has allowed me to achieve my dreams.

**Interviewer** [00:21:40] Interesting.

**T13** [00:21:40] And then Spanish, because I have... I speak Spanish as well, to a very good level, you know, perfectly. I'm very comfortable with it. So Spanish for me is the language of passion and sunny holidays. It's hard to think about sunny holidays when I come from Bulgaria [laughter]. So, like, being in the U.K, it's, you know, sunny holiday, sunshine and lots of music... And actually, the language of music, because I love flamenco, and that's the reason I learnt Spanish. So I learnt Spanish because I, you know, I love flamenco and I also love guitar playing, so for me Spanish is the language of music simply because learning Spanish gave me access to artists, music artists, that I would not have been able to appreciate had I not been able to speak the language. So I actually fell in love with Joaquin Sabina. There you have it... It doesn't matter. But I was, I was so... Absolutely love his music and his voice and then I went to learn Spanish so I can understand it all.

**Interviewer** [00:22:58] Sounds like... Sounds like my reason for learning languages in general. Like, I like this a lot, I'm going to go learn it so I can access this more.

**T13** [00:23:07] Yes, so I can access it. Yes. Yes, exactly. Yes. So I can access it. So that that was that's why I learned Spanish.

**Interviewer** [00:23:14] OK, yeah that's interesting. I didn't know that you have so many languages! That is cool. I relate to that. Obviously, I don't have as many.

**T13** [00:23:22] And French! French is the baby. French as the baby.

**Interviewer** [00:23:25] Oh yeah. I was going to ask if you live in France, you know some French as well, right?

**T13** [00:23:30] Yes. I know... I think that's the right way of putting it, actually, Interviewer: 'I know some French' [laughter]. I don't think I have enough French to be dealing with architects, which I'm having to do at the moment and, you know, builders and things like this, but I can speak French [laughter]. I learned, I learned French because when I qualified as a teacher 14 years ago, I was told that with my language combinations of German, Russian and Spanish, I would not be able to find a job. So I had to learn French to a level where I could at least offer the language at a very basic level. So, year 7, year 8, the little people, all these little people. So I went and did A Level French and then an IGCSE to be able to access jobs. I **didn't necessarily** practice it, it was a bizarre thing that it's... I mean, school system in the U.K. it's quite strange in that respect that if you teach German you expected to be able to teach French.

**Interviewer** [00:24:31] Like that's... Yeah, well [laughter].

**T13** [00:24:33] You just, you are just expected to be able to teach French, and I used to go to these interviews and people say "so you deal with the French?" And I say "no, I'll do all the Spanish you want, but I can't really do French", and they would go "no." [laughter].

**Interviewer** [00:24:49] What? It was...? Yeah, well... Crazy!

**T13** [00:24:52] Yeah. Is it that... These are my languages.

**Interviewer** [00:24:55] Cool. I like all your all your metaphors and the "baby", the "adoptive mother", and... Yeah. Well, the last question in this session is something that you already kind of comment on, but you can expand on that. Um, have you ever been able to express something in a language that is not your first language more satisfactorily? How so?

**T13** [00:25:24] Yes. In, in English, as I did mention to you, when it comes to expressing complex concepts. So if I have to talk about abstract concepts and explain them to somebody... I mean, if I have to talk about the chair to the left, to the right of the table, I am perfectly capable of expressing myself in Bulgarian.

**Interviewer** [00:25:53] Mm hmm.

**T13** [00:25:54] But when I when I discuss complex concepts about life... I even actually find myself, both myself and my son, we immediately switch into English. Even if... We very rarely talk in Bulgarian.

**Interviewer** [00:26:10] Mm hmm.

**T13** [00:26:11] But if we did and all of a sudden we have to talk about abstract concepts in terms of relationships, in terms of when it comes to ethical issues, et cetera... I remember discussing with him when he was doing his degree a couple of years ago, writing his dissertation on a very, very hot, sensitive topic about the refugees that were being smuggled through the Bulgarian border. I found myself without words. I could not discuss this in Bulgarian. And it was because I could not express myself. I could not find the right words.

**Interviewer** [00:26:51] Interesting. So yeah, you would say that the answer to that question is definitely a big bold "yes"?

**T13** [00:26:59] Yes! [laughter]. Yeah. Sorry, that's the short answer. I'm sorry, I was...

**Interviewer** [00:27:05] No, don't worry, don't worry [laughter]. I'm just summing up in my mind as well. So, the next trio of questions is specifically on directionality.

**T13** [00:27:18] Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:27:18] So this first one is a cluster question, so bear with me. Um... What is the difference for you between both or more directions of translation? How would you describe your translation process and types of challenge, linguistic or otherwise, when you were translating into a first language/mother tongue and into a foreign language/second language?

**T13** [00:27:45] That was a very long question, Interviewer [laughter]. Don't worry, don't worry [laughter]. It's basically how do I describe how I how [00:27:55] [inaudible]... [0.0s] So what I find myself... Because I do work from translating into Bulgarian, and I find myself having to do much more research for very elementary vocabulary, because the language that is being used in the country, in Bulgaria, at the moment, is not the language I learned in school. And it is my own fault, which I, it's not like it's anybody's fault, I didn't want to know anything about it. Sometimes I do... So what I ended up doing quite often is,

particularly if I have a little bit more complicated project, I need to... I often send my work to my best friend, who still lives in Bulgaria, she's a journalist, for proofreading. Because sometimes the language now has been absolutely flooded, Bulgarian, with English words, which I find very strange. And sometimes I express myself somewhat archaically, if you know what I mean? It's not archaic, but it's... the language has evolved and common practices, particularly marketing, have adopted many foreign words, which Bulgarian language as a language does not have those words, because it's Bulgarian as a language is still somewhat stuck in the dark ages. Does that answer part of your question?

**Interviewer** [00:29:23] Yes. Yes, but do you feel that when you translate into English, for example, you...

**T13** [00:29:31] [00:29:31][inaudible]... [0.0s] Sorry.

**Interviewer** [00:29:31] So I was saying if, when or however you... If it's, like, a professional translation or are you just practicing or whatever it is, if you also feel the same need to send it to a proofreader who is a... Like, as you say, to send it to a friend in Bulgaria, but you also, like, if you translate into English, is that a different process for you?

**T13** [00:29:55] Um... Sometimes. I mean, the honest truth is that my husband, because he loves literature, so all the practice pieces I do, anything I attempt, I always give it to him to proofread. Anyway, it's kind of an established practice. He doesn't... His job is completely different, but he's a very highly educated, well-read man. And sometimes, the times when I actually ask him to help me out it's when I am... When I have an idiomatic expression. Because... And really, to check with him more that my English might not be too archaic. Is that making sense? Because it depends on what type of text you translate, of course, but if I'm translating an idiomatic expression from German and I will come up with a couple of solutions and then I'll go to him and say, "what do you think? Which one do you think works best in here?" But to me, I find this, like, a normal process of translation, if that makes sense. I don't feel necessarily super nervous, whereas when I do Bulgarian, there are certain points when I think "oh God, somebody has to look at that before I send it out."

**Interviewer** [00:31:08] Interesting. Now, that's interesting too. Yeah, well, that's, basically, that's the sum of the question is just a difference between the directions or the translation process. And, as you said, you, like, some of the things into English are just normal translation insecurities, whether, um, whereas in the... into Bulgarian it's more about feeling... Well I find it interesting that you mentioned in both, in both directions you mentioned archaism as a thing, which I find interesting. Because we sometimes forget "oh I'm talking about the direction German to English, Bulgarian to English, etc.", but there are like kind of subdirectionalities, like, "what English?", "what German?", what... Who is, like, "who is the reader?"

**T13** [00:31:57] Yeah. Yeah. Because sometimes the piece you are translating from the German might call for something a little bit... that's not so modern. Not necessarily the hottest teenage talk, do you know what I mean? [laughter].

**Interviewer** [00:32:10] Yeah. Yeah, yeah. And I think...

**T13** [00:32:15] I would hate to have to translate into a modern teenage story, that would horrify me [laughter].



**Interviewer** [00:32:20] Also, if you think about it, if you get, like, that's not about being native or not being proficient or not... Because, if you ask someone, like, to translate something that's, like, teenage talk for, like, it's a very dated translation for, like, 2020, it depends on who the translator is, no matter if they're native or not, if they're first or second language, it's a kind of an almost a different language, a different directionality. That's why I find interesting the... Something that came up with the interviews is these subdirectionalities, like, yeah well, the German with a capital G, English with a capital E, which one are you talking about? There are different, different, different levels of... you know. Different dialects and dialects.

**T13** [00:33:07] They are nuances. Yeah. I guess, you know, sometimes I have to I do go to my son, actually, asking questions, because obviously he's grown up, he's very fluent in the street language. And I would say "could you say this?" And he says "Mother, I did not expect to hear these words from you"... [laughter].

**Interviewer** [00:33:27] Yeah! [laughter].

**T13** [00:33:32] He think... he thinks my use of language is quite posh, that's what he says, you do not compromise slacking with grammar and, you know... I hate text talk and things like this, but it's just because I resisted in terms of a linguistic point of view. It doesn't mean to say that the language doesn't exist full stop, and if I have to translate into it, then I am definitely going to need some help.

**Interviewer** [00:33:52] Yeah, yeah. I think everyone would, you know. I'm all for helping each other in any way, but I think yeah, it's interesting, because I find it interesting when [translators] mention also having a reader, because we don't work in a vacuum, we're not like, we are not an island any way. Whatever direction, whatever language we speak, like, we need to... I mean, I have my readers who always read whatever I do. So I think, yeah. It's more collaborative than... So, do you have preferred genres or text types for L2 translation? And are they different from your... From when you translate into Bulgarian, let's say?

**T13** [00:34:34] Yes, definitely.

**Interviewer** [00:34:36] Which one?

**T13** [00:34:38] I don't, I, for L2, translating into English, I - and I'm talking for example if I start from German or even from Bulgarian, whichever language, into English - I much prefer more creative genres. And I enjoy them better, so I enjoy... I enjoy, for example, news. I just haven't got... I don't have a financial head, so it's going to be very unfair for me to say, I don't like translating finance into English. It's got nothing to do with the English. I wouldn't like translating finance into any language.

**Interviewer** [00:35:13] In general. Yeah.

**T13** [00:35:14] In general. Or engineering. I just don't have an engineering head, you know I, I have to imagine everything, and unless I have a thorough understanding of the concepts in the source text I, I struggle to put them into any language afterwards.

**Interviewer** [00:35:31] Do you... But within literature, do you have, like, do you prefer to translate novels, short stories, poems?

**T13** [00:35:41] I just started poems, at a workshop. I am working with a group of, like, we are sort of amateur poem translators and poets. And I'm really enjoying it. Into English. I'm really, really enjoying it. I like travelogues, but that's my personal choice because of the genres I like to read. I like short stories. I also like political commentary. So I do enjoy reading books about culture, so... The reason I like travelogues - and when I say travelogues I mean more like Dervla Murphy than Bill Bryson, if you know what I mean - a travelogue that tells me about the culture, about the people, and gives me sort of, like, a cut through to see the history, the way these people develop, etc. So I really enjoy that. But in Bulgarian, I don't like doing creative texts, so when I have to, when I take assignments for translating into Bulgarian - because I do and I feel like, you know, you have to be professional, whatever you do - if... The more matter of fact the assignment is, the more likely I am to accept the job or to even bid for the job. So I'm very happy to translate more technical texts into Bulgarian. And, I mean, I've translated silly things, I've translated Beton mixing machine instructions into Bulgarian. From German into Bulgarian. I... I have completed this. I did interpreting for the NHS and public services as well. So, I'm very happy to do something that I can have... Something that I don't need to have an emotional relationship with the text. I think is the best way to put it.

**Interviewer** [00:37:41] Interesting. Do you...

**T13** [00:37:44] ...In fact, with more creative texts, one has an emotional relationship with the text.

**Interviewer** [00:37:48] Yeah, definitely. But I added this one because well, the other question would be if there are any that you'd prefer not to, and you kind of already answered this, but, like... I added this because the many things that you read about L2 translation or however you want to call it, they say "well, it's okay for, like, prose, but poetry is something else, you shouldn't translate into a second language, you shouldn't translate poetry into an L2". I wouldn't agree with that. So, I added this because, also, it also depends on what, you know... "Oh, yeah, I translate into L2, but no literature" or like "I translate into L1, but only..." You know? So that kind of thing I find interesting, the genres and the types of text that you would do, and if they are different in the different directionalities, which you just said it is.

**T13** [00:38:39] It is, because I think with the Bulgarian, in order for me to be professional, I have to be emotionally distanced from the text. And I find it easier to emotionally distance from the text if it's a very much of a "matter of fact text".

**Interviewer** [00:38:52] Yeah.

**T13** [00:38:52] So I have done environmental pamphlets, for example, translated into Bulgarian. But I feel very passionate about the subject, about environmental protection etc. So very passionate about the subject. So yes, I'll do that. But then I have a relationship with the topic rather than the language then, does that make sense?

**Interviewer** [00:39:13] Yeah, no, makes total sense. Yeah, well that was an interesting answer. The next set of questions is on market and gatekeeping. My first one is: has your translation work been criticized, rejected or disregarded because you are not a native speaker of the target language?

**T13** [00:39:36] Well, I've not been given even the chance in some cases.

**Interviewer** [00:39:38] OK.

**T13** [00:39:38] So, so that's where the full stop comes.

**Interviewer** [00:39:42] Yeah.

**T13** [00:39:42] A full stop. There's not much to talk about it, you know, it's a full stop [laughter]. So... But I really have to face up to it, and I need to develop a strategy on how am I going to cope with that when I start approaching publishers, hopefully soon, to pitch for literature.

**Interviewer** [00:40:06] Mm hmm.

**T13** [00:40:07] Do I tell them I'm translating into L2 or do I just send in my copy?

**Interviewer** [00:40:12] I would say.... Don't tell them [laughter], because I've seen...

**T13** [00:40:17] My husband thinks, my husband keeps saying, he's now saying to me "you have to stop apologizing for being Bulgarian".

**Interviewer** [00:40:26] Yeah, that's true. I agree with you. Stop... And I've seen you in the Literary Translators Group, there was this woman who said, I forgot her name, but she said that she pitched the same, or like the same style, from the same author, same style of writing, but two different pieces with two different names. Like, one with her name, which was very Slavic sounding, looking, and one with a fake pseudonym like an English, Anglicized name, and, but to the same publishers. And they wrote back to her very Slavic sounding name, they were like "oh yeah, it's clear in the text that there are many linguistic inadequacies and it's clear that you're not a native speaker of English", and then, in the other one "oh, this is perfect, whatever, this is stylistically whatever". And she was like...! The only difference was, like, my name, really! So... And this was reported by some of my interviewees, like, depending on, if you have a very exotic sounding name, it might be, it might be harder, but yeah. Sorry, you want to...?

**T13** [00:41:38] Funny you should say that, but since I... So, my husband and I have been together for very... For many, many, many, many, many years, but we weren't actually married, and I had my very Slavic name. I mean, you could not mistake it that this was not... [laughter]. It was screaming at you. And it's interesting though... I started getting more jobs when I changed my surname, when we got married and I became Ellis.

**Interviewer** [00:42:07] Yeah. And then you became... Well, yeah.

**T13** [00:42:10] Apparently, all of a sudden, I am trusted to be taken, you know, to be given translations into English, and I just find this a little bit fake.

**Interviewer** [00:42:22] Yeah.

**T13** [00:42:22] But there we go. It's a fact of life, which, you know, I have to admit to, so...

**Interviewer** [00:42:30] And one thing that you commented on at the beginning, and this is a question that you can spend more on because of your own experience in your M.A. and in, anyway, your professional experience: have you ever been overcorrected on a linguistic choice or a specific form that was consciously made by you? And how so?

**T13** [00:42:56] Have I been overcorrected?

**Interviewer** [00:42:59] Like, did someone correct something thinking "oh, yeah, she didn't... she put that because she's not a native speaker", but in fact it was something that you consciously did?

**T13** [00:43:09] Something which happens, interesting, a kind of pinpoint, an exact example, but it was interesting. Last year in some of the comments on my work, where we all do the same translation piece for practice, and it was interesting how on some, some of my language, some of my language choices, I had been picked up to say "oh, this is not appropriate for the style", and then a colleague had used exactly the same phrasing and they weren't picked up on it. And so I did I did question that. I did question it at the time to say "well, how come?"

**Interviewer** [00:43:47] Yeah. And this happens even to, like, I have people who are very aware of all these things and who were aware of my work as well, read my translations, but they weren't... They didn't read in the source language in Portuguese. And they would say "well this sounds weird in English". And I felt that it was a bit of a like a "yeah, you don't know that it sounds weird in English because you're not native speaker". And I was like, "well it sounds weird in Portuguese as well".

**T13** [00:44:14] Well, yes, exactly. Exactly. If sounds strange in the source language, then I see no reason why it shouldn't sound strange in the English language.

**Interviewer** [00:44:23] Yeah. Yeah. Maybe it's...

**T13** [00:44:25] Last week I was doing a piece, a creative piece which I was doing for practice for myself, and I wrote it down to my husband and he said "oh, this sounds odd", and I was like, 'yeah it sounds odd in the German'. [laughter].

**Interviewer** [00:44:36] Exactly!

**T13** [00:44:38] "You just have to come to grips with it". "So give me the exact German words", and I gave him the exact German words. And he said "oh, that's odd". And I was "yes, exactly! It is odd! It is just odd." [laughter].

**Interviewer** [00:44:49] Yeah. And it doesn't make sense... I'm not for flattening the English, like making it, like... I think that, obviously, there's one, you know, you have to also write... You have to write well and be good in whatever language you're using. But like, also, at the same time I'm like, sometimes it's too much that we, like, flatten and make it, like, the English reader cannot be affronted with something weird, which is weird because, like, sometimes, like you just said, in German it was weird and in Portuguese it was weird, and why can't this other reader also find it weird, I guess, anyway?

**T13** [00:45:25] Well, yeah, I think it's like... I've just been, for practice piece, doing something... Are you familiar with the work of Ernst Jünger?

**Interviewer** [00:45:31] Mm hmm. Yeah. Yeah.

**T13** [00:45:34] So I'm in his book on the First World War, his vocabulary, the vocabulary he's using is so raw, and horrific, the imagery which he intended to create, and I was...

While I was doing this and, you know, we had a discussion and somebody said, "oh, but this is very, very frightening." But he meant it to be frightening.

**Interviewer** [00:45:55] Yeah. Yeah. Exactly, yeah.

**T13** [00:45:57] He meant it to be frightening... You know, he's, he's talking about blood 00:46:03 beneath 00:04 fields and meadows and things like this. And it's just like "oh, this is weird". Well, yes, but...

**Interviewer** [00:46:11] But it is weird.

**T13** [00:46:12] It is, but there we go! It's the... I think in a creative piece of art, in a novel, literature, when language is being used creatively, I think there's a little bit less scope to be weird, if you know what I mean, because if that was the intention of the author, then are you starting to write your own piece rather than... Working with the author.

**Interviewer** [00:46:41] Hmm, so this, the "writing your own piece" is a good segue into the next session, which is on creative writing and fluency in translation: how do you view the relationship between fluency and creativity in the languages you use?

**T13** [00:47:06] I think creativity... it's somewhat separated from fluency for me, to be honest, because I think when we talk about fluent use of language, we inevitably abide by norms.

**Interviewer** [00:47:22] Yeah.

**T13** [00:47:22] There is a norm that has to be adopted. Whether you are writing a newspaper article for The Guardian or whether you're writing a newspaper article for The Mirror, for example, you will have to abide by two very different uses of language.

**Interviewer** [00:47:38] Yeah.

**T13** [00:47:38] So I think this is fluency, in a way. Creativity, I feel, has the freedom of, you know, I am... As far as I'm concerned, when it comes to creativity everything goes, because everybody is individual and, therefore, they should have the right to express themselves using a language structure, I should call it, of their own choice, a creative use of adjectives, something that necessarily... People won't necessarily use in their day-to-day use. Because if they use it in their day-to-day use, then it's not going to be creative anymore.

**Interviewer** [00:48:21] Interesting. This brings me to the fact that one of my interviewees said, very strongly, that he thinks that fluency and creativity are enemies, and another said you need fluency to be creative in a language. And I think the problem was with the word "fluency", because some people would take it to mean proficiency or, like, this, the standard of language where we get accepted or, like, you have a certificate that you can speak that language B1, C1, C2, whatever; and being fluent as in, like, knowing enough of the language to create in that language.

**T13** [00:48:57] To create in the language, yes. But I think these are... I think creativity... It will come with, with being able to be deep into the language, and be under the skin of that language. But again, you know, it's not about adhering to standards. It's not about adhering to, as you say, the certificate.

**Interviewer** [00:49:18] Interesting.

**T13** [00:49:18] Yeah, because people that have the fluency certificate, they're not necessarily going to be able to write a beautiful sentence. They might write a correct sentence. But not necessarily beautiful or something that could be accepted as creative.

**Interviewer** [00:49:42] Interesting, I like your answer. Obviously, I should be neutral, but I agree with you [laughter]. So do you also do creative writing outside of your translation practice? And if so, does it involve, like... In which languages and how do you feel this relates, this creative writing relates to your translation practice?

**T13** [00:50:06] No, I don't actually. I don't do creative writing. I do creative thinking [laughter].

**Interviewer** [00:50:10] Yeah [laughter].

**T13** [00:50:10] I'm somehow frightened to put pen to paper, and I think I channel this through when I translate. That makes sense? And I'm more able to do it so in English.

**Interviewer** [00:50:28] So you're more, you feel you're more creative, you can channel that creativity via translation, but not as...?

**T13** [00:50:34] Yes, it's the imagery. I have a weird brain. My brain works with images. So any word, every word brings, you know, a painting in my head, so to speak. So I'm one of those people that just has to imagine everything, and unless I can imagine it, it doesn't stir any emotions in me. So I find myself, when I, when I work with the language I can - unless it's very strictly academic or very strictly technical, etc. - then I'm able to channel this creativity through my translation choices. I can hear it, does that make sense? I can hear, I can hear the rhythm and I can see the the images that are being created in my world.

**Interviewer** [00:51:21] Yeah, I think I have a similar experience. Do you think that... So does it make a difference what languages or, like, this is for all of your languages or do you feel more comfortable with one, like...?

**T13** [00:51:37] I feel more comfortable with... I mean Spanish, Spanish inevitably is just the way, Spanish vocabulary just evokes strong images. It goes with the, I think, with the culture and the passion of the people and all these things and the music. But I think, I struggle with Bulgarian. I can read it... If I read poetry in Bulgarian, particularly the poetry that came from back in the day rather than modern poetry - which I tried at the time, I just don't understand it, I think it's flat, it's not creative, I think it doesn't do anything for me. No, no. It really doesn't. I mean, I went on to the... I don't know whether you know this website, it's called Lyric.de and... Poetry from any country in any language you can possibly imagine. It's beautiful. It's lovely. So, you know, and you can listen to the poets reading, and I looked a few Bulgarian poems on there. And I was just... I was disappointed. And I don't know whether it's my relationship with the language or whether it's just that these ones weren't good anyway [laughter].

**Interviewer** [00:52:46] Yeah, yeah. But I mean, sometimes... Well, sometimes, sometimes I feel similarly when I read contemporary novels in Portuguese. Because I don't feel excited about it, I don't like the style, but it's just weird, because... Because if, if I'm trying to translate into... Do L2 translation, translate Brazilian literature into English, I need to be

in tune with what's happening in the Brazilian literary scene right now. But I kind of don't want to read these books! It's weird. I just, I just got a bit disappointed as well. Like, I feel like they could be so much more colorful and much more... Well, anyway, that's just my... But I kind of relate to that maybe a bit.

**T13** [00:53:29] Yes. Powerful, and the use of language somehow flat. I don't know.

**Interviewer** [00:53:34] Yeah, yeah. Same. I feel the same, yeah.

**T13** [00:53:37] It's what... Since when did we start calling everyday language poetry?

**Interviewer** [00:53:42] [laughter]. Or like, just, just pressing Enter and then that's a poem. That's not... You know? How they do nowadays with some Instagram poetry and stuff like that. They just press an Enter and "wow, now you have a poem". It's just... You just pressed a key on your keyboard. No, it doesn't make it a poem anyway. So the last two questions are pretty straightforward and they're on training and professional stages. So, the first one it's a cluster one, but it really depends on the answer to the first one, right? Because it's basically about your formal translation training: did you have any? And if you did, did it include different translation directions? And how does that translate into your professional practice, if you're, if you have that more formal translation training?

**T13** [00:54:38] So to do... When I first started... Because obviously I could not... I mean, it's not obvious, but I could not, because of the gatekeeping for the English language, I could not start translating into English. I had no professional training on this, apart from the very little training I have had at University when I was doing my modules. Because I did Tourism and Economics degree, but with German and Engl... And Russian.

**Interviewer** [00:55:04] OK.

**T13** [00:55:06] I had some translation modules in there, but it's nothing like the translation training I am receiving now, well, in the process of doing my M.A.

**Interviewer** [00:55:14] OK.

**T13** [00:55:16] And I found... In terms of, you know... One of the reasons I wanted to know how to, actually, how it all works. And that's why I wanted to do the Translation M.A., but, plus, also it's an accreditation for me that hopefully can convince somebody that I can translate into English. If I have been successful into achieving a Master's in Translation from German to English. So I, I think translation training is important, because I think it gives you grounding. It gives you grounding that I'm not necessarily sure that you can acquire unless you have a very clear understanding of what translation is formally/formerly. And then you go and do a lot of reading yourself.

**Interviewer** [00:56:08] Mm hmm.

**T13** [00:56:10] That makes sense?

**Interviewer** [00:56:11] Yeah. It makes sense that I would agree with you. And I think when I was... I studied a very straightforward, like, it was... The name of the degree was "Translation". So it was, like, very obviously training a lot of translators. And I remember thinking at the end of my degree, I was like, "am I going to use all this theory? I don't think I am, because when I'm translating I don't think about all these theories I learned about

translation." But they do inform your practice, and they make you more confident, and I guess by knowing where you stand you're also more able to explain or defend your choices. And I guess it's... I mean, one other thing that I think that, if you like something, why wouldn't you want to learn more about that subject? Like, if you like translation, why wouldn't you want to learn a bit more of what other people said about translation, or how is the history of translation, etc., etc.? So I'm of that opinion that if you if you like something and you have the means and you have the opportunity and, you know, why not study that? Why not just...?

**T13** [00:57:18] Exactly, yes. I think, of course, when it comes down to it... But, as you say, it informs your practice. I mean, I don't think about which page from Mona Baker am I applying to my translation just now when I work. But I understand it. And I think 'oh, actually, this is what it's called. This is how, this is where I can find answers'. Because there are so many questions when you translate, so so many questions which, if you have the right theory, if you have had the grounding theory, then you know where to find the answers.

**Interviewer** [00:57:54] Mm hmm.

**T13** [00:57:54] How do you translate a newspaper article? You don't just pick up the paper, you need to do lots of reading beforehand, don't you? And you need to work out what genre it is and which paper it's going to, and what's the target audience and, you know, all these things.

**Interviewer** [00:58:11] And also the whole foreignisation and domestication thing, that people see it as opposing or, like... It's, it's a spectrum, right? Like say, depends on what... Or you can say "well, I'm all for domesticating". And then you find a word or you make a choice that's actually... It only works if you foreignise it or if you... So it kind of... We need to be less strict about like "I choose this theory, this method and I'm going to use it and I'm going to..." It really depends on the text. It really depends on every individual choice that you make throughout.

**T13** [00:58:48] I agree with you. I think it's very much of a guideline, and then you... I think sometimes I find myself having to make an individual choice on a sentence by sentence or word by word.

**Interviewer** [00:58:59] Yeah. Oh, yeah, yeah. I would say. Yeah. It's not, it's not going to be all like... Obviously has to be coherent, but it's not going to be, like... Yeah I get it. I cannot find the words now but yeah, but I know what you mean. So... [pause]. Are you still there?

**T13** [00:59:24] Yes, yes, yes.

**Interviewer** [00:59:26] OK. So... It was a very weird silence, that's not a normal...

**T13** [00:59:29] Oh sorry [laughter].

**Interviewer** [00:59:30] I thought it was, I thought your audio had gone so.

**T13** [00:59:34] No, no, no, no, no. I'm here. I'm here.



**Interviewer** [00:59:36] So the last question is really straightforward. It's: are you a member of a professional association? And if so, which one?

**T13** [00:59:48] Yes, the Chartered Institute of Linguists, I am a full member of the Chartered Institute of Linguists and I'm a student member of the ITI.

**Interviewer** [00:59:56] OK, yes. I just, I just added that as a curiosity to see how connected, interconnected are my interviewees. And do you have anything else to add? Because I just reached the end of my prepared questions, but if you want to add something or comment or something...

**T13** [01:00:13] Um... Not really. Well, can I just say yes to that? I read something. I'm researching a topic for university and I was looking into, you know, browsing, translator blogs. And I must admit, I did have a somewhat shivers going down my spine when I read a "The 12 Rules for Translators" by Susan Bernofsky.

**Interviewer** [01:00:35] Mm hmm.

**T13** [01:00:37] And one of them is "do not translate into L2. I don't care whether you lived in this country". It's very... It's quite imposing, and I thought "whoa!".

**Interviewer** [01:00:46] I didn't know that she... I actually met her some two years ago because we translated the same novel by Yoko Tawada.

**T13** [01:00:55] Yeah?

**Interviewer** [01:00:57] *Etüden im Schnee*. I translated that into Portuguese and she translated, obviously, into English. And I met her and she was... I mean, she was nice to me, but at the same time, at some point I would say... Because I did my masters on it, right? I did my masters on the translation process. And I would comment on things like: oh, yes, sometimes I had to adapt because in Portuguese this doesn't make sense, or I had to, like, slightly alter a bit. And Tawada was aware of it and didn't have any problems with it, and then she was going to... She was like, kind of... As if she was teaching me German! She was like "oh no, but in German that's also..." And I was like "not really. Is it? I mean, I'm half German and I grew up with German". So, I mean, hmm!

**T13** [01:01:40] But it was interesting. I mean, I did not expect it, you know? I found her blog very helpful, but then she had these rules for translators, which takes you to... Which she has written together with a translator from Arabic. And there was this rule. I read it and I thought "uh!".

**Interviewer** [01:01:58] Yes.

**T13** [01:02:00] What do I do? You know, such well-known names, respected names in literary translation advocates "absolutely no way you translate into your Language 2". I think... I mean, I am not saying everybody Willy-Nilly in translating in their Language 2. I think it's important that... I mean, one would like to see if that people have professional standards and they adhere to code of conduct and ethical responsibilities, et cetera, et cetera. I mean, I would not take a text which I know I'm not capable of because, either my language skills or my subject knowledge skills, I'm lacking.

**Interviewer** [01:02:37] One thing I would ask you, like you do remember how old the post was? Because I was talking to an interviewee and she... She was a Brazilian translator who lives in the U.S., but she's Brazilian. And she was telling me how, in the ALTA Conference, this guy started saying "oh, yeah, you clearly are not native, you have all these mistakes that are made clearly because you are a non-native speaker of English", etc., and then that she said that Susan Bernofsky stepped in and defended her. So I just mean, maybe she changed her...?

**T13** [01:03:10] Could be an old post, could be. Could be an old post, because... I'm going to have a look. I'm actually going online now to have a look.

**Interviewer** [01:03:17] Okay [laughter]. Because I find it interesting, maybe she changed her mind or, or like, depend on individual cases like this.

**T13** [01:03:27] Oops. Tips for beginning translators. No, it's not this one. To... Uh... To to to... I'm going, I'm going to try and find it, but it's... It was only yesterday. Why didn't I leave it? I quite often leave things so I can go back to them.

**Interviewer** [01:03:50] Well, I think that it's interesting that I have a case of... Last year we had at the Warwick University, the Translat... Uh, Summer School. So I saw on the website that, like... There was no strand for, like, Portuguese. But I joined the German workshop and... But before I applied, I looked and there was a little disclaimer saying "oh, please note that we need a native level of English." And then I was like "OK." And I was talking to this other person who also participated in that workshop. I remember asking my supervisor like, "can I apply? Because I'm... I don't know if I'm that." And she's like, "of course! Apply!" And I got a bursary. It was great. But also, like we were talking about how if you didn't think that your English was good enough to do a weeklong translation workshop, summer school, whatever, like hours and hours every day of literary translation, why would you pay five hundred pounds to participate in something if you didn't think that your level of... Your linguistic level was good enough to match? So I mean, we kind of were questioning why the need to add that disclaimer? Who do you think is going to apply to this summer school, just random people who have a very broken English and want to translate into...? I doubt it! So, it's kind of, like, this need to add that disclaimer or this need that you just mentioned Susan, that has to add that to the 12 points, it's just like is that necessarily? Like, who would do an L2 translation if they didn't feel properly prepared for it? I don't know. I just find it a bit unnecessary, really.

**T13** [01:05:36] I'm trying to find it. Sorry, Interviewer. I'm trying. I can't find it now. It was a link from her website that went on to this other person's Arabic translator website where the rules were... I'm just going to type Susan... [typing], [pause]. I'm hoping to be able to take part of the... Yes, I just found it. "21 more rules for translators". So she has written this with somebody called Hala Salah... I'm not sure I'm going to say this correct, unfortunately, I do apologize to the lady, Hala Salah Eldin Hussein. Number seven... Eight... Nine... [pause] "Render into your mother tongue". I'm really reading it straight, I'll send you the link up: "I don't care if you were taught in Oxford University or your mother is a half-Mexican, half-Irish citizen. If you have spent your early years in an Arab country, another English native translator will probably do a better job rendering Arabic "literary" texts into English. Don't do it!"

**Interviewer** [01:07:01] Wow! That's very categoric.

**T13** [01:07:02] It is very strong!

**Interviewer** [01:07:02] Yeah, yeah. I wasn't expecting that from... Yeah.

**T13** [01:07:07] So, I mean, she has... I'll send you a link by email. There's no date on the post.

**Interviewer** [01:07:14] OK. Well, but it is interesting to see these... People might have... Like, yeah, yeah, interesting. Good to know.

**T13** [01:07:27] I really.... Because, because I was doing this module with University called Translation Industry. And so we had questions about what is... we have to answer these theoretical questions of what does your client look like? And what qualities do you need to have to be attractive to your client? I was just looking around and reading so I can put everything very concisely, and I came across this. And I closed it very quickly [laughter].

**Interviewer** [01:08:00] Yeah! [laughter]. That's weird. Ugg! Well, I come across this all the time because I'm, I'm studying this specific topic. So I have I've read so many... Honestly, bullshit things that have no backing, there's no, like... If you go and read theoretical works and, like, studies that actually tested this hypothesis, a lot of them prove exactly the opposite of what, you know, of this norm. So, yeah, well. But none of these people who claim that you shouldn't translate into your non-mother tongue... Do they offer any study, like, any evidence as to why not?

**T13** [01:08:42] Because, let's be honest, I, I would dare many English native speakers or with mother tongue English to write the same piece of work as I do.

**Interviewer** [01:08:54] Yeah.

**T13** [01:08:54] With the same level of fluency, with the same level of grammar correctness if you want to call it, punctuation in the right places...

**Interviewer** [01:09:05] Yeah. I mean my boyfriend is a native English speaker and I doubt that he would be able to transl... Or, like, to write... Like, I was translating a book of poems. I doubt that he would be able to have a more poetic English than mine, you know.

**T13** [01:09:23] Yeah. What I was trying to say is that I think there has to be given the chance to people. Because your name is exotic and you may be somebody who was not born in the U.K. doesn't mean to say that you don't have a deep understanding of the culture and you haven't worked your little socks off to gain that deep understanding of the culture of the country that you can transfer and render if you were to be translating, and to be able to judge what is acceptable and what is not and how far to go with what we talked about, foreignizing, domestication or whatever. And I think we need to have, you know, be given the chance. I think maybe I might do the same thing if I... When I start going for publishers for real life, I will just put a different name.

**Interviewer** [01:10:22] Yeah. Well, just yeah. Just do that. And also... But there are... It's looking up, in the sense that I know that I'm also... I'm sending questionnaires to publishers of, specifically publishers who published translated fiction, literature, and a lot of them have said "oh, I don't care" or "I never noticed" or "I, if..." You know. So it's, maybe it's getting better.

**T13** [01:10:50] Yeah. Maybe.

**Interviewer** [01:10:51] It's a good note to end on.

**T13** [01:10:53] Yes. Yeah. I've just sent you the email with the link to the post.

**Interviewer** [01:11:01] OK, cool. Thank you. I think that that's very useful for me. And um... Well thank you again for, for...

**T13** [01:11:06] You are welcome. I will be sure to read your findings when they come out next year.

**Interviewer** [01:11:11] Sure. And I will I will email you when I'm transcribing the interview, if I have any questions about any like anything you said, I will probably email you and we'll, we'll keep in touch anyway.

**T13** [01:11:23] Yeah.

**Interviewer** [01:11:23] OK, cool.

**T13** [01:11:25] OK, thank you very much. Have a lovely day!

**Interviewer** [01:11:29] Have a lovely day you too!

**T13** [01:11:31] Yes! Good rest of your week.

**Interviewer** [01:11:31] You too. Bye.

**T13** [01:11:33] Thank you. Bye bye, Interviewer.

•

## Interview T14 pt 1

**Interviewer** [00:00:04] So are you OK? Are you. Did I make you wake up too early?

**T14** [00:00:13] No, no, not at all, I had to go out early this morning, so it's OK.

**Interviewer** [00:00:17] I had another interview early this week, because I've been, I had, like, some weeks without any interviews and then now I have two this week. So it's kind of a crazy curve of, you know, some weeks are more busy and some are just very, you know, I'm just waiting for someone to talk to me. Yeah.

**T14** [00:00:38] Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:00:39] Thank you for accepting to be interviewed. And thank you for joining me. I put one hour, but it doesn't... It really depends on you, really, like, on how much you talk. I have had participants talk for two hours and one for, like, 20 minutes, so it really, really depends on you. Yeah. And you'll see that I talk a lot as well, which doesn't help much. But.

**T14** [00:01:04] No, but that's what it's about, we are in the work of favoring communication and furthering, so that's only good.

**Interviewer** [00:01:13] Perfect. Are you ready to start?

**T14** [00:01:16] Yes. Yes. That's good. Thanks.

**Interviewer** [00:01:19] Just a disclaimer. As I said before, feel free to, you know, there's no right answer. This is supposed to be... There are questions that I need to go through, but this is supposed to be more of a chat and not a right or wrong answer kind of thing. And also, considering that my interviewees are, like, from this broad spectrum of, like, different practices, different backgrounds, I just use terminology that you might not agree with or you might not feel is fitting for your case so please feel free to comment on those as well, if you'd like, because that's also interesting for me.

**T14** [00:02:00] OK.

**Interviewer** [00:02:00] I separated my questions into, like, themes.

**T14** [00:02:05] Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:02:05] So the first one is approaches to language, it is a bit more broad. The first one, I guess it's important because not everyone would say yes to this question. Do you consider that you have a mother tongue, first language or more than one? If so, which one or which ones. If not, why not?

**T14** [00:02:29] Ha, that in itself would warrant, you know, a 10-hour conversation between us, I think, it's a very complex situation because the perception of language can only and only ever be very subjective. I remember years ago writing a poem called My Language Family and playing on this double meaning of language family to give a sense of what my language, my subjective language family was. I'd have to say I'm mother-tongue Italian, but it's a bit of an official definition, it's more, it's more that... I guess, well, I guess translation is a mother tongue, really. That's not an extreme, an extreme statement. The

reasons for this are that I grew up in a mixed language environment where the main everyday language was Italian or Italian, which is, in fact, Tuscan, and also one of the languages of Northern Italy, which is considered a dialect and also with the presence of the less preponderant, but nonetheless quite vivid French as well. So at about the age of six, I began approaching and studying English so the formal answer to your question would be I'm mother tongue Italian and my second language is English, but the real answer is of grandmother tongue is alpine, Father-tongue Tuscan, mother tongue, Italian,- English and... [laughs] I have to send you that poem, I think.

**Interviewer** [00:04:55] Yes. It will be interesting. Please do. And I think, as you said, the language Italian with a capital I includes many, like, it contains multitudes and includes many different dialects and specific language contacts and stuff like that.

**T14** [00:05:14] So if you like, more precisely, it's layered over an incredibly complex linguistic reality, as is any national language, I think, because I can't think of any place in the world that has only one language. It has only one official language. It's very different.

**Interviewer** [00:05:33] But even living here in the UK, which thinks of itself, the country thinks of itself as very monolingual. It's really not, like, it never was and is not now either. So yeah. So it's interesting. I love that kind of, I love that topic, that's why I'm researching it.

**T14** [00:05:57] Yeah, and I am really convinced of the necessity of such research because that really allows some breathing space from some really toxic narratives.

**Interviewer** [00:06:07] Yeah, yeah. Yeah. I was having an interview on Tuesday and at the end the person told me of a list she found at a website on Arabian literature, and it was on, like, rules for novice, beginner translators. And one of them was, like, very patronizing and just blatantly wrong, and it said against translating into a second language. And it was very stupid. But this kind of thing is very prevalent. And it's still, like, I feel like I'm fighting, especially in the English-speaking world, because in other languages, that's not that much of an issue.

**T14** [00:06:49] Yeah. And also, I think, despite what we are being encouraged to believe, it is a very recent development.

**Interviewer** [00:06:56] Yeah, yeah.

**T14** [00:06:57] I have been translating for quite a number of years now and it's really long since I started and the concept of what's the definition, if you like, of what a translator was didn't have that sort of strictures attached to it. A translator is somebody who is expected, if they call themselves translator, to be bilingual and to come up with the required texts in any of the language combinations that they, you know, say that they're proficient in, so this is a very new development, and a very, it stems from a very narrow-minded outlook.

**Interviewer** [00:07:42] Yeah. And also it's historical. There's a historical, linguistic amnesia because it's a very, very recent development. Um, I was studying, like, you know, like, reading on multilingualism and translations into Latin in medieval times and early modern times. And at that time, Latin was no one's mother tongue. Yet all these, you know, these intellectuals in Europe were translating into Latin.

**T14** [00:08:16] Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:08:17] So, how was that then, you know?

**T14** [00:08:20] Yes, of course, there is that, and also there's the fact that it just really feeds into what they... Or it is caused by a change in political situations and in what...I'll have to repeat the word narratives, what narratives we are given as a sort of justification for some policies. You know, the fact of being... it's also policies in terms of what happens to the teaching, because, for example, we have an increasing number of literature courses that do not contemplate language teaching, which to me is completely absurd, if you think of translation, say even only 20, 25 years ago, it was simply embedded in the study of languages. There was no such thing as a separate translation qualification, they were very, very, very few, if any, simply because of a very simple fact. The teaching of language was done through translation. So if you have to... Yeah. I mean, I don't know what your experience is when you grew up studying languages, but for me at least, what happened was that you would be given, maybe, suppose there were six hours of language teaching in a week, you would spend maybe one to maximum two hours learning grammar, and then you'd be thrown into the deep end of having to translate. And that is how you learnt the language. So that sense of translation as literally woven into the teaching of a language has been lost in many ways. I think, so that we, you know, it's a bit like teaching architecture without having any modules at all on building materials, that is a ridiculous situation.

**Interviewer** [00:10:58] And it's like like learning... If you don't have the experience, then you run the risk of getting really pragmatic and dogmatic, actually, not pragmatic, with translation theory, for example.

**T14** [00:11:15] Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:11:16] If you have the practice of doing translation in language classroom, you kind of already kind of learn or perceive that every day. Yeah, it's all good and, you know, to have like norms and rules, but it's going to depend on every word or every, like, your choices will depend on many other things. And you will have to, like, exactly be thrown at the deep end and do it to kind of see that some of these things need to be more flexible, need to be more thought, you know, so it's not set in stone. You know, you need to be able to and if you don't have that experience while learning, it's hard to. I don't know, I just... I have this feeling as well. And I think in general, I'm OK with not understanding everything, which is something that people also need to get comfortable with.

**T14** [00:12:11] Yeah. To be humble and recognise it. But I think that's why also a growing number of translators and translation theorists and teachers and scholars like Tim Parks or David Bellos are very dismissive of this dichotomy between the literary translator and the non-literary translator. I don't personally very much accept it either. In that I think there's a risk of cloistering, of hyperspecialisation that in the end doesn't serve a good translation simply because theory is there to also confirm what you find in practice and to give you a sort of steerage, a bit of steerage in the right direction in your practice, but one without the other is completely unthinkable. You know, if I were to be provocative, I'd paraphrase Oscar Wilde and say there are no literary or non-literary translators, only good or bad translators. A good translator is somebody who does precisely what you've said a moment ago, who is completely open to whatever any specific text throws at her and so can produce a good text no matter what that text is, a bad translator is somebody who narrows down their specialization to such a point that it becomes a straitjacket.

**Interviewer** [00:14:07] Yeah. Yeah. And and I would agree, like, and the person I talked to on Tuesday had a similar view. And I think this comes more from people, like, I don't know. I'll ask you more about this in a second, but I'm assuming from your discourse that this is your case. I have experience with technical translation, I've been a freelance translator, all the while interested in literary translation and doing literary studies and stuff. But professionally, to get money I would do.

**T14** [00:14:38] Yes.

**Interviewer** [00:14:39] You know, jobs here and there. I do a lot of freelance translation. And this other person I interviewed on Tuesday had the same experience. And I think in general, from the people I interviewed who are also practicing, you know, linguists, technical translators, that you have to be able to do anything.

**T14** [00:15:00] Yes. That is that is the great freedom of our profession. That is the great fun in it, because let's face it, if you're sat at a desk. Eight hours a day, it hurts everywhere. The money is getting better now, but it was very painfully bad for years, OK, and so why would you do it? You do it because through the lens of language, you are learning all the time. So I think and I say that to younger translators, at the moment I'm teaching a workshop at King's College to do with specific translation projects and to translate or to go into a court of law and have to come out in real time with the right word at the right time with the right tone will help you much more when it comes to doing those tricky literary dialogues in a book that you're translating than having done 10 novels that you hate just because you have to survive as a literary translator. So that is a fictitious sort of distinction that doesn't really apply and it shouldn't be encouraged. My problem, though, and I think the problem that we should call attention to is that such a narrow view of what translators can and cannot do is now informing funding decisions.

**Interviewer** [00:16:43] Yeah.

**T14** [00:16:43] That is a huge problem, because if a publisher is applying even to PEN and, you know, I hope that has changed and I hope I am telling you something that is out of date, I will check on on the website, but until, at least, for the past, I would say, six to seven years, the grants that a publisher can have from English PEN for translation are only given if the translator is mother tongue English, which means either that or the publisher has to make a special declaration and so on. And I don't know, if you know publishers, who are people who really, they... To say that we all live on borrowed time is accurate, but in case of a publisher even more so, you know, for a start, it's an insult to the publisher because he has chosen or she has chosen a translator on the basis of trusting them. Two, it casts doubt on the translators *bona fide* because the translator is saying I am able to translate into English, even though my passport is Portuguese or Brazilian, English or Italian. That's a made statement. And you're implicitly casting doubt on their good faith.

**Interviewer** [00:18:14] Yeah.

**T14** [00:18:15] And three, you're putting an extra pressure on on the publisher's time. Who has to, if he wants to stick with you or if he wants to stick with a particular translator, has to justify his choice, which is, this seems totally, well, it seems sadly in line with, you know, certain immigration policies, or certain...

**Interviewer** [00:18:39] I actually don't see the point of adding the disclaimer at all. If the work is not good enough, then you just reject it. Why add the disclaimer? You know,.



**T14** [00:18:50] It's not even a disclaimer. It's like a burden put on the publisher that when he applies for grants, he has to say, I know this translator is not a mother tongue English speaker, but I think she is excellent, therefore, these are the reasons. And that is in itself is, you're asking a publisher to justify himself for choosing a particular translator. It doesn't make sense. So having said that, you know, I've simply continued to work in either or more directions without ever, you know, I mean, this attitude that sees what you call with a good word, exophonous translators as a bit of a strange or unwelcome one is not yet prevalent, shall we say. It's a worrying development, but it's not yet universal.

**Interviewer** [00:20:13] And so I'm heading to the second question... What would you say is your language of education? Is it different from Italian? I'm asking more about your background. What languages were you taught in education?

**T14** [00:20:34] I was taught English from the age of six, firstly as a fun after school club, and then I said I liked it very much, so I was then... I studied that, you know, as a child, really. That was my first language, the first language teaching I received. Then, of course, in secondary school, in secondary school, what should I say, the first foreign language teaching I received, because obviously you do study your own...you know, if you're Italian, you study Italian grammar, literature at school from the age of five or six. And then, so, I had formal schooling in Italian and English from the age of six and then at the age of 13, secondary school, I had Latin added to that which was great, and then from the age of 14 to 17, I studied, as well as these, I studied French and German.

**Interviewer** [00:21:50] OK, OK. And at university, what's your background?

**T14** [00:21:59] At university. I did... I sort of got into university as a magic [00:22:06] **Dalyan/galleon** [0.0s] full of knowledge that I would go into and take and learn what I needed from. So I moved by three different faculties in Italy and here and in England, doing literature, doing linguistics study. I then left after a relatively short time, because I felt that the full immersion into the realities of language is much more important for me. And then after a few years, I qualified. The real point was that I wanted, and I was much more interested in qualifying and working as a translator. So, I took whatever qualifications were available at that time. So, for instance, Institute of Linguists, diplomas in interpreting and so on. And I sort of continued to weave the daily practice with whatever theoretical readings and study I could add. Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:23:20] Right. Interesting. Thank you. One thing which is a bit obvious since I'm interviewing you.

**T14** [00:23:29] Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:23:30] Wait, there's something flashing here. What happened? No, nothing. Sorry, there was something flashing in my Skype. Do you translate into a non-mother tongue? If so, what is your experience of it?

**T14** [00:23:42] Yes, I translate. In fact, at the moment, since I live here, I translate mostly into English and what is my experience? My experience and my findings on this is that language has a wonderfully and magically pragmatic aspect to it, that if you live in a certain country and speak a certain language, and you at the same time study it, because that is important or at least observed, you know, once your formal course of study in a certain language can be said to be concluded, you would hopefully at least have learned to

observe your own practice in using in, and from delving into that language so the faculty of self-observation in, in and at work.. So, my experience is that the sense of this as a instinctiveness that is there and that you cultivate. I suspect that if I were to, for instance, return to Italy or to live in France, the daily practice, the daily full immersion into another language would make so that, you know, whatever skill with English would become... Would sort of go like a river, more under the surface because, you know. I don't know if you felt that, when I go back to Italy, which is where I was born and where I lived until the age of 20, and I'm often told... it takes me a few days to return to speaking Italian cause I would speak English when I am here, so...

**Interviewer** [00:26:08] Yeah, I know.

**T14** [00:26:09] I'm trying to say that often these categories are challenged by what language actually does, do you find that, too? In your...

**Interviewer** [00:26:22] Yeah, definitely. And I, I have a weird, tricky background myself, because my mom was in a German family born and raised in Brazil, but spoke only German until the age of 10. So to think that she could live up to the age of 10 in Brazil and be formally educated and not need to speak Portuguese. It was a very specific community, right? And my mom then... she was a linguist, a phonologist, a professor. She didn't want to speak German to me. She thought it wasn't fair to my dad because he didn't speak or understand German. So, she thought it was unfair that she would speak a language with me that my dad wouldn't understand. And yeah, so I didn't grow up bilingual, per se. But at the same time, like all of the lullabies and nursery rhymes that my mom would sing to me as a child were in German. So if I had a child today, I would probably speak Portuguese to it, because, without a doubt, my first language is Portuguese. But I wouldn't know about nursery rhymes and songs in Portuguese. So she would sing that to me. And I just didn't understand the meaning. But for me, when I started learning German at the age of 18, properly and together with English, I was like, I mean, I still have problems with grammar, but, I mean, I think that my pronunciation, my accent, is really good because you don't realise that I'm not German until I make a mistake like a grammar mistake.

**T14** [00:28:10] But I don't know. I again, provocatively, I could almost argue that German was your mother tongue, even though you didn't speak it.

**Interviewer** [00:28:22] Yeah, well, it is a river that, as you said, a river that's always there. And in a way, because my grandparents speak German, we would sing in German without really actually understanding what we were singing. But I heard that language all the time. And it's been such a great part of our... And weirdly enough, now that I'm here in England, I feel much more monolingual since I moved to this country because I don't feel like, so, my German is there and it will be revived whenever I, so, when I go to Germany, at the beginning, I'm like, oh my God, my German is too rusty, I don't remember any words. And then after a couple days I just feel way more comfortable when I already... Things start coming back to me. But it's like, ever since I came here, I became much more monolingual. You know, I use my Portuguese, obviously, to speak to my friends, my family. But it is so very weird that other languages such as German kind of, it is always there, but it's not something that I can practice or I can see every day, which is weird for me.

**T14** [00:29:28] Yeah, I think we all have that. We sort of have an array of languages that is there in a sort of, in suspension, sort of. And it's passive, but it's also alert. I mean, I realise, for instance, that the equivalent, you know, the language my grandma spoke that

comes from one of the northern valleys of [00:29:57]Orleans. [0.0s] And I spoke it very much when I was, [00:30:02]yeah, not much long. [0.0s] It was as if it's there. It's like a charger. You've got them, then something happening, something happening in your circumstances, sort of cathalises or sort of sparks it and it comes up again. It's quite uncanny. And that's why I'm very wary of, of that sort of definition, of course, but having said that, one thing to add about what the experience is of translating into another language than your first is that, of course, you... I guess you... you do more... To use a metaphor, if you're a dancer and you do, you have to do or you want to do, because otherwise your body will hurt, four hours of stretches every day. You do a little bit more to be able to find the spontaneity and you sort of go, you check in extra time, for instance. I suppose without getting. I mean, there is a friend of mine who is born and raised Algerian. And so he grew up with French, with Arabic and with the dialect of his hometown, which is Algiers, and then he was about 40 when he went to live in Italy and he learned Italian. Then he started winning prizes for writing in Italian. And so, you know, and and he says, OK, it's a weird relationship because the second language is the language in which you're freer to, you know, it's much more of a... almost what allows you to to be desecrating, to be provocative, but at the same time it is a language in which you behave a little bit in an OCD fashion. You check every, you know, just like a person who is going out and checks three times if they've taken their keys, if they switched off the light, you will say, OK, yes, I've said that, it feels, it sounds really good. But let me just check, because they are aware, you know.

**Interviewer** [00:32:23] Can I just plug a question here, because you just mentioned this and I find it...It's a question that comes much later on, but I think I can plug it here now since we are talking about it. How do you view the relationship between fluency and creativity in the languages that you use? For example, you just mentioned your friend, but in your case.

**T14** [00:32:52] Yeah. Yeah. I think that, again, it's how do you view the relationship between different limbs in your body? You know, it's just, it's like that, there is no... For me there is no... and that is why I'm wary of when people say, oh, you know, it has to read well, it has to. And it doesn't matter how accurate. These things feed into each other. And so the if I stay with the metaphor of dance or of music, it's absolutely the same. If you train your ear every day to hear what form, with good form in the languages, to hear where the best possible version is, then you have a spontaneity to pull out these incredible twists of creativity. And the critics will say 'that's a brilliant improvisation', they don't understand that you can improvise because you... You're like a musician, you do your skills every day and you like it. If you don't do that or, you know, it reminds me of, you know, when people say, they ask a great guitarist and say, how do you get to be so good? And they say, well, you know, I'll wake up, I'll go to my guitar and I'll start doing, you know, riffs, scales. So it's as if you're in a constant dialogue with the language. And that is what allows you to then come up with things that people consider very incredible, but that for you it's just a natural progression.

**Interviewer** [00:34:50] One thing that you mentioned that with this metaphor of the dance and the improvisation... I remember being very good at, I really, really enjoyed improvising in my theatre class, my theatre club at school. And I think I'm good also in improvising with writing and some types of music, some types of instruments that I play. But I remember when I did, years ago, I did tap dancing. We were doing this very classic American tap-dancing style. And then one day we had this other instructor come and we were like, like complete beginners. Right? So we were really, like, we couldn't even do a shuffle properly. Right? This guy came and he was of the modern American school of, you know,

completely improvising and going crazy. And he wanted to do a little like circle and have us each improvise one thing and then the next person would do something else. And I remember I dreaded that. I hated that.

**T14** [00:35:53] Of course.

**Interviewer** [00:35:54] I wasn't, I didn't have the skills to.

**T14** [00:35:56] Exactly. The only reason is that exactly. I'll tell you something more that occurred to me while working on my last book. Oh, I say last as if "oh, it was the last one". [laughs] And again, this was another thing, because I was at the same time, I was creating a file with the first translation, so the French text on one side and the translation on the other. The book I showed you, for Andy, for Smokestack, the one and only Smokestack. And then I found that... And this was wonderful because it was a collaboration, simply because, you know, one thing is to say to yourself, oh, yes, I can translate from French. Another thing is to say, how much do I know about this context? How much do I know about the whole background that these particular poems come out? And if you honestly think I don't really know enough and it's wonderful to work with someone who is fully from that background. So that was the other added bonus and maybe something we can talk about eventually. But after that very first phase was finished of a collaborative translation by which we put down the text and the work of editing and preparing the manuscript, I being the old poem hand in this, I took care of that. And it's something that I would like just to stress for people for, you know, maybe younger translators who are beginning to work. The more you go through the text looking for micro mistakes that you might have done, spelling, typos, the more you look for that complete cleanup of a manuscript, the more the big decisions in translation would leap out. It's as if you were literally immersing yourself in every minutia of the text and there is no part of a text that is non important, we know very well that we... And that is something that we are encouraged to forget, but we do so at our peril, that sentences change hugely depending on where a comma is. With our languages, especially, but not only, obviously, I was about to say with Latin languages, but, no, in every language you place a comma in a certain position, if you know, so the smallest details, the painstaking attention to the smallest detail is what then allows you to be fresh and creative.

**Interviewer** [00:39:13] Yeah.

**T14** [00:39:16] And I love your story about that. The tap-dancing example is, of course, you can't improvise if you don't know the basics of it, I agree, totally.

**Interviewer** [00:39:30] I was learning bass, you know, electric bass, and my dad was like, my dad's a musician, and he was like, you know, you should just sit with your bass in front of a TV, put the concert of like a rock band that you like and just imitate that. And I was like, Dad, but I first need to know where the notes are. How will I just improvise, imitate, like at least in, obviously some people are different, but in my brain that doesn't work. In order to be able to do that, you need to also already have a basis of a.

**T14** [00:40:00] A little bit of help, I guess. Do you still play bass?

**Interviewer** [00:40:04] I do. I do. I play bass, violin and the recorder. But I know with the recorder when I say it sounds like a child, you know, the child thing, but the actual baroque recorder like, you know, the good type, not the...

**T14** [00:40:21] I know. Yeah, yeah. That's great. And do you get a chance to play with people?

**Interviewer** [00:40:28] Not really. I was part of a conservatory from the ages of five to 17.

**T14** [00:40:36] Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:40:37] And the purpose of the conservatory was to train students to go into university and study music professionally. I didn't go. But a lot of other people don't actually end up doing that. But it was a good thing to have.

**T14** [00:40:53] No, it's a great, great life skill. It makes your life vastly more, you know, vastly richer if you know,.

**Interviewer** [00:41:02] Yeah, and I think... but my problem is that this kind of, especially classical music and that kind of stuff, it creates this environment of kind of not doing music for fun, but doing music because you need to learn that piece. You need to get better at that technique. And then I when I finished that, the conservatory, I started doing uni and I just... For example, I had... My violin is a family heirloom, it is great. I love it. But I hadn't played it for 10 years. Because I just thought that I couldn't just play for fun, you know.

**T14** [00:41:44] Yeah. Well but now you know, you can just put the two together and sort of use that, use that training. And it is also a question of unlearning some stuff if you've had a lot of classical training. But if you are a classical musician, you will understand that... I'll tell you another funny story, which I well, I played piano as a child and I remember my teacher was this incredibly funny woman with a mask of Beethoven on the wall and she would blow kisses at him and say, I understand the women who ran away with him abandoning their children.[laughs] So then the time came to prepare for the end of year, sort of, show and she would have you play your pieces in, you know, with everything in the final and ask you totally terrible questions in the meantime to test your concentration. But I remember what she always said, you know, if you look at what great concert pianists do, even a few hours before the concert, they're not rehearsing with the passion, the pathos, the, you know, they're going through sticky passages note by note. Right? Because then when you're on stage, when you will have created that suppleness and you will know the notes. And it's completely the same, in fact, then I am also. Oh, OK. So we can talk about this one. [laughs]

**Interviewer** [00:43:37] Well, we can definitely, like, I think that actually this interview will have to be split into two because both of us, we talk a lot. We might need to schedule a second part for another time. But I can just add two questions.

**T14** [00:43:53] Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:43:53] And then we can maybe, I don't know about your time and your... I don't want to take too much of your time, but I also don't want to, you know, interrupt you too much or make it too, like...

**T14** [00:44:07] We can do another session. Well, we decide when in a minute.

**Interviewer** [00:44:14] But I'm going to I'm going to ask you one question, maybe to finish off this first part. If you're OK with that, how would you describe your relationship to the languages you can speak, write, translate.

**T14** [00:44:32] My relationship. Oh...

**Interviewer** [00:44:35] I imagined you would like that one.

**T14** [00:44:39] But it's totally like we were talking, you know, like we were saying earlier, they are as different, literally, as different members of your family or as different limbs in the body. I think the family analogy or metaphor is more accurate.

**Interviewer** [00:45:04] So how, in your case, how would the family... So Italian is which one, it is the mother?

**T14** [00:45:11] No, I'd say more say more Italian is more a father tongue. English, more mother tongue. But that's a very risky thing to say because I'm illegitimate. I'm an illegitimate child. [laughs]

**Interviewer** [00:45:26] Do you have any adopted mothers or stepmoms?

**T14** [00:45:30] I have, well, two grandmother tongues which are French and the dialect and and certainly a sister tongue. that's Spanish, you know what I mean? [laughs]

**Interviewer** [00:45:45] Yeah.

**T14** [00:45:47] That's a bit...even that is not, it's not fully accurate because, again, I would stress this, I think to shoehorn a reality like language into metaphors of this sort is not what we should do.

**Interviewer** [00:46:15] But I find it interesting in that sense, because I have people telling me the wildest possible, different metaphors for their languages, which is interesting because it, as you say, is not necessarily something we should do to shoehorn these languages into these categories. But at the same time, it is interesting to see how people build these metaphors, like why? Anyway, I always find that interesting. So one thing I was just going to ask you before we close off this section. Have you ever been? I think I would say yes, but I kind of know the answer, but please feel free to add things. Have you ever been able to express something in a language that is not your first more satisfactorily? How so?

**T14** [00:47:11] As a young woman, yes, as I grew older, no, precisely because the work of a translator is to achieve competence in a number of languages.

**Interviewer** [00:47:29] OK, so I'll just, since we're getting quicker now, I'll just add this other question more specific about directionality and what is the difference for you between both or more directions of translation? And, um, how would you describe this process and types of challenge that arise when you are translating into a first language mother tongue, or into a foreign language? Second language?

**T14** [00:48:02] To be honest with you, in practice, I don't feel a difference.

**Interviewer** [00:48:09] OK, interesting.

**T14** [00:48:12] There's also a lot of talk about what different skills are needed to translate, for instance, poetry versus theatre versus this, and in reality and from a strictly linguistic

point of view and from the point of view of your training, the skill is always the same. And part of, a big part of that skill is your adaptability.

**Interviewer** [00:48:37] Yeah, yeah. I actually would say that I was taught both directions, I studied translation as my undergrad degree and we had the same amount of modules for Portuguese into English and English into Portuguese, that was not even an issue. So we would translate either direction. And I would say I remember, like, whilst reading the studies about L2 translation, specifically those that looked at the brain and what areas are activated in the brain with the directionalities. OK, yes, in the brain, they are slightly different processes, but different parts of the brain will come up to the rescue of others, like in the sense that, oh yeah, maybe they won't activate those areas that much in L2, but then the other areas will come, will get activated more and then it will balance it out. And in the end, you know, which I find interesting in the way...

**T14** [00:49:38] To be honest with you, I think this is, you know, for a neurologist that might be very interesting, for a practicing translator and a linguist that sort of thing can be even be damaging, because it's again, you know, it really discounts a most important point. That language is closer to art and magic than it is to utilitarian...

**Interviewer** [00:50:13] Not a science, right?

**T14** [00:50:15] No, language also is a science, but the dichotomy between art and science, again, that is something that we should challenge. The faculty of medicine in its origin, it was the Faculty of the Arts, for example.

**Interviewer** [00:50:34] Yeah.

**T14** [00:50:35] Just to remind us of where we come from.

**Interviewer** [00:50:40] This is a personal opinion of mine. I think the good doctors are the ones that are more human in the sense that I know my, uh, my pediatrician going up growing up he was also a choir conductor, friends with my dad. He was my dad's supervisor in his like so and he was, he still was, he's still alive and well. But he's just the best man ever. Like he is just good at arts and and his. Yeah. And it made him so much more human than other doctors I've met, to be honest. I usually... and the opposite is true as well, like artists that also have a scientific curiosity, I would say.

**T14** [00:51:34] Yeah, I think that if you are earnest and serious in whatever work you do, the more you pursue it and the more you practice it, the more these distinctions have to form.

**Interviewer** [00:51:47] Yeah, that's true. I was going to ask you, you mentioned about specific abilities to translate different types of text, but do you have any preferred genres or text types for L2 or L1 translation like, are they different or is that for both directions the same kind of preference you have? Or does it not make a difference at all. I don't know.

**T14** [00:52:13] No, I'd say that there's no, there's no difference and that the only preference is dictated by taste, of course. You know, I find because, for example, if you say, you know, I translate a lot of poetry, but if a proposal arrived for me to translate poetry that I don't get on with at all, then I won't do it if I can. Of course, everyone everyone has to know, especially with poetry, and I don't do it. So it's a question of taste, but not all... and

at least in my case, I don't find that I translate legal into Italian better than poetry into English. No, there's no, there's no such difference.

**Interviewer** [00:53:06] I was going to ask you, are there any that you prefer not to translate? Like you don't mess with, or you?

**T14** [00:53:18] Well, OK, I, I try, in fact, not I try, but I don't do stuff that I object with, like object to, like, you know, if someone comes to you and says, Oh, please translate, you know, propaganda material for Donald Trump, I'd probably say no.

**Interviewer** [00:53:47] Yeah, yeah. But ideologically you would say

**T14** [00:53:48] something that you object to that you find objectionable and that something that and also in actual fact, any text that seems to me to, to show disregard for form, then I, I tend not to, not to bother because I see it the most important part of our work, I think, is to continue refining our understanding of form. So if a text, you know, it's bad enough to be confronted with all this stuff every day in the media and in bad writing and to have to translate it as well. So I think you're right. I think the, my preclusion, if you like, the only the only criterion that I use to base my decision on whether to accept or not is not it's not genre, but it is form. And also, you know, unless, as I said, you know, there are some ethical, ethical questions that...

**Interviewer** [00:55:14] I was gonna, I was gonna ask you... I added this question because when you read like manuals, encyclopedias, like dictionaries of translation studies, and when you do find any mention of directionality or L2 anything, uh, I've seen many, like, I've seen very often the, like, saying, oh, yeah, it is possible. It is, you know, but poetry is something else. I don't deal with poetry. Poetry shouldn't be translated by... anyway, you know, that kind of thing. So that's why I added the genre, because, you know, it depends on which one you prefer. Some people say, oh yeah, I love I do a lot of technical translation in both directions, but I don't mess with or I don't want to try literature. But then it's not something necessarily related to the direction it was just that, you know, as you said, taste and um. But I found it interesting because why are people so scared of poetry?

**T14** [00:56:14] Well, OK. I think they should be [laughs] I guess poetry again, is is what allows you for the least. Margin. You know, poetry is that... it embodies the human condition in that it is the ultimate paradox, you have to condense what is your endless infinite in a place into a very compressed form so that... Unless you have an instinct for that then maybe. Maybe that's that's a good caution that people have if they say, I don't want to translate poetry for that reason.

**Interviewer** [00:57:09] Hmm hmm hmm, interesting.

**T14** [00:57:18] Well, you know, I think I started I'm just trying to remember what I want. Well, I think my first encounter with translation was precisely that. A translated shred of poetry came through the radio and I put everything down. I rushed out to buy the book and the book had this wonderful introduction by the translator. And I thought, OK, so this thing that I've been doing at school and in my spare time, I could actually do that, you know, when I grow up.

**Interviewer** [00:57:54] Yeah.



**T14** [00:57:56] So that that was and again, my instinct was... my first information, if you like, was of poetry.

**Interviewer** [00:58:06] So yeah, I, I, I love poetry. I didn't always love poetry. It's a new and more recent development in my because the way we were taught poetry was very, like, we would dissect it but not looking for sounds or, or anything. It was just um I remember at school and to get into university we had to, like, what is the meaning of this poem. What? I mean, yeah, it was way too much of an obsession with poetic syllables.

**T14** [00:58:42] Yeah. That can cause disaffection that's for sure. Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:58:45] And later on... I now love, I especially love translating poetry into an L2, love it, which is.

**T14** [00:58:55] What is it you translate? what, what, what do you work on?

**Interviewer** [00:58:58] So I have a poem. A poetry translation in that journal No Man's Land. That's for German Literature. I have one for the last. The 2019 issue. One of them. I have a poem by Yoko Tawada. That, I mean, I love her. I translated her novel into Portuguese. And it was extra interesting for me because it was from German into English which are both kind of.

**T14** [00:59:31] Yeah, exactly, yes, great

**Interviewer** [00:59:35] And I now just finished the first draft of a translation of a collection of feminist poems from, uh, by, uh, by a Brazilian poet and it will be published sometime next year. So, um, and I loved doing that. I just love the musicality. I love when things sound a little bit flat, maybe in Portuguese and then out of sometimes by coincidence, they just they just sound good in English.

**T14** [01:00:03] You do. And also, you know, if you once you understood what the process is that this particular poet, uh, likes to use, then you are free to, you know, you can't always do the same effect line by line, but you can do it two lines down. Yeah, if you've understood the process, but sometimes you can't. For example, you know, one of the poets I work with at some point there's a page of hers and I think, oh, yes, this here, this is a wonderful, you know, a readymade and so on. And it's on and so on. And I was so hyper pleased. And then I had to decide, well, look, no, simply because this poet doesn't do that in her, it isn't part of her writing process. So I'm not at liberty to say that, you know, it's it's too much ego.

**Interviewer** [01:01:01] Yeah, but, well. Sorry did you say something.

**T14** [01:01:02] No, no, carry on.

**Interviewer** [01:01:09] Um, I think now is a good point to end the first part of the interview, because the next sessions are on market and gatekeeping and creative writing and translation and then training and professional status, there are not too many. I think the second part will be shorter than this first part. And I can... we can talk about possible other dates if you. I'm pretty flexible if you...

Commented [CL1]: I am gonna delete the remainder of this convo because it is just babbling

[01:01:40] Yeah. That's yeah. I think this week was very busy. But, you know, coming up the next few days, most days she could I think let me just how about Tuesday the same time I'm going to choose this the seven we were spending.

[01:02:08] Yeah. Yeah. The same time.

[01:02:13] Yeah that could work.

[01:02:16] So ten thirty again.

[01:02:18] Yeah. OK, let's do that. Maybe. How does it work. You send me the new figure.

[01:02:22] Yeah. The same thing.

[01:02:23] Essentially the time should be it should be quicker.

[01:02:28] Yeah. No, no don't worry. I was, it was lovely. I mean I wish we could talk for hours and do likewise.

[01:02:36] No, no I think you do the installation. That should be, it should be even for this old Ludite that I should think.

[01:02:46] But yeah. Well thank you.

[01:02:48] This was a lovely, lovely start to my day and we will try again on Tuesday. But you have now my contact if you need to. Um, anyway, you can message me any time.

[01:03:00] That's good. And likewise, do call and write in the meantime. But if not, we'll meet again on Tuesday.

[01:03:07] OK, perfect. Thank you. See you then. Bye. I.

End of part 1

---

## Interview T14part 2.mp4

**Interviewer** [00:00:04] Thank you. I'm just going to start recording before I forget again. So I hope you had a nice weekend. Sorry for the interruption.

**T14** [00:00:14] Oh, don't worry. All well, thanks. And you, too.

**Interviewer** [00:00:19] Yeah, it was a good weekend. It is getting really cold here.

**T14** [00:00:23] It is getting very, very damp as well in London. Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:00:30] So we don't have many questions to go through. Like the second part is, as I told you, I think last week, last week, the questions now are a bit more pointed, but obviously you feel free to expand on them as much as you want. Should we start the questions? Are you ready? Are you OK?

**T14** [00:00:53] Yes, that's fine.

**Interviewer** [00:00:54] Perfect. So the first question, we had this specific theme, which is market and gatekeeping. So the first question would be, has your translation work ever been criticized, rejected or disregarded because you are not a native speaker of the target language?

**T14** [00:01:14] No, no.

**Interviewer** [00:01:16] OK, good to know. That's a simple answer. And have you ever been overcorrected on a linguistic choice or a specific form that you chose that was consciously made by you?

**T14** [00:01:34] No. I've had very positive experiences with editors.

**Interviewer** [00:01:42] OK, good. And the corrections were just on, you know, normal corrections weren't for any assumption of.

**T14** [00:01:51] No, exactly. No, no. That was just what you would expect. Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:01:57] OK, well that's that's good and refreshing to know because it's not the case for some. So my interviewees.

**T14** [00:02:02] Yeah. No I wouldn't have defined any of the corrections I was given as dictated by prejudice in any way.

**Interviewer** [00:02:15] OK, that's good to know. Thank you for that. So this was quick. The next question is, is, is on creative writing, fluency and translation? I already asked you the first one which was on the relationship between fluency and creativity. And the second question would be, do you also do creative writing outside of your translation practice? And if so, in which languages like in the in your first or second or third? And how do you feel the creative writing if you do it, relates to your translation practice?

**T14** [00:02:51] I don't see a split between the two. I think that... I suppose if I were to use an image, I'd say that writing is a tree and translation is one of its main branches. So I don't really see a split. And I do write and I write mostly in English. And I, I've had the strange experience of how we say that you can translate anything except yourself. But I've had to to self-translate on occasion. And this was the perhaps unusual situation of translating myself from English, which is not my first language, into Italian, which is, so.

**Interviewer** [00:03:42] So how do you feel like... so is this self-translation? You think it's another one of the branches of this tree you mentioned?

**T14** [00:03:52] self-translation, if you could call it like a small, a smaller branch coming from the translation branch if you want to stay with that image. But self-translation is notoriously difficult. I don't know if your experience... Because obviously you don't have that necessary limit or constraint that the translation of any of the text would place on you, but it's nonetheless an interesting exercise.

**Interviewer** [00:04:30] Yeah. And have you have you ever self translated into English?

**T14** [00:04:39] You know, I don't think so, because being here, having lived here and and really begun most of the intensive writing in English, I've, I've not, I don't think I've ever done that. No.

**Interviewer** [00:05:00] OK, so you do more creative writing in English then?

**T14** [00:05:04] Yes. I used to, you know, in my beginnings as a writer of poetry to write in a very deliberately hybrid language, which had to do with that stage of your relationship with the language that is pure play, which is a bit like what children would do. But then most of that was, then, it was kind of a phase that evolved into writing mostly in English

**Interviewer** [00:05:41] and ends, and you have like a do you do a specific and you do more poetry or in your creative writing practice is it different, like, the genres and texts that you use, or you like to write, are they different from the ones that you like to translate or

**T14** [00:06:00] I mostly write poetry or prose poetry and... Yeah, the rest of the work is translation, you know, for instance, I translate novels or nonfiction or theatre which are as well as poetry, of course, which are different genres from the ones that I would instinctively go to when writing.

**Interviewer** [00:06:28] OK, I just saw this these last couple of questions were just additions that I had, because I think it's interesting. The last last couple of questions are on training and professional status. Yeah. So the first one is a cluster one. And of course, it depends on your answer to the first sub-question to see if I need to read the whole question. Did you have any formal translation training?

**T14** [00:07:00] Well, you could say that because of the way language was taught when I was studying as a child and as a young student, translation simply was at the core of language training. There was no difference between learning a language and doing translation simply because translation was considered the core of language learning.

**Interviewer** [00:07:26] And would you say that in that experience you had while learning languages, and translating as part of it, do you, did you have... did you do it in different directions or was it just in one direction or

**T14** [00:07:42] both

**Interviewer** [00:07:44] Mm hhm. Yeah, this is interesting for me, especially because I studied translation, um, my undergrad degree. And in Brazil we would have the same amount of modules and credits for Portuguese into English, English into Portuguese. It was the same amount exactly like whatever's said to us. You know, so this is also a thing that I think this norm comes from people who maybe are not that used to formal translation training of any of whatever type.

**T14** [00:08:19] Yeah. Or language or language training intended as as it has been for thousands of years.

**Interviewer** [00:08:30] Yeah, exactly. Like, I obviously I, I feel like obviously it's it's very rare to have a very specific training like I did in my undergrad. But I think if me and my colleague, my classmates and we are all trained to do as you said in the first part of our interview, to do whatever comes to you, like, you have to find a way and do it. So we just... there was never a question. If we finish that degree and get a diploma, it's assumed that we are able to do both directions. There's not even a question. And they train you for that.

**T14** [00:09:13] Of course. And that is, that is correct. Because it places good responsibility on you to sharpen your language skills in both languages, which is what you wanted in the first place. To write well, in both languages.

**Interviewer** [00:09:31] And I feel like it's just my, kind of, perception from the, like, from what I've heard so far is that especially in English-speaking countries, it's a different kind of... I feel like the people I know who are English speakers, native speakers who learnt a foreign language, they don't feel comfortable translating into a foreign language. And then they assume that then the rule must be true for everyone, but it is not. This is because of the way they learn languages and the way other things as well. Right. For political reasons.

And like, the position of English and all of that, that I find it interesting.

**T14** [00:10:08] yeah. And for reasons of sort of... I almost want to say cultural production and How, how language learning is perceived. I think that's changing a little bit.

**Interviewer** [00:10:28] But yeah I find that if you were... in my case, I got used to the feeling of not knowing everything that's going on, like when you start reading in a foreign language. My mom was a linguist, a professor, and she told me, this time I was trying to read, I don't remember which language it was and she was like, don't just don't just read with a dictionary by your side. This is not going to work. Read it and get immersed in it and you will get from the context and then slowly you start to start to get the language. So get used to the feeling of not understanding every single word in front of you and I think this kind of uneasiness and this kind of throwing you out of your comfort zone is something that I got used to with with languages, any language. And I think sometimes, if you're not used to that, it can be really hard. If your language teaching at school and in your environment doesn't doesn't make you feel comfortable with not knowing everything around you, it might be so, so scary really to translate into an L2 or to, like, you know, write in an L2, which is something that really depends on your context, like in how are you... where you were taught...

**T14** [00:11:48] And so often we hear things like a working knowledge of a language or fluency in a language that is... we always need to take it with a pinch of salt because we don't know if that's... what the teaching has done, if the teaching has been able to instill precisely that. i.e. a loving relationship with the fact that you will never know. You can't ever know a language. It's, it's, it's a different... it's a journey. It doesn't... it doesn't really stop. And that's why at least I do... for me at least that's that's why I like it, the work seems worthwhile.

**Interviewer** [00:12:32] I don't know if you've heard this. There was a poem going around on the Paris Review talking about... it's by Lydia Davis. It says, "*All my life I have been trying to improve my German. At last, my German is better, but now I am old and ill and don't have long to live. Soon I will be dead with better German.*" It's funny and all that. And everyone jokes about, like, life's too short to learn German. But I also think that you don't have to spend your whole life trying to finally learn, like, to be able to say "I have finally learned everything I can in this language". It's not... it never stops, right? And that's that's the fun part, I think.

**T14** [00:13:17] Yes, I agree. And I think you might as well say it's it's that it's a poem, it's something that you could apply to anything. I mean, you're faced with the fact that your life is getting shorter. And you could say, oh, look at all the hours that I've spent trying to learn to roller skate. Doesn't really, you know. it's in that sense, I'm not...

**Interviewer** [00:13:40] I remember reading that and thinking, don't die with good German, live with good enough German. You just, you know, like I'm so.

**T14** [00:13:53] Yeah, I mean, there's that... there's that sense that whatever you do with language, for me at least, is something that you do to your mind, primarily for a **utilitarianistic** [sic: utilitarian] purpose, you know, it's it's it's a head game to want to say I, I learned this and then I'm good at it and it will be, you know, it's it's something that I do to alter my mind, my perception of who I am in the first place. So in that sense, you know, I agree that in the scheme, the grand scheme of things, you know, when you're faced with your... you're meeting your maker, you might think that everything's futile. But I think language of all of all possible endeavours is one of the least futile you might engage in.

**Interviewer** [00:14:50] Yeah, yeah. It opens so many avenues of thought and. Yeah. Well, thank you for that. I was I mean, we just. Yeah. Thank you for that. The last question of my prepared questions is a very simple one: Are you a member of a professional association, if so, which one? Or which ones?

**T14** [00:15:18] Yes, I was a member of the English PEN and the Society of Authors, the Translators Association. I'm not now, I'm a member of Italian Society of Authors and various... the **ALCS (authors' licensing and collections society)**, which sort of protects whatever rights you you might have and sort of updates your list of publications. So, yes, and I think they're useful. I'm a member of the Modern Languages Association. Yes. And I think these things are quite useful, although I don't always agree with some of their policies. For instance, when PEN restricts funding precisely on the basis of the translator having to be mother tongue English. I feel very uncomfortable when the Society of Authors invites Boris Johnson as a journalist to join it. I feel very uncomfortable.

**Interviewer** [00:16:24] Yeah. Yeah, that would.... Yeah, that's... I didn't know about that.

**T14** [00:16:29] Yeah, yeah. There was... at the time of the Tory leadership contest. Yeah.

**Interviewer** [00:16:36] No that's weird... anyway. Yeah. But that is interesting to know because like allegiance or membership to a group or a professional association among L2 translators, it's interesting to note the trends. That's why I added this. If you feel welcome at all or not, if you feel that your, your specific ability or your specific practice is being welcomed in that professional association, which can be. Yeah.

**T14** [00:17:08] Yeah, So I, I did for quite a long while and then I began to, to feel differently.

**Interviewer** [00:17:20] So we reached the end of my questions. And do you have anything you want to add at the end now. Um.

**T14** [00:17:32] No, just that to work with language, to work with translations is, so often, it's always its own reward and you know, so much of the the... So many of the steps that we we made for recognition of our profession were wonderful achievements and long may they continue, especially for translators who are, shall we say, outside the boxed-in categories that so often try and fail to limit us

**Interviewer** [00:18:13] yeah, that's... that's a perfect note to end on. I agree with you completely. So I would be, I will be transcribing these interviews throughout December and

January, most probably. And I will probably get in touch with you if I have any questions, you know, regarding something I didn't understand or, you know, because transcribing can be weird. but if you have any questions in the meantime, if you want to get in touch about anything, please feel free to message me. Email me and.

**T14** [00:18:46] OK. With Pleasure.

**Interviewer** [00:18:48] Thank you again for accepting to be interviewed.

**T14** [00:18:52] No, thank you, and it is great and it's great to know about your work and to continue interacting.

**Interviewer** [00:18:58] Yes. Let's do let's keep in touch and have a nice end of your week and yes, be safe

**T14** [00:19:04] OK. You too. Thanks again. Sure. Thanks. Bye bye.