

Introduction

Anne Malena
University of Alberta

This issue has been a long time coming, mostly because of COVID 19 still disrupting most of our regular activities but also because of other multiple factors affecting academic lives and perhaps related to the pandemic. First intended as a collection of articles selected from revised submissions following the 18th International Translation Day at the University of Alberta on the theme of Queer Translation, which was celebrated virtually on September 30, 2021, and welcomed Brian James Baer from Kent University as our guest of honour and keynote speaker over an entire week of activities. Dr. Baer gave three stimulating and well attended talks, participated in a drama class, and was featured as the principal reader in an evening session of readings by translators across the globe. Since September 30 has now been officially designated in Canada as Indigenous Day, we were grateful for the presence and participation of several Indigenous authors and translators from all over the country on the last day of our celebration. During the evening we heard literary excerpts or short works in Cree, English, French, Mandarin, Ojibwe and Russian. Some of the Indigenous readings were published in the last issue of *TranscUltrAl* (13.1) last year.

The current issue includes only one of the papers that were originally presented at the conference, and it has been revised for this publication. Brian Baer and another presenter surprised us by sending in brand new articles on the theme of Queer Translation, which we are delighted to include in our Translation Studies section. The term *queer* is of great interest to translation and cultural studies and the concept has generated much research over the last decade. Professor Baer has been a leading figure with several books on the subject, the most recent being *Queer Theory and Translation Studies: Language, Politics, Desire* (Routledge, 2021), which traces “the transnational circulation of queer texts.” Questions motivating this research include how queer translates or not across languages and cultures, queering practices and their im/possible translations, the challenges of teaching queer literature in translation, and much more. Marc Démont (2017) distinguishes between three different modes of translating queer literary texts: 1) Misrecognizing translation; 2) Minoritizing translation; 3) Queering translation. The first ignores queer, the second “congeals its drifting nature” and reduces it to denotational equivalences, and the third has a two-fold function: critiquing existing translations and, inspired by Kwame Anthony Appiah, preserving the thickness of queer literary texts. (157). Other scholars have been concerned with power relations in discourse and the critical possibilities offered by translation practices and theories to disrupt hegemonies and heteronormativity in numerous areas, including, but not limited to, cultural studies, decolonization, education, identity formation and performance, Indigenous studies, languages, law, linguistics, politics, sexuality, and sociology. Indeed, as Brian James Baer and Klaus Kaindl state in the introduction to their edited volume on *Queer(ing) Translation* (2017) “a queer approach [to translation] opens up possibilities for both sides to sharpen

their analytical view on identity-formation processes, to unmask essentialist ideas, and to utilize the subversive potential inherent in the fluid concepts of translation and sexuality in order to understand the practices and discourses involved in negotiating identities.” (4). Brian Baer discussed some of these issues during his visit at the University of Alberta, focusing on the general ambivalence toward translation in global sexuality studies and related fields, the genre of gay anthologies, and queer subjectivities and political agency, that he has shown to be radically different across the globe. The opening article in this issue of the journal, co-written with Yingmei Liu, deals with the early 20th century British novel by Radclyffe Hall, *The Well of Loneliness* (1928) and its French and Chinese translations. They argue that, through the provocative use of the terms *queer* and *invert*, Hall’s novel was an early precursor of critiques of identity politics while presenting specific challenges to translators.

The next three articles in this section focus on China, the first by Yangyang Long on the country’s translations and representations an ideologically menacing Other in Daniel Defoe’s and Voltaire’s writings. The second contribution by Zhengtang Ma explores the 1990s’ flowering of queer literature in Taiwan from the perspective of translation as a queer praxis that “fucks with” linguistic, cultural, sexual and gender binaries. The third article by Wangtaolue Guo analyzes the Taiwanese novel *Niezi* [*Sinful Sons*] by Pai Hsien-yung and its translation by Howard Goldblatt as *Crystal Boys*, arguing that translation contributed to the queer iconization of the novel. The next section includes one article by Debbie Tsoi that is outside of the theme but also about China and analyzes how culture-specific items in Hollywood film titles are rendered in translation.

In the Carnet de route section you will find two essays about translation, the first by Bentolhoda Nakhei about the English translation of a 12th century Persian poem and the second by Jacqueline Shea about the English translation of an Andalusian folktale by the interesting female author Cecilia Francisca Josefa Böhl de Faber y Ruiz de Larrea who assumed a male identity under the pen name Fernán Caballero. The issue concludes with two book reviews, one by Maria Christina Seccia about the 2019 monograph by Michela Baldo, entitled *Italian-Canadian Narratives of Return: Analysing Cultural Translation in Diasporic Writing* and the other by yours truly about *Translation and History*, a textbook recently published by the well-known translation scholar, Theo Hermans (2022).

Before closing I wish to thank all the reviewers and contributing authors for the quality of their work, their patience and their diligence in ensuring the continuation of a successful and high standard scholarly journal.

REFERENCES

Baer, Brian James. *Queer Theory and Translation Studies: Language, Politics, Desire*. Routledge, 2021.

——— and Klaus Kaindl, editors. *Queering Translation, Translating the Queer: Theory, Practice, Activism*. Routledge, 2018.

Démont, Marc. “On Three Modes of Translating Queer Literary Texts.” *Queering Translation, Translating the Queer: Theory, Practice, Activism*, edited by Brian James Baer and Klaus Kaindl, Routledge, 2018, pp. 157-171.