Tamám: trace, reinterpretation and the periphery of poetic translation

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Abstract

This thesis consists of two parts: my main creative project, *Tamám*; four translations of the Chinese T'ang poet Yu Xuanji; and an accompanying critical commentary. *Tamám* is a present-day reimagining of *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* consisting of one-hundred-and-one quatrains. It frames translation as a creative process informed by philosopher Jacques Derrida's *la trace* (trace): that source texts and other sources defer their meaning to one another, simultaneously absent and present in the genesis of new writing. These sources tangentially influence and "mark" the content and meaning of a new text. The main translational elements of *Tamám* are the Persian source text of *The Rubáiyát*; Edward FitzGerald's 19th century translation of *The Rubáiyát*; the case of the Somerton Man; the sociopolitical climate of 21st century south-east England; translation theory and deconstruction theory. The critical element of this thesis is split into three chapters, led by images from *Tamám* that focus on different aspects of trace in relation to creative writing and translation. Case studies include poets not traditionally considered translators (Ed Dorn and Tom Raworth), and contemporary poet-translators (Tim Atkins and Anne Carson) to suggest that trace is a peripheral element of writing processes. The commentary for *Tamám* follows these analyses and foregrounds the issues I encountered in the writing process, solutions to them, and justification of my creative response to aspects of trace and translation discussed in the theory. This is held against translations of Chinese poetry to demonstrate how the strict form, regulated verse, provides new creativity with absent-present trace of the form in its native language. In doing so, I argue that for the poet's practice translation is an act of creative (re)interpretation that informs and supplements the composition of new poetry by way of trace.

Contents

4. The "shaded & coded returning image"

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I want to pay tribute to the late Mark Fisher, Tom Raworth, and most recently, John James. My admiration of their work has been integral to the formulation of this thesis, and all sadly passed while I was writing it.

Finally, and most of all, I would like to acknowledge my parents for their lasting support, patience, love and kindness through what has been at times a very difficult but equally rewarding period.

Notes

This thesis is written using the MLA style. Internal, in-text page references in the

critical commentary of thesis are listed in parentheses with "p." or "pp." before the

page range, e.g.: (p. 45) or (pp. 34-7). Citations of external texts follow the standard

parenthetical MLA Works Cited referencing system.

The following texts are cited using the following abbreviated titles listed in brackets:

Jacques Derrida

 The Ear of the Other. (*Ear of the Other*).

Edward FitzGerald

 The Letters of Edward FitzGerald: Volume II 1851-1866. (*Letters: Volume II*).

 The Letters of Edward FitzGerald: Volume III 1867-1876. (*Letters: Volume III*).

Daniel Karlin

 The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám. (*The Rubáiyát*).

Ezra Pound

 "Letters to W. H. D. Rouse, from *The Letters of Ezra Pound 1907-1941*".

 ("Letters to Rouse").

 The Translations of Ezra Pound. (*The Translations*).

Jack Spicer

 My Vocabulary Did This To Me. (*My Vocabulary*).

 The House that Jack Built. (*House that Jack Built*).

Lawrence Venuti

 The Translator's Invisibility. (*Translator's Invisibility*).

Tamám

SIMON EVERETT

They are going on a journey
Those deep blue creatures
Passing us as if they were sunshine
Look
Those fins, those closed eyes
Admiring each last drop of the ocean.

—Jack Spicer, 'Radar'

On December 1st 1948, the body of an unidentifiable man was found on Somerton beach, Adelaide, South Australia. A shred of paper was found in his pocket with the words "Tamám Shud" printed on it.

This had been torn from a copy of Edward FitzGerald's first edition translation of *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*. The copy of *The Rubáiyát* was eventually found with a letter-based code written in it. The code has never been deciphered and the man's identity remains a mystery.

What follows is an attempt to draw together and present these threads, so that poetry and translation might offer a space for their interpretation.

MRGOABABD

I

Tamám Shud
bowl of eye in blue
a coming noose of light
& ember of a Kensitas

II

today like Shelley's last July
grasping for the reel's end
fast tight tape through my fingers
I wanted to get back to you

IIII

with the straight facts all of them
at Shingle Street
above the swash
I was a beachwalker then

IV

& Somerton's on my mind
by the esplanade by the sea wall
twilit left hand catching sky
wherever heart & heat collide

V

your poem tucked
bleeding veinfuls of chroma
sea-changed rich & strange
clean shaven bitten rough

VI

through Europe, Oceania
you'd radio home there's no receiver
all at sea I'm lost there & I'm sorry
static plays urgently to itself

VII

I read the body as a translation of parts
& Trelawny picks over the bones
it's in the air the sand & stormy last nights
half-dreamt futures & final breaths

VIII

while at Viareggio
all the mist's burning off
like white smoke drawing a blank
vellum pulled to a squeak

IX

First day of Summer
the report's being written
on the back of every other report
in the back of a Hillman Minx

X

beyond Jetty Road beyond
the world alive
the new & Necessary Fiction
I'm calling it in

XI

while a dull empire tips
its foundations in the sand
the UKIP order bleats
& ISIS shades the end of East Street

XII

here in Paradise
in this wild
we have a dead man
we can't be sure

XIII

who's one of us or not
cash in hand, tax dodge
our guns sold off & firing hot
in the distance oilfields chunder

XIV

note it on a pad & wait
bear witness to the morning
bow a neck & let's
go nipping at the heels of what's 'Holy'

XV

give us back our spectres of Hope
Heads & Hearts each lost to the foam
our shorelines caught in liminal tangos
& waves falling over their own anatomies

XVI

Dead men do not lie
or tell others dead right
the deep nights bleaching poets clean
no ending no credits spliced

XVII

from Bawdsey out
I rake the Orford foreland over
Cobra Mist a skeleton listening
deaf to noise across the sound

XVIII

a body is an aftershock a manifestation
atomic in proportion
& I think of all the unspent half-lives
& silence aching the Victoria Desert

XIX

hours of hellos & heave-ho
hours spent sinking drinks
& of saying yes yes &/or no
my time signature's measured in sand

XX

honouring sieved bones
& catalogues of terrible times
your last moments were they exquisite
shelve the file it reads 'remains'

XXI

& at the edge of Annihilation's Waste
'remnants' thumped in ribbon ink
a costume pressed in & boxed up
you (n)ever existed, Exit Stage Left

XXII

when the signal terminated
did it blink to standby
draw to a dot
the wash bag's neck?

XXIII

did the power supply shut
off totally off
no notice of closure
cord ripped from the wall?

XXIV

somewhere at sea
an absolute coordinate of no return
back beamed over a scope's oscillation
& no body exactly knows

Stage Right is the binding in the heat
the bag to take it away in
& the hand to write 'deceased'

I think of Burke & King
in the desert grassland
discussing their mortality, so
casually, as if it were possible
to overcome by talking
for hours to a dying man

this is what happened
I'm sure
before one left the other unburied
stayed for two further days
then went

xxv

all the kids with shells cupped to ears
think they got a kind of signal
repeating nothing like the air's noise
turned back to air

xxvi

In this promised land
stainless avenues of procedure
broken dreams divided lovers
the cursed & clinically patient

xxvii

a callback's a prize that slipped by
dialling up Origin via Source
only then a stock ticker reply
synthetic news reports

xxviii

& in the end of it all Rose Cottage
Mallarmé watching over Anatole
cold ivory echoes ash & feldspar
Cage conducting at 0

xxix

I think it is second degree
life halved hope expectation
a thing shaking off its plastic cover
a Caliph's mercy at the close of a divan

xxx

for what it's worth
Rafi was right
it is nothing for a man to die
bargain encore & rise

xxxi

but he came onto the scene
just when the line cut out
& the hanging receiver went past
even the dial tone

```
Pervaneh
BEING suggests the removal of covers
frustrates language
the body vacated
its tongue
doesn't know what to do


- - - -


or rather
I don't know what to do
with you
now you are blown
asunder
borne on that wave of air
to never never
```

salted white
to a crust

but what I would do if given the chance
if not to do with love or regret

but what I would do if given the chance
if not to do with love or regret

MLIAOI

MLIAOI

XXXII

In this image now & again
prolonged surgical corridors
voices through a pop filter
deep ferrochrome erasure

XXXIII

g over
riting over
as writing over

XXXIV

as it goes the lost future
as it said was writing over
itself a salt lake empty promise
deleted a great white ocean

MTBIMPANETP

XXXV

We cannot leave it here to lie
questions breed questions
aureate sand inconsolate thoughts
lost left you unturned

*my whole split this
memory trauma
its coils roped to the stake
the coal lump stuck*

XXXVI

the problem is there? there
heart hands hard to carry on
vital end stops vacuums air to air
a pathologist looping back around

XXXVII

I figured through an incised window
poems flush to a fit
precision moulded almost perfect
unpackable & Divine

XXXVIII

from my worm's eye view
most mornings at this desk to type
so difficult at times to hold
the evidence still to gather

XXXIX

to Eliot the return was key
to rearrange the furniture twice
to think yes I like that shade of green
to sit get up go out come right

XL

re read over break fast
as Lao Tzu says Let It All Go
& scraping together bits of Dao
I spy cow slip blow

XLI

Trace insists itself heard hiding
instead I'm talking it out
the world caught riding its coat tails
image doubled over a leading edge

the vicar who hears your movements
so early before even
your vision of God takes tea
finds comfort in that
no end of comfort
when there is not a sound nothing
in that gap between
the official waking

& the having woken
to read digest think lightly
to choose how to start to speak
before there is even mystery
all plausible options exist

XLII

who is it who's laid named cast
a geography running through us *a priori*
& at this latitude the root's dug out
in dead-ends dirt trays scrutiny

XLIII

this morning
overwrites one day ago
half light halves
a fog screen goes up

XLIV

& the ghost horizon of the Colne
leads an inquisition
into what's 'real'…
what I find is that yes

XLV

He who Giveth
must also Take Away
a tape's dual reels winding
pinch wheeled but I'm still here

XLVI

behind the sterile waiting room
an 8-Track coils elevator music
falls
a near indefinite wait

XLVII

drip-fed
permineralised
the honey combed Human mould
injected with formaldehyde

XLVIII

&when the i spies come for you
abandon your Hope & scatter
bunkers dust & black screens line
Kelvedon Hatch, Woomera

XLIX

fictions you tend to thumb through
skewed through Cambridge Analytica & you
doing identity theft of a kind week nights
like Pierre Menard like Borges like Pessoa

up there in guest room space
do you even live
or is it the continuing
in spite of not because of
or that the storm-eye's pause hides
the making of noise of tea
to find you face down in blankets
to find you dead in those blankets

& even then
do you live
in the casual sense clothed
of the self unbuttoned wrapped in
sheets
not even one last
taking of drinks of days
of sounds

^L

in the name of justice the poem
leads at sea my buoy my point anchor
Jestyn Boxall Prestige T Keane
guy lines cut clean Occam's razor

^{LI}

life & leads slip I follow not even
circle 'truth' in dug outs market places
Wikileaks & off peak traffic
hits me wasting time lines move

^{LII}

Fedosimov leers
phantoms dance
propped up laying it out too late
this bedside lamp beside my Self

poet the past days of my life
before the ratchet grip mind stucks
~~turned up~~ *Starts at points working out*
the method caught

As things fall apart into themselves as
an arrangement of dust is the most
vital evidence of all, as when squashed
or drawn in cannot hide Legibility

This cannot escape scrutin—
56mm of rain, the sta—no—
A morning spent folding sh—
The close attention of the—

The conclusion that it is fr—
So, so fragile
To be sentient in this cru—
It is dangerous to make ass—

you hope for a revelation
the chiller
half expectation of the living
ing off the thin cover of plas—

was the ride to Purgatory rough
were the forensics good enough
did the bleed through stains
bleed through or
did the lignin fox
I ask of You

straddling your two-way grace
in the mercy period
of that final Realm of Language
am I allowed to go over the
end or has this half-way
house levelled the earth
& nailed the casket shut
for good?

KUZA-NÁMA

LIII

Nobody told you it would work
this way a green boat
fishing in your mind blue water
& you made up laid out

LIV

Sunday best blown
gull at Glenelg pier a mirage
a shell cups oncoming wind
meets a language dragged

LV

two men bent over drinking
a body wide legged assessing
shaded & coded returning image
years years of unpicked poets

LVI

dare to cast a desperate rod
scramble for unanswerable need
then the tape slackens reels
nothing perhaps not even a black fish

LVII

Meaning halates like spilt cream opacity
in somehow early twilight now again
still my lexicon's a stubborn ass yanked along
& 'God' flicks grooves from tongues

LVIII

the Word a vessel cup a shuttled baton
the back of the throat the mind's song
spent runners falling close to the wire
some days stuck I don't speak on

LIX

all along the Word divided
manifests Click Yes 4 Brexit
data falls ash wipes
quickly scorched earth tactics

LX

Colchester snatch a letter broken
off the new new moon of Gloucester goes
bright & black behind turnstones
cold-calling staccato

LXI

& when awake & hunting facts
& not at home I'm shipped out late
constantly feedback circles from sources
I face you in my thoughts my sleep

LXII

like a memory of here bright sun
a poem of yellowing pages plastics
pot plants a higher sense
roots extend

LXIII

for in this the losing land of lost content
shady & plucked notions of 'fidelity'
stalks a memory a poem beats against
sulphur soured & poorly churned 'reality'

LXIV

return alcoholic to mouths of poets
whose songs are snippets drunk to nothing
a heady texture distracts a page
you try to fail to rephrase

LXV

well. I can't see the stars that sit
behind the sun. I have also repeated
many lines. I have aped poets upon poets.
I have also struggled to lift the wine

MLIABO AIAQ

MLIABOAIAQ

LXVI

First day of winter
window open
refresh the browser
hit 'No'. Fret. Sit

LXVII

pulled to fray
the threaded rope
the fear of Zika
the Italian quake

LXVIII

in extremebold   **BE VIGILANT**
online catfish stream trouble
Jestyn marks FitzGerald in
hooked lines sink her

LXIX

how does this concern you
imagining a kind of Samarkand
refugees on beaches row
run & duck war zones

LXX

draw dawn in the golden ratio
Euclid in a perfect sand mirror
the road's an ocean unsponsored free
'home' is a concept we click it go on

LXXI

while on French beaches the prohibited few
lashed by Hebdo salt & sun
unwrap under tight surveillance
atrocities committed two-ply to one

LXXII

Viareggio couches a steel sky
modroc pastes indifference
mediocre 'dystopia' workable storms
a manageable 'poetic' a smoldering heart

nobody exactly knows

what happened to fidelity

it lost itself in circles

a paw chasing its prints

of days and days around

an ouroboros' tail

the radium girls

who dipped their brushes thinned

them to points between both lips

they so sure of their task

could not see the sun indoors

for blacklight & above them

the curled measured

iron inching out

of their own time that wild

coming dark <u>tick</u>

what one does not know one does not see

that's what I was told

or was it the reverse

LXXIII

flat & vacated Somerton
fixtures tossed to the North Sea wind out
wireframes blown off a blueprint
fortleben skirting the edge

LXXIV

o but I was in love she says
with everything melanin brown
lovers brittled in the light
release by Magian wine

LXXV

in love with lefts rights
heavy texts pieces hard pasts
threads & bare regret
an old soul a nurse a spy

LXXVI

I was in love when love lettered
back & forth & fast
like first catch of the day today
to last orders time passed

LXXVII

leads end lovers meet (again)
iodoform smells dead air
pumps cycle feed back bad blood
hours eyes watered open after dark

LXXVIII

tonight
a dakhma shadowed horizon
Babel peaks over
carrion gum & shine

LXXIX

shale flakes away stakes raise
petrels swoop in & take life cascades
screen text blittered to a phone
seek evasion from the Deep State

LXXX

in Rowhedge
a fresco excavated from the '40s sings
a brown boat fishing in red water
beautiful grey fish

tonight

the cup is done

tells me

not to rhyme in schemes

waves lap & lap in rhythms they

would only come in snippets

that's Life

& by the sea wall

people circulate

sweep detect

sounding

LXXXI

Root the best days of my life
root of square of spine
a low fluoro flogged by its starter
years stutter

LXXXII

rooms black gone & done stack
momentos evidence shirts shoes
even I shelved there not as pronoun
negative space assumes

LXXXIII

should it all come to this
in storage aisles & shy night oceans
a still drawn likeness a construction
re interpretations of dawn

evidence / translation as gaps

One way of writing this could be to
persona through which to
account. Although this should
to / speak for me.

Multiple retellings of the same scene/image
a possibility

Verses to focus on :- XLVI (72);
LXVIII (60); XXXVIII (53)
/
air image   Annihilation's waste.

'weren't it a shame for him'. (72)
Man's glitch

ITTMTSAMSTGAB

LXXXIV

With me all along you
headlong into occupied spaces
held & breathing each night assisted
recorded over spoken deleted

LXXXV

I hit close for closure not
theories shot by dental records
a hair's breadth next to Truth
shift missed clues

LXXXVI

where love's kept in cool bags guarded phrases
full body searches estranged partners
covered paths inked prints
geneaologies spread over digits

LXXXVII

we browse a blocked & local history
fenced & PRIVATE charcoal structures
a clipped held rose at Pytches Road
on the Deben boats ghost

LXXXIX

hares track fields & sand I mix
signals double cross
move like civilisation without code
hide in acrostics dotted arrows

XC

through connections made on service towers
miles miles of notation of diversion go
photonegatives lost vital characters
tossed nights of Khayyám & Martellos

XCI

in taut masts low master signals
xeroxed back to me set to seeking
& still in shapes the Black Beacon comes
antennae down, attenuated
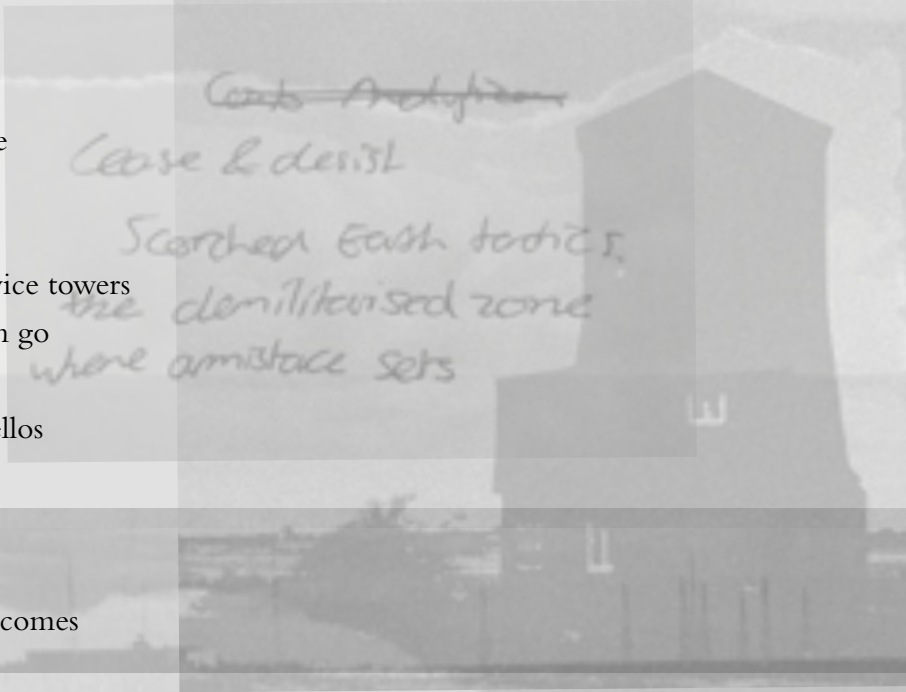
XCII

No one can know exactly
a gull strafes a collapsed roof sinks
look in echoes lichen emptied chambers
audio lines degraded masters

XCIII

no body knows beyond an optical zoom
beyond broken sticks in the sand
classified folders futures re(dis)covered
suited figures stooped over a man

XCIV

we are each going eyes closed in concrete
solenoids in loop & background hum
our hard loves fast regrets gone
back to dust

XCV

False Dawn
almost an egg-yellow filament
silver salts fade & haunt
a wolf's soundless pounce

XCVI

verses lovers come back to me (still)
most dark. All dark.
& all visual artifacts writhing
in the morning post nights before

XCVII

it may be ends come bright & cool
under sheets minds Turin imprints
as days on beaches a windbreaker laid
as a child eyes shut for blood orange light

XCVIII

now more & more due process
poems passed as [A–B] exhibits
trying on fact knocked out of true
a hunch a skew *sic* proof

XCIX

when at the desk *stet* an image
nets of blown roses & dead faces roaming
colonnades, the courts of Margiana
on the *Scandal*'s deck, *Don Juan* in the ocean

c

& coming out of the white tiled
distance, the still Gulf St Vincent
imperceptible in amplitude & sine
just miles of this, in corridors, standing

To be persuaded by that
final end step STOP
on the telegram in passing
on to the ear to page

And the return, you return to
the body of this man
it is something you mustn't let go
the unused ticket to Henley Beach

what if there were no linens
spread to catch our bodies
to stretch us over the sides of summer
of steel rails & ceramics
that we might lay open
to the air, roaring,
without noise & witness
to wait

King knows
what he won't bury is no longer
'human', cannot be carried
'home', now a stranger
& not of Nation, the outback
& in the outback
out to the edge of a Nation
& of all its history, & the backwash
the grasses open, sweat-beaded
no marked grave with stick, rock
his back to it all of it, torn-shirted
forward into wind & walking
in trackless light

—

^{CI}

Deep at the sand's edge
lost scenes & stone memories
curled shells of cold & broken Kings
wait, their halved eyes open

Tamám Shud

Four Translations of Yu Xuanji

Simon Everett and Lin Su

Poem for the Riverbank Willow

The jade of your green
connects
these barren banks

and fog blends myriad
silhouettes
into the highest pallor
of buildings   far-off

as reflections unfold
on the autumn-water-surface.

Flowers fall on fishermens'
heads to say
I'm here   just

by these old roots
and hidden fish-dens

and branches that lower,
tie
        and drag   along
the boats of passing
guests.

Cold windy
desolate
night
laced with rain,

I am
startled
by nightmares

that just
increase this

gloom.

Poem for the Riverbank Willow (Out Set)

More understated
row back the rhetoric

(paraphrase)
Marianne Moore

"the deepest feeling
always
shows itself in silence
not in silence but in

restraint"

regarding the fishermen
kept? as fisher/men
              un/broken

              [im]permanent
              human mortality

self
referential   always

-- & by extension
The Natural World

a means of conveying
Stay! Don't go!

Sent to a Neighbourhood Girl

Too ashamed to let the sun
touch your face, you
hide behind your sleeve

and in your sadness you
are too dispirited to even
rise or adjust your looks.

It is easier
to find priceless
treasure

more difficult
to depend upon
a lover.

While
against your pillow
secretly weeping

or among flowers
heartbroken obscured
to all who pass

there are
others to admire. Why
regret losing *him*?

Sent to a Neighbourhood Girl (Out Set)

"Plausible" exegesis:
bashful is not a
modifier

for the sun. (Strict) coherence
to the real

subject –
& she might cover that which
is brightly shining on
her face.

We have two options

(1) to be shy   says
what's the point?

(2) or ever
indistinct,
"indolent" disconnects
the broken-heart-poem.

The preference
is option (1)

The Fragrance of Our Nation

Dawn till dusk, you're drunk
and singing   yearning
for spring.

In the rain
someone is waiting
for a message -

their gut wrenches
by the window

as they roll up a curtain
to see only mountains.

A heart of autumn
renews
like the redolent smell
of springtime grasses

you take your
leave of all
parties.

How many times
has this dust fallen
silently from

the rafters?

The Fragrance of our Nation (Out Set)

(As a footnote I
would be belligerent
to the cultural
transgressions)

in other words
the striving ideogram:
"Little Gidding"

– & synaesthesia Eliot
renews redolent renews
                melancholic

The Smell Of These Times
                [or]
This Nation
In These Times.

The promise of
Lovers, of purpose. Of
dual

withdrawal

To a Master Alchemist

Her robe is
cut
from the rose
illuminations
of the morning
sun-clouds
and incense
that curls
from the burner.

She rises from
her draperies
to wear the hibiscus
crowned gown

patterned
by mountains
and the running
water
below.

Birdsong
is her only interlude

                a release
as the freed crane
flies
from its cage -

but sleeping
            in the high
ceiling hall
this spring

the rain
at dusk   for her
falls
heavily.

To a Master Alchemist (Out Set)

Thus
she roamed in the roamings of
significant difference

cut, created   coloured
those parts that had (I) foxed.

        Laboured action states

she just puts incense in
the holder   perhaps also

[un]certain
connotative
blendedsyntax   Yes? No.

Character not found [ ]
guess thin associates (**thick**?)
river mountain contrast
     else defer/ignore

heavyhanded
rain at dusk therefore
is just a routine   just
a poem partaking of the evening

      & its (subsiding)
      sound

Critical Commentary

1: Introduction

1.1 Translation

> تمام *tamām*, *timām*, Entire, perfect, complete, consummate; all; whole;
>
> conclusion, end, termination; finished, accomplished, performed;
>
> completely, totally, absolutely, entirely; – *tamām shudan*, To be
>
> completed; to die […]

> شده *shudan*, To be; to become; to be lost or elapsed; to be doing; to go,
>
> depart, emigrate, pass; to transfer, transport; to remove, deface, erase
>
> […] (Steingass 323, 738).

There is definite irony in framing the introduction to my thesis with two entries from
Francis Steingass's *Persian-English Dictionary* that together, at least superficially,
mean the opposite of beginning. However, this is perhaps the most logical place from
which to start, as the title I have chosen for my accompanying creative writing project
is *Tamám*, which consists of a series of one-hundred-and-one quatrains that radically
reimagine *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*. Steingass defines "*tamām"* as "whole",
"complete" and, more bleakly, as "end"; "*shudan*" is defined as "[t]o be; to become;
to be lost or elapsed", of "transfer" and movement towards completion. When placed
together ("*tamām-shudan*", or *tamám shud*)[1] the phrase means that which has

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[1] While Steingass's definition of "شده تمام" is romanized as "*tamām-shudan*", it is
more commonly written as *tamám shud* due to the popularity of Edward FitzGerald's
first edition of *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*, which ends with the words "Tamám
Shud"; the fifth edition ends simply with "Tamám" (Davis 61, 84). I will use
FitzGerald's variant throughout this thesis.

"finished", or has been "completed". In this context, *shud* "is an *auxiliary verb* that puts [*tamám*] into the past tense, so 'tamam shud' means 'ended' or 'finished'" (Abbott). By isolating *tamám* – removing the auxiliary verb *shud* – the completion of the phrase is incomplete; it is forever an end without having ended.

This critical commentary of my Ph.D. thesis is, in part, an examination of the process of translation in these terms: as a mode of creative writing that produces ends – translations – that are not ended, that constantly draw from source texts[2] anew with each successive translation, layering and enriching the STs' meaning. As a microcosm of this, one need only look to Steingass's manifold definition of *tamám*: it is simultaneously presented as meaning "termination", "performed", "absolutely" and "entirely", among other terms (323). Connections between these words can be glimpsed: to terminate is to cut off a performance, or act, and for something to be absolute suggests an entirety, a totality. The "end" is not final; it continues to be viewed through different lenses, with fresh eyes, and through these layered variations of meaning a new and more vibrant sense of the source emerges. As Walter Benjamin notes in "The Task of the Translator", "[i]n its continuing life – how could one speak of 'continuing life' if the process did not involve a metamorphosis and renewal of a life force – the original work changes" (300) as a consequence of its kaleidoscopic translations. Just as the source's "continuing life" is important for the genesis of creative work, finding connections between its translations is often a fructive exercise for translators to undertake so as to identify the direction of travel, the "metamorphosis" that their own, new translation will undergo.

The aim of writing *Tamám* has been to explore translation from a poet's perspective as a metamorphic process that informs and supplements new poetry;

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[2] I will abbreviate "source text" to "ST" moving forward.

doing so obliquely, from the periphery. The *Oxford Dictionary of English* defines

translation as "the process of translating words or text from one language into

another"; "the conversion of something from one form or medium into another" and

"the process of moving something from one place to another" (1889). While

translation is a process that operates between languages, it is also important to

acknowledge that translation is a process of movement between forms and places,

which broadens the definition of what it means to translate in innovative ways.

Historically, translation was positioned as a closed, linguistic art only capable

to be performed by those educated and talented enough to do it. John Dryden's claim

that "[n]o man is capable of translating poetry who, besides a genius to that art, is not

a master both of his author's language and of his own" (146) is a damning assessment

for any writer wishing to experiment with texts in an unfamiliar language as a method

of generating new creative work. Dryden also lays out the spectrum of translation in

clear terms: "metaphrase", "turning an author word for word, line for line";

"paraphrase", "translation with latitude, where the author is kept in view […] but his

words are not strictly followed as his sense" and "imitation", "where the translator (if

now he has not lost that name) assumes the liberty not only to vary from the words

and sense, but to forsake them both as he sees occasion, and only taking some general

hints from the original" (145-6). While this framework has steered translators since

the 17th century, Dryden's obvious disdain for "imitation" – the most radical variant

of what he is reluctant to call translation – is palpable, and moving the discussion in

favour of a more inclusive attitude towards the varying shades of translation has been

gradual.

Three centuries after Dryden, the poet Robert Lowell notes in his collection of

translations, *Imitations*: "I believe that poetic translation – I would call it an imitation

– must be expert and inspired, and needs at least as much technique […] as an original poem"; and that "I have been almost as free as the authors themselves in finding ways to make [the translated poems] ring for me" (xii-xiii). Here, the importance of the poet's creativity in translation is beginning to emerge as an established and respected position in the debate (Lowell's use of Dryden's term "imitation" further implies support for its practice). Lowell's admission of being "almost as free as the authors themselves" stops just shy of advocating full equality between the poet-translator's[3] creative autonomy and that of the creative freedom enjoyed by the ST's author. Ernest Fenollosa and Ezra Pound's 1918 essay "The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry" suggests a shift in terms of mastering a ST's language: that "[f]ailure or success in presenting any alien poetry in English must depend largely upon poetic workmanship, in the chosen medium" (100) rather than an equal mastery of, in Pound's case, Mandarin Chinese.[4] Furthermore, Pound's "English poems based upon some Chinese text" (Yip, *Ezra Pound's* Cathay 4) in *Cathay*, coupled with his insistence on the substantial editing of a poem's ST, such as the removal of "a certain number of <u>blank</u> words for timing" ("Letters to Rouse" 280), is evidence of the poet-translator's own creative agency beginning to shape the translational process.

From the latter part of the 20th century to the present day, contemporary poet-translators have been taking the lead in reclaiming translation as a process of

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[3] I use the term "poet-translator" to foreground that many of the translators mentioned in this thesis are primarily poets; their practice is of writing poetry, and translation is part of their process of poetic composition.

[4] Wai-lim Yip argues that "because *Cathay* is at root a group of superb poems, Pound's total ignorance of the Chinese language does not seem to have bothered his English readers" (*Ezra Pound's* Cathay 3), thus reinforcing Pound's position of advocating poetic skill in a target language over knowledge and mastery of a source language presented in "The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry".

movement between poetic forms and styles as opposed to solely between languages.

Poet-translator Tim Atkins presents the term "poetic translation" as

> a form of translation, usually of poetry, in which the aesthetic and
>
> execution of the translator is as important as that of the perceived
>
> intention of the original writer, and may concern itself with recasting
>
> the poem with attention to sound, shape, energy, form and the
>
> translator's creative imperatives […] (*Seven types of translation* 6).

This definition shifts the translator to the forefront of the process of translation,

"recasting" the ST in a way that is reminiscent of Benjamin's aforementioned

"metamorphosis" ("The Task of the Translator" 300). It also acknowledges what

translation theorists Eugenia Loffredo and Manuela Perteghella call "the retracing of

the translator's subjectivity", an "intercreative process, a meeting point" (8) for both

parties, that contains "ideas of both 'fragmented' and 'shared' agency". This inches

beyond Lowell's translational practice of "almost" having as much creative freedom

as the author (xiii). If, as Atkins reasons, the translator is now "as important as" the

author, the balance is recalibrated between translation and new creative work to that

of an equal standing.

The practice of regarding formal and contextual aspects of poetry in

translation as a means of generating creative writing has recently come under the

banner of "expanded translation"; that "[a]s twenty-first century poetry expands into

the possibilities of different media […] it also expands possibilities for translation"

("Poetry in Expanded Translation: an AHRC Network 2017-2018"). However, poet

Peter Riley's comment that "[w]orks claiming the new tag 'expanded translation' are

found to occupy a very wide range of different procedures, some incompatible with

each other, and the treatment of the original varies from respectful representation to

outright animosity" demonstrates the difficulty poets and poet-translators still face

when using translation in this "expanded" sense: their focus is on the interpretation of

form and process rather than exact linguistic rendering. The accusation of

"animosity" towards a ST – and by implication the author of the ST – is a heavy

charge to level at a translator. Translation theorist Lawrence Venuti claims that an

infinitely diverse ("respectful" or otherwise) range of ST translations is an

inevitability: "in the fact that the same source-language poem can support multiple

translations which are extremely different yet equally acceptable as poems or

translations, we glimpse the possibility that no invariant exists, that the practice of

translation is fundamentally variation" (*Translation Changes Everything* 174). If

translation is variation, then it is surely a necessity to welcome "different procedures"

that may mean poets are "free to be inconsistent" (Riley).

When conceptualising *Tamám*, I did not want to remain too long in the debate

of "imitation" versus "respectful representation" in translation, as the notion of exact

equivalence between languages is, at its root, impossible. The linguist Roman

Jakobson states: "on the level of interlingual translation, there is ordinarily no full

equivalence between code-units, while messages may serve as adequate

interpretations of alien code-units or messages" (139). Consequently, being respectful

to the ST becomes a flawed and subjective task. Who, after all, decides whether a

piece of writing is being respectful to a ST other than the reader? What would be

sufficient criteria for one to determine this? In *Tamám*, the translational activity is

not always a direct representation of "alien code-units", and in terms of linguistic

translation of the source Persian of *The Rubáiyát*, there is little that might be noticed

outright other than shadows of the imagery found in the ST. It is what I see as the

scope of interpretation (of reimagining and reframing the imagery in a ST) and of

adaptation (the reconstruction of a ST's elements in a new medium) that permits

maximum translational creativity. Starting from a basis of non-equivalence is

liberation from "fidelity to the word" (Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator" 304)

and the framework of translational activity manifests in other areas, such as form:

Tamám, like *The Rubáiyát*, is written in quatrains, and as I will visit later, contains a

"Kuza-Náma" (Book of Pots) sequence.[5]

     I have found it is especially the case with translation that "the exercise of

one's own creativity turns out to be directly proportional to the constraints to which

one is subject" (Loffredo and Perteghella 9). To translate with little or next to no

understanding of the Persian language, a language which I cannot read or speak, has

been an exercise in creativity: the constraint has been reliance on dictionaries in part,

but more constructively on the assimilation of existing translations and contexts of

The Rubáiyát into the creative experience of my writing/translating process. The poet

Tom Raworth prefaces his collection *From the Hungarian* as an experimental series

of translations from "a language of which [I] know nothing" (118), yet his endeavour

provides a wellspring of creativity as a result of that constraint. As I will evidence in

the work of Raworth[6] and other poet-translators in subsequent chapters, what I term

"the periphery of translation" is the edge of the practice of translation; not that the

practice fails to be a type of translation – after all, movement of meaning from one

place to another is translation – but that it gives the most agency possible to the

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[5] I discuss my reinterpretation of the Kuza-Náma in *Tamám* in 4.4, p. 176.
[6] Tom Raworth's practice as a poet-translator forms the entirety of section 4.3, p. 162.

translator as a poet to produce new creative work while being aware of and inspired by the mark – the trace – of its source(s).

Translation is not only a means of representing an expression of a source language in a target language, or even sources that contribute to the writing of a new text: it is also a means of representing another culture in a target culture. This has, as I discuss further in 1.2 (p. 51), been regarded as a problematic part of historical translations of *The Rubáiyát*. As Lawrence Venuti states,

> [t]he violent effects of translation are felt at home as well as abroad. On the one hand, translation wields enormous power in the construction of national identities the writing of for foreign cultures, and hence it potentially figures in ethnic discrimination, geopolitical confrontations, colonialism, terrorism, war. On the other hand, translation enlists the foreign text in the maintenance or revision of literary canons in the target-language culture, inscribing poetry and fiction, for example, with the various poetic and narrative discourses that compete for cultural dominance in the target language (*Translator's Invisibility* 19).

It is this "violent" effect of translation on the culture from which the ST originates that leads to the misrepresentation of the ST's culture. Orientalism, which I will address later, is a prominent aspect associated with translated texts from the East, such as *The Rubáiyát*. It demonstrates the destructive potential of translation to domesticate foreign texts; that it has the ability to distort national identities, the

representation of indigenous people, and to create a lens of stereotypes through which one might view a foreign culture.

However, I do feel that a more positive case for translation rests with the view that it enriches our understanding of a ST's culture by allowing it, at least in part, to be presented in a target language; and that in an increasingly globalized society, it is a necessary means to engage with audiences that would otherwise not have access to the ST, and therefore ST's culture. By adding to the discourse surrounding foreign cultures, translation serves to enrich "the maintenance or revision of literary canons", as Venuti puts it, and in this light Edward FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát* has the dual role of supplementing the canon of Victorian poets and poetry as well as introducing the West to Omar Khayyam, cementing his name as an eminent 11th century Persian poet. If translation were to not exist, there would be less of a window through which one might begin to glimpse other cultures. Furthermore, as George Steiner states, a culture itself "is a sequence of translations and transformations of constants" (426) that are expressed by individuals, communities, and countries. *Tamám* is therefore not an attempt to appropriate or misrepresent Persian culture or Omar Khayyám; hence it is not called *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*. It is my own interpretation of the sources that I have consulted, a means of triangulating and reinterpreting the various translations of the Persian text, yet with an awareness of my own geography and culture being a piece of its composition.

I also believe and posit that, as mentioned previously, translation is primarily a process that is the movement of meaning through from(s) that creates a new text, and that the definition of translation should be sufficiently broadened to encompass this activity in the sense of likeness of meaning; of, as Jack Spicer recognizes, images and meanings that "correspond" (*My Vocabulary* 133), going beyond interlingual

translation which strives for equivalence of words and of meaning. I do maintain, however, that translation in this sense still does and should have limitations to this broadening. For this thesis, I will omit that which stretches outside of textual and imagistic sources of meaning from what I class as "translation", as both my translations of Yu Xuanji's poetry and the composition of *Tamám* are the movement of meaning through primarily textual and image-based sources.

Furthermore, as I will argue in 2.3 (p. 85), "intertextuality" – in a sense the dependency of a produced text on another text or source to elicit meaning – is a textual phenomenon that differs from translation because it requires an awareness of STs and sources; it demands the reader to have a knowledge of texts outside of their immediate reading experience. How translation as a process differs, crucially, is that a translation is read often without the prerequisite knowledge of the ST or the ST's language. The movement of meaning through form is not a dependent requirement, it is instead a relational web, in a deferred, tangential and often obfuscated sense – the translation is a partial likeness of its ST. One knows it is meant to be a translation, yet does not need to read or understand the ST; this means that translation is a process of loss as well as gain, where non-equivalence of meaning and the absent ST is filled by new decisions and directions taken by the translator. While this effect is one I have purposefully used in writing *Tamám*, it means that *Tamám* is not intentionally intertextual: the meaning is a result of its absent-present sources, in a system of deferral and interrelation.

Tamám is also not what could be considered a full translation from the Persian ST of *The Rubáiyát* to the one-hundred and one quatrains that comprise it. This is because, in relation to Dryden's translation continuum, it is not "metaphrase", "paraphrase" or even "imitation" in the sense that it does not parallel Omar

Khayyám's text, or try to imitate it with any linguistic precision. It is not an attempt

to provide an interlingual, equivalent translation of the Persian text into English that

one might expect of a scholarly translation, and I have argued that this is a fallacy I

do not want to chase after due to the impossibility to achieve equivalence of meaning

in translation. *Tamám* is simultaneously a translation, in the sense that it moves

aspects of meaning from the Persian ST and other sources into a new space of

writing, and it is not, because it is also a new piece of creative writing. This is

intentional, as an extended representation of *la trace* (see 1.4, p.61), characterized as

a simultaneous absence-presence of other sources in a new text. When I refer to

Tamám as a translation in this thesis, I intend this to be read in terms of

reinterpretation – the faint marking of, reconfiguration of and expression of a ST and

related sources – and I would therefore classify *Tamám* as a "reinterpretation

translation" of *The Rubáiyát*.

1.2 *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*

The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám is attributed to the 11th century Persian astronomer

and mathematician, Omar Ibn Ibrahim Al-Khayyám (Omar Khayyám), who was born

in Nishapur in 1048, died in 1131, and served for some time at the court of Sultan

Jalalu'd-Din Malikshah (Avery and Heath-Stubbs 14, 24, 31). Khayyám's *rubáiyát*[7]

consists of quatrains that are intended to be read as standalone poems, compiled as a

body of work that resembles (though is not overtly intended to be read as) a sequence.

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[7] *ruba'i* is Persian for quatrain. The plural form (a complete body of quatrains) is most commonly known as a *rubáiyát*; a selection of a few quatrains can also be referred to as "ruba'is" (Avery and Heath-Stubbs 9, 37).

A *ruba'i* also has a corresponding rhyme scheme of AABA in English (Avery and Heath-Stubbs 9).

In the time of Khayyám, the *ruba'i* "became a form identified with dissent from social and religious orthodoxy" (Karlin, *The Rubáiyát* xv), popular with poets who "needed a means of expression in which they would not have to suppress personal feelings, beliefs and doubts" (Avery and Heath-Stubbs 12). This was largely reflected in "[s]cepticism about the value of high-flown metaphysical speculation" that had become prevalent in 11th century Persia, combined with "an emphasis on the concrete pleasures of human life" (Karlin, *The Rubáiyát* xiv). Khayyám became viewed as a "free-thinker and a heretic" in the wake of his verses written "in praise of drunkenness and sex" (Karlin, *The Rubáiyát* xiv) that "revealed the evil of [his] mind" (Avery and Heath-Stubbs 33-4). The non-rhyming third line of a *ruba'i* set amongst the other three lines that rhyme together is an apt representation of this freedom from conventional thought and of the form's social and religious non-conformity. For ordinary people, its short length and rhyme scheme meant that it could "easily be memorized" (Avery and Heath-Stubbs, 13) and the form had the potential to "circulate anonymously" (Karlin, *The Rubáiyát* xv) with speed to other like-minded acquaintances.

My decision to translate *The Rubáiyát* as a reinterpretation was largely threefold: first, it is a substantial body of poetry that can be read as standalone quatrains that have the potential to hang together, forming a sequence. This is a constraint that focuses the act of poetic composition into four lines, meaning that image and voice must utilize the given space to maximum effect if a quatrain is to be read in isolation. It also allows for images to return and link to one another across the *rubáiyát* as a whole. Second, in the post-war era of poetry there have been very few

attempts at reimagining *The Rubáiyát* that respond to contemporary issues.[8] Attitudes

surrounding translation have changed since Edward FitzGerald's 19th century

translation, and there are other contextually significant and interrelated theoretical

and circumstantial aspects to consider (such as the Somerton Man case and Derridean

theories of deconstruction – see 1.3, p. 57 and 1.4, p. 61). Third, the primary themes

of *The Rubáiyát* are those that are constant and human: a simultaneous awareness of

social injustices, the lurking futility of existence and the transience of self, set against

the necessity to draw enjoyment from that which is tangible, of the moment: *carpe*

diem. It is a work that finely balances resistance and dissidence with acceptance and

release.

The overarching themes that pervade *The Rubáiyát* are also, as a consequence

of being in a sense timeless, relevant to the recent socio-political landscape in the

United Kingdom. When writing *Tamám*, much of the material was composed at the

time of the UK's referendum on membership of the European Union in 2016. This

meant that the right-wing, nationalist forces such as the United Kingdom

Independence Party (UKIP) were gaining prominence, and this crystalized in the

country voting to leave the European Union. The British exit from the European

Union (Brexit), UKIP, and the sense of established world orders breaking down

weigh heavily on the composition of certain quatrains, such as XI "the UKIP order

bleats / & ISIS shades the end of East Street" (p. 5) and LIX "all along the Word

divided / manifests Click Yes 4 Brexit" (p. 15). Paralleling the unorthodox form and

renegade subject matter of the *ruba'i*, I wanted *Tamám* to absolutely provide a

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[8] One notable example is *The New Rubaiyat: Omar Khayyam Reincarnated* by Ame
Perdue, written in 1943. This work peppers grandiose FitzGeraldian diction with
wartime overtones and technological and scientific developments, such as "the Motor
Car", "a Deadly Tank" and "microscopic Cells" (41, 10). Consequently, the
collection is more of a pastiche, or borderline parody of FitzGerald's translation.

comment against these insurgent and authoritarian political and social forces that

promote isolationism and threaten liberal democracy, as this too threatens the

progress made against historical prejudices, national superiority and domestication in

translation (which I will later discuss).

It is fitting that the translational history of *The Rubáiyát* is one of creative

dissent from orthodoxy: a manuscript of poems that arrived in England, centuries

after being written, that then underwent a radical metamorphosis into embellished

Victorian English by Edward FitzGerald.[9] What has made FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát* one

of the most famous examples of innovative translation is just that: it is Edward

FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát*; a work he kept returning to, revising it over a total of five

editions. It is a work that has become so synonymous with the poet-translator that it is

now difficult to see the ST solely as Khayyám's work. Dick Davis asks: "[i]s the

Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám FitzGerald's poem or Khayyám's?" only to offer the

answer: "[w]e don't know; it seems to be the work of a poet hovering somewhere

between the two, so that it is both […] Victorian and English but at the same time

medieval and Persian" (2). Despite including Omar Khayyám in its title, I would go

further than Davis' assessment in suggesting that there is a root problem of authorship

with *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*: that, as Daniel Karlin observes, over time

"more and more *ruba'iyat* were attributed to Omar, with less and less authority" (*The*

Rubáiyát xiii).[10]

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[9] For a detailed account of FitzGerald's encounter with Khayyám in 1856 upon
receiving a transcribed manuscript from his friend, the academic Edward B. Cowell,
see the introductions of Peter Avery, Dick Davis and Daniel Karlin in their edited
translations and editions of *The Rubáiyát*.
[10] Much of the Islamic civilization was destroyed by Mongol invasions in the 13th
century, meaning that works such as Khayyám's only survived through pieced-
together anthologies of damaged or lost manuscripts (Avery and Heath-Stubbs 34-7).

It is guesswork to know exactly what of the ST is written by Omar Khayyám

and what of it imposters writing in his tradition composed.[11] Peter Avery, for

example, notes that "[s]everal of the ruba'is attributed to Khayyam […] also appear

in ancient books as the compositions of other twelfth-century Persian poets and

philosophers, and in some instances they have been attributed to later poets too". He

suggests that the best logic that scholars have used to categorize Khayyám's quatrains

is that his "unorthodox views would result in unorthodox ruba'is being attributed" to

him (37). Ambiguity of authorship problematizes any translation that privileges

fidelity because, simply put, who is the author that one is to be faithful to when

translating? I would argue that the notion of a "respectful" translation is flawed in this

context, as the ST no longer holds proof of authority. It is the translator who chooses

whether to honour an author whose text's fidelity is authenticated by the subjective

logic and assumptions of others, or to go against this and focus on the ST for what it

enables the translator to create. Khayyám's body of work presents the translator with

that choice, and the decision I have made in writing *Tamám* is to privilege the

translator's creative agency.

One of the heaviest criticisms of FitzGerald's translation of *The Rubáiyát* is

that it stands as an embodiment of "popular imperialist attitudes" (Drury 46) to the

East that were prevalent in Victorian England. As Annmarie Drury notes,

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[11] A further, similar example of ambiguous authorship can be evidenced in the work
of classical Chinese poet Han-shan ("Cold Mountain", c. 700 AD). Robert Henricks
surmises: "[my] assumption would be that the real Han-shan lived and wrote at the
end of the Sui [Dynasty] or in the early T'ang [Dynasty], and that later on […] a
number of poems were added to his collection by one, or several, fellow Buddhist
devotees" (6).

>FitzGerald's disparagement of Persian literature involved prejudiced

>views that were common in Victorian Britain and that have a place in

>Orientalism […]: ideas that the poetry could be understood with an

>incomplete knowledge of Persian, that it would benefit from European

>rewriting, that it was minor literature (Drury 46).

The attitude of Victorians such as FitzGerald towards other cultures is an extension of

the British Empire, and of British dominance overseas. Edward Said states that "[b]y

the end of World War I Europe had colonized 85 percent of the earth" ("My Thesis"

107); consequently, the East was increasingly subjected to Western dominance and

scrutiny throughout the 19th century. Orientalism's thrust, A.L. Macfie argues, is that

Europe "is seen as being essentially rational, developed, humane, superior […] and

masculine", whereas "the orient […] is seen as being irrational, inauthentic, passive,

feminine, and sexually corrupt" (4). On a fundamental level, "[Orientalism's] mode,

from the beginning, was reconstruction and repetition", and that "[t]o reconstruct a

dead or lost Oriental language meant ultimately to reconstruct a dead or neglected

Orient" (Said, "My Thesis" 107).

The reconstruction of foreign languages, and therefore cultures that are not

familiar to a new audience, is a troubling assertion for translators and poet-translators

because of the inevitable need to disseminate texts between languages and cultures

(as discussed in 1.1, p. 45). Indeed, the ingrained superiority and prejudices of the

Victorians towards places such as the Middle East was destructive; the effects of this

still felt today. As a result of Britain's colonialism, Sandeep Parmar regards the UK's

contemporary poetry scene as "a patronizing culture that presents minority poets as

exceptional cases", and that "British poetry lacks nuanced, fluid, transcultural

paradigms of racial and national identity". Yet even if what it means to be English,

and "Englishness", should quite rightly no longer be fixed to archaic notions of the

British Empire, the problem of how to translate poetry from a foreign language

without domesticating it in the English language is an enduring issue for translators. I

will briefly discuss in 4.2 (p. 152), for example, early 20th century English language

translations of Chinese T'ang poetry that disfigure and overwrite so much of the ST's

formal delicacy by domesticating the ST in traditional English forms and diction.

For FitzGerald, the English language had a degree of dominance over the

Persian language, even if his translation "began as a linguistic exercise, not a literary

choice" (Karlin, *The Rubáiyát* xvii). FitzGerald writes of Omar Khayyám that "[h]e

writes in little Quatrains, and has scarce any of the iteration and conceits to which his

People are given" (*Letters: Vol. II* 291-2), clearly a subjective appraisal of the Persian

poet, his poetry and the society in which he lived. Yet Karlin argues that FitzGerald's

"designation of Omar Khayyám in the title [of *The Rubáiyát*] as 'the Astronomer-

Poet of Persia' is like a warning not to expect caliphs and harems, genii and giaours,

magic carpets or Circassian beauties"; that this "connotes a respect for what is

historically and culturally distinctive, as opposed to 'Oriental' in a vague, generalized

sense, or consciously artificial" (*The Rubáiyát* xxxii). With *Tamám*, I have sought to

move away from the potential misrepresentation of Omar Khayyám, his poetry,

Persian culture, and the domestication of STs by writing a text that is fundamentally

my experience of interacting with the ST itself – a "reinterpretation translation" – and

not a scholarly, "metaphrase" translation of the Persian ST of *The Rubáiyát* alone but

a personal, reimagined interpretation of various interrelated sources and other

translations of *The Rubáiyát* that moves relational webs of meaning through form into

a new text.

Like many others, my own discovery of Khayyám has been through FitzGerald's translation, and as I will demonstrate in subsequent chapters, *Tamám* is interfused with rewritten shades of the imagery and phrasing of his various translated editions. FitzGerald's translational practice was not completely dissimilar to that of mine: "inseparable from that of editing" (Karlin, *The Rubáiyát* xxxviii). FitzGerald "cut, conflated, reordered and rewrote" the work he translated; he also performed "hands-on" editorial work on the published writing of others, where he would "customize his own library" by cutting out passages with scissors, reducing and refining volumes (Karlin, *The Rubáiyát* xxxviii-xxxix). The 1859 first edition of FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát* consists of seventy-five quatrains, reaching a high of one-hundred and ten in the second edition; by the time of the fifth edition, it had decreased again to one-hundred and one. As a point of comparison, E. H. Whinfield's 1883 translation contains five-hundred quatrains "based on a collation of eight authorities" (7) drawn from original Persian ST manuscripts.

However, as Karlin observes: "[p]aradoxical though it seems, FitzGerald's presumption of authority over the texts he translates is simultaneously the sign of his lack of belief in his own creative, *originative* power" (*The Rubáiyát* xxxviii). It is certainly a paradox. In September 1858, FitzGerald openly states in a letter to Edward Cowell that "[m]y Translation [of Khayyám] will interest you from its *Form*, and also in many aspects its *Detail*: unliteral as it is. Many quatrains are mashed together" (*Letters*: *Vol. II* 318). Phrases such as "unliteral" and "mashed together" suggest that FitzGerald was sure of his translation's unorthodox and defiantly creative nature, but this is undercut by an admission made to Elizabeth Cowell: "I do not care about my own verses […] [t]hey are not *original* – which is saying, they are not worth anything […] they always recall other and better poems" (*Letters*: *Vol. II* 14). It is this self-

deprecation of his own ability to create new writing that seems to have led FitzGerald instinctively to translation: it gave him a writing constraint – that of another's work – through which to have the confidence to be creative, and it suited him.

T. S. Eliot's view that "[n]o poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists" (153) was written in 1919, in his essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent", only a few decades after Edward FitzGerald's death. Eliot's argument that the worth of one's writing is relative to the work of others is a strong rebuttal to FitzGerald's despairing claim that his own poems had no originality or worth. Furthermore, FitzGerald demonstrates that his *Rubáiyát* was an act of translating creatively with the awareness and presence of other writers' work. Karlin argues: "[h]is stroke of genius was not simply to translate 'freely' […] but to steep Omar in English allusions and idioms which *already* had their own life, which were not in the position of borrowing from the Persian but lending to it" (*The Rubáiyát* xlv). Through this act,

> the imagining of one culture has become fused with another.
> FitzGerald can do this with a single phrase, as he does with the 'silken
> Tassel of my Purse' in stanza XIII, or the 'surly Tapster' of stanza
> LXIV, or the 'sorry Scheme of Things' in stanza LXIII. All of these
> have literary affiliations (ranging from Chaucer to the late eighteenth
> century) […] (Karlin, *The Rubáiyát* xlv).

I have been conscious of this kind of allusion when writing *Tamám*, layering repurposed phrases from FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát* and from other pieces of literature,

theory and poetry in order to create a rich fabric of imagery, and of meaning (relative

to the reader's knowledge of outside texts)[12]: this is reflected in each of the chapters

of this critical commentary that are led by visceral and important images in the

poetry. Often these are very specific allusions. Chapter 4, "The 'shaded & coded

returning image'", includes analysis of poet Jack Spicer's poem, "Aquatic Park". I

rewrite the line "A green boat / Fishing in blue water" (*My Vocabulary* 131) in

Tamám as "this way a green boat / fishing in your mind blue water" (p. 15) in order to

cast Spicer's concrete image as a projection of the mind. Another example is a line

from FitzGerald's quatrain VIII: "And this first Summer Month that brings the Rose"

(Karlin, *The Rubáiyát* 20) which is distilled into three images: the "Rose" becomes

"Rose Cottage" (p. 7), a common euphemism in British hospitals for "mortuary"; "a

clipped held rose at Pytches Road" (p. 22), a rose growing in present day at

FitzGerald's home, "Little Grange" on Pytches Road, Woodbridge; and finally, "nets

of blown roses & dead faces roaming" (p. 23) in stanza XCIX, modifying, mixing,

drawing on and developing the previous images. I also rewrite "this first Summer

Month" as "First day of Summer" (p. 5) in stanza IX, which alludes to the Somerton

Man's discovery on the first day of Australian Summer (discussed in 1.3).

In spite of FitzGerald's self-admonishment, his creative influence on *The*

Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám demonstrably extends into translation itself as an activity

that permits originality. His *Rubáiyát* is disobedient: it does not adhere to the

conventional "metaphrase", and at times even "paraphrase", of Dryden's respected

translation continuum. FitzGerald's penchant for rewriting and forming the writing of

others into new editions and versions has provided poet-translators with a precedent

for the application of translation in the genesis of creative work, presenting a method

---

[12] I discuss outside texts in relation to translation and trace in 2.3, p. 85.

of retaining and adapting parts of the ST while allowing one to exercise the freedom

to distil, extend and expand it in new ways. Consequently, his *Rubáiyát* rightly

enriches *Tamám* in terms of image, but also informs its process and scope.

1.3 The Somerton Man

On 1st December 1948, the body of an unidentifiable man was discovered on

Somerton beach in Adelaide, South Australia. He wore a suit, was clean-shaven and

carried hardly any possessions. He had no money. There was a cigarette hanging from

his mouth that had gone out (Feltus 39). The night before, other beach walkers

noticed the man laid out by the sea wall; they thought they had seen him stirring, so

they moved along (Feltus 37-38). Nobody saw him arrive. The coroner's inquest was

unable to ascertain the unnatural cause of his death: the use of an undetectable poison

was suspected but this could not be proven true (Feltus 44, 90-92). To this day,

detectives, scientists and numerous hobbyists have not managed to identify the man –

known as "The Somerton Man" – despite the enduring scrutiny of thousands,

spanning decades.

This otherwise unrelated case would ordinarily have no association with *The

Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*: the ST is so far removed from that stretch of beach in

Adelaide that it seems illogical to begin drawing the two together. However, tightly

folded in the pocket of the Somerton Man was a torn scrap of paper with "Tamám

Shud" legible on it in printed typeface.[13] It had been carefully torn from an edition of

Edward FitzGerald's translation of *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*, which was later

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[13] The exact same typeface can be seen in *Tamám* at the bottom of p. 26. It has been adapted from the same published edition of FitzGerald's R*ubáiyát* that the Somerton Man's scrap of paper was torn from.

found to have been tossed through the open window of a car (a Hillman Minx) on the

day before the Somerton Man died (Feltus 104-105). The back page of this book

contained a handwritten code, which has yet to be deciphered. Former Australian

Police Detective, Gerald Feltus, explains how many amateur code breakers "used the

writings within [*The Rubáiyát*] as a 'key'" to unlock the code's meaning, however

many "invented their findings or used the known events to suit them", often

"applying inductive and deductive logic to scenarios, due to their restrictive access to

limited and selective information" (115). The proliferation of Russian espionage at

the onset of the Cold War perhaps provides an explanation for use of indecipherable

codes written in innocuous and seemingly unrelated texts, and if the Somerton Man

were a spy, even some rationale behind his peculiar death. Yet the role and

significance of the code and of *The Rubáiyát* are unknown, just as the significance of

the shred of paper printed with "Tamám Shud" is not clear. The purpose of both is as

shrouded as the true identity of the Somerton Man. Ruth Balint suggests that

"[h]istorians who work to resurrect the world of individuals who lived in the past are

always, ultimately, confronted by the 'unknowable-ness' of their subjects. The

distance of time, the different mental and cultural worlds of the past, mean that we

forever remain on the brink, only ever 'almost knowing' our subjects" (160). The

work of those trying to piece together the life and circumstances of the Somerton

Man from hard evidence can only ever be a reconstruction, an attempt at reimagining

the truth.

       The Somerton Man case in a sense binds *Tamám* together. When I set out to

write my translation of *The Rubáiyát*, the significance of the Somerton Man was only

partially apparent. The discovery of "Tamám Shud" in the Somerton Man's pocket

provides an obvious connection to FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát*, yet the depth of the case's

significance lies in parity between the interpretation of an anonymous deceased man's

identity from various sources, such as his belongings and location, and of the

interpretation of a ST into a new piece of writing through the process of translation.

For the Somerton Man, "there is no singular character or identity around which to

construct, even partially, a life. His unknowableness in this case is absolute" (Balint

162). Whatever identity the Somerton Man has is one fabricated from his possessions,

location, and the time and nature of his discovery. *The Rubáiyát*, as I have discussed,

is attributed solely to Khayyám but this is not necessarily accurate, as "contemporary

scholars now stress the impossibility of establishing the authentic text, and what is

celebrated as the [*Rubáiyát*] of Omar Khayyám is most likely a hybrid text, produced

over time, coupling his own verses of sensuality and contingency with new versions"

(Hiddleston 256). The parallel here is evident: the identity of the Somerton Man has

also been "produced over time", hybridizing established fact and evidence with

supposition.

 One of the aims of *Tamám* has been to present poetic translation as a method

of reconstruction, a way of offering various sources for the reader to interpret. An

example of this is the run of quatrains XLIX-LII (p. 12) that lay out various images

that suggest the analysis and interpretation of evidence and key players in the

Somerton mystery. The lines in stanza L, "Jestyn Boxall Prestige T Keane / guy lines

cut clean Occam's razor", list several key figures in relation to the Somerton Man

case: "Jestyn", a nurse living in Adelaide, whose "telephone number was found

written on the discarded copy of [*The Rubáiyát*] at Glenelg" near Somerton beach,

and who was rumoured to have known the identity of, and been romantically

involved with, the Somerton Man (Feltus 173, 179); Alfred "Boxall", a lieutenant in

the Australian armed forces who was (confusingly) given a different copy of

FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát* by Jestyn[14] some years earlier (Feltus 107); "Prestige"

Johnson, a man Jestyn claimed she was married to at the time (but was not) (Feltus

107); and "T Keane", a name written on articles of clothing in a suitcase believed to

belong to the Somerton Man – a lead that went nowhere in the police investigation

(Feltus 62, 75). These pieces of evidence are "cut" on the following line with

"Occam's razor", a term that is credited to the 14th century philosopher William of

Occam, who proposed that "in interpreting scientific data, the simplest explanation

consistent with all the known facts is preferred as a working hypothesis over more

complicated ones" (Stansfield 107). If the interpretation of these "facts" in forming a

hypothesis about the Somerton Man is a subjective undertaking, Occam's razor raises

the question: which hypothesis is closest to the truth? Or, perhaps more pointedly:

will any hypothesis offer a resemblance of "truth" in this situation, even the simplest

one? As with the choices a translator makes when deciding on a translational practice,

I would argue that there is no correct way forward over any other – just varying

practices that create varying translations. Just how much of a ST is retained or

discarded as excess (where it is "cut") is a creative exercise for the translator.

When writing *Tamám*, I used the case of the Somerton Man and Adelaide in

the 1940s as the starting framework to form a meeting place for 11th century Persia,

19th century Victorian England and present day, experimenting with the trace of *The

Rubáiyát* in each through closing the gap between these very different yet related

periods.[15] The Somerton Man – an identity that was given to the man after death –

collapses temporal boundaries because it is an unresolved case: the same questions

and interpretations of the evidence have been constantly worked and reworked into

---

[14] A handwritten *ruba'i* from that particular book given to Boxall, signed by "Jestyn",
can be seen layered into *Tamàm* (see p. 18).

[15] I explore this palimpsestuous layering of place in greater detail in 4.4, p. 171.

new theories since 1948. The paradox of his body being given new life after death in

the form of an enduring mystery, explored again and again, is not dissimilar to Walter

Benjamin's "continuing life" ("The Task of the Translator" 300) of a ST (see 2.1, p.

69). As with a ST's translation, the Somerton Man is continually read anew, reframed

in the eyes of those who reconstruct his identity on a daily basis from evidence and

supposition. Did the man, with some irony, tear out the words "Tamám Shud"

("finished") knowing he was about to die, only to then remain a mystery without

closure? Was he aware of *The Rubáiyát*'s verse XXIII: "Dust into Dust, and under

Dust to lie, / Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer, and – sans End!" (Karlin, *The*

Rubáiyát 27)? Did he conceal an "end" in his pocket knowing it would mean endless

beginnings?

1.4 *La Trace*

Translator of deconstructionist Jacques Derrida, Alan Bass, describes in his

translator's notes how Derrida's neologism *différance*

> combines in neither the active nor the passive voice the coincidence of
>
> meanings in the [French] verb *différer*: to differ (in space) and to defer
>
> (to put off in time, to postpone presence). Thus, it does not function
>
> simply either as *différence* (difference) or as *différance* in the usual
>
> sense (deferral), and plays on both meanings at once (*Writing and*
>
> *Difference* xvii-xviii).

English cannot express this bifurcation of meaning in one single word; Derrida's

différance is intended as a construct of layered meaning that might be obscured for

the English reader, therefore the original French is used as a neologism in the way

Bass does in his translation. In *Margins of Philosophy*, Derrida furthers this by

starting with: "I will speak, therefore, of a letter" (3), pivoting his discussion about

the multiplicity of meaning surrounding *différance* on the letter "*a*" as opposed to the

word unit as a whole, foregrounding its similarity to *différence* while actively

deferring the meaning of *différance* to it. In English, the split meaning of *différance* is

also presented as one of difference: a difference that simultaneously relies upon the

French verb stem and a composite English translation of two verbs "to differ" and "to

defer" so as to elicit an understanding of the neologism as intended. Derrida describes

différance as "the playing movement that 'produces' – by means of something that is

not simply an activity – these differences, these effects of difference. […] *Différance*

is the non-full, non-simple, structured and differentiating origin of differences" (11).

If meaning is continually deferred, and "produces" difference through its continual

"playing", moving in relation to other words, then the concept of "origin" is

problematized: after all, as with *différance*, what might be considered the word's

origin, *différer*, is not fixed. The product, *différance*, relies on the relationship

between "to defer" and "to differ" in order to elicit meaning, and it is this web of

deferred meanings that in turn creates new meaning. Derrida qualifies this by stating:

"[t]hus the name 'origin' no longer suits [*différance*]", and that instead "*différance* is

literally neither a word nor a concept", rather it has "the complex structure of a

weaving, an interlacing which permits the different threads and different lines of

meaning – or of force – to go off again in different directions, just as it is always

ready to tie itself up with others" (11, 3).

As with the play of meanings surrounding *différance*, Derrida's "*la trace*" is translated into English as "trace" (or "the trace"); yet, as translator Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak comments: "the French word carries strong implications of track, or footprint, imprint" and that "the reader must remind himself of at least the track, even the spoor, contained within the French word" (*Of Grammatology* xv, xvii). So, like *différance*, "trace" is interpreted through the relative meaning of a simultaneously absent word in English. While the meaning of the "track" or "road"[16] is an important aspect of trace, it is telling that *la trace*, like *différance*, also loses its relative meaning when represented by a single term in English (trace). The reader must look to the deferral of meaning between "trace" and "track" to elicit a richer sense of the term. Trace can, therefore, be evidenced as a development of, and application of *différance*: to trace – to leave a mark or "imprint" – is for one meaning to be simultaneously marked, coloured by, or partially transferred to other meaning through its *différance*; thus, the "weaving" of meanings that diverge and converge. As Derrida claims, language is "a retention and protention of differences, a spacing and a temporization, a play of traces", and "[o]ne cannot think of the trace – and therefore, *différance* – on the basis of the present, or of the presence of the present" (*Margins of Philosophy* 15, 21). Trace is the intersection of past instance and the immediately occurring, anticipated present moment ("protention") but at the same time it is neither of these; it "is not a presence but the simulacrum of a presence that dislocates itself, displaces itself, refers itself, it properly has no site – erasure belongs to its structure" (24). The shifting deferral of the trace's meaning(s) causes the erasure of the trace, which crosses temporal structures and also sits outside of them, "and makes it

---

[16] I present a discussion of trace's activity in the word "road" in 3.1, p. 113.

disappear in its appearance, makes it emerge from itself in its production", so that "it is a trace, and a trace of the erasure of a trace" (24).[17]

Derrida's expansion of erasure as an attribute of trace can be observed in *Of Grammatology*, where he makes reference to "presence-absence"; something that was, and is, as a present that never came to be: "[t]he absence of *another* here-and-now, of another transcendental present, of *another* origin of the world appearing as such, presenting itself as irreducible absence within the presence of trace" (70, 47). Consequently, Derrida's assertion that meaning is not derived in isolation, and that a point of "origin" is not fixed but rather part of an organic construct – a "presence-absence" – impacts profoundly on how one might understand translation. J. L. Kruger notes: "[t]he main problem deconstruction poses to the practice of translation is its seemingly relativist open-endedness and its plural perspectives on the process of signification"; and that "deconstruction affects conventional notions such as equivalence and faithfulness in translation, […] [it] removes equivalence […] from the purpose of translation" (49), as I have discussed in 1.1. Derrida's presentation of *différance* and of trace extends to inform his position on translation, namely that: "nothing is translatable and, by the same token, nothing is untranslatable", because of "the condition of a certain *economy* that relates […] not as the same to the other, but as same to same or other to other" ("What is a 'relevant' translation?" 427). This is not equivalence but a relational correspondence[18] that, as with *différance* and trace, suggests the deferral of meaning between texts – a ST, a translation and other texts – and that meaning is not absolute; it is an "*economy*", an exchange, and a fluid,

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[17] 3.4 (pp. 135-6) notes the protentive and retentive nature of *la trace* as it features in *Tamám*; 3.1 (p. 106) and 3.2 (p. 115) both contain further discussion on erasure and trace throughout.

[18] See 4.1 (p. 144) for an expansion of the notion of correspondence in translation.

building movement. Derrida qualifies this by stating in *The Ear of the Other* that

"[t]ranslation augments and modifies the original, which, in so far as it is living on,

never ceases to be transformed and to grow"[19] because "[t]ranslation is writing; that

is, it is not translation only in the sense of transcription. It is a productive writing

called forth by the original text" (122, 153). My position is that, as Derrida proposes,

translation is a clear act of "productive writing" that draws upon and adds to a ST by

virtue of the existence of its translation(s). Therefore, this is how I have approached

my translational practice in *Tamám*.

To unify the above strands moving forward, I argue that the activity of trace is

broad and ever-present; that it informs poetic translation and consequently the

composition of poetry because, as Derrida states:

> each element appearing on the scene of presence […] is related to
>
> something other than itself, thereby keeping within itself the mark of
>
> its past element, and already letting itself be vitiated by the mark of its
>
> relation to the future element, this trace being related no less to what is
>
> called the future than to what is called the past, and constituting what
>
> is called the present by means of this very relation to what it is not:
>
> […] not even a past or a future as a modified present (*Margins of*
>
> *Philosophy* 13).

From the ST of *The Rubáiyát* and its translations to the Somerton Man case, the

theory informing *Tamám* is absolutely that of trace. This manifests in the text

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[19] Derrida is referring to Walter Benjamin's "The Task of the Translator" (see 1.1, p.
38 and 2.1, p. 69).

"keeping within itself the mark" of multiple elements, obliquely and in a deferred

sense, where time periods collapse through image, voice and form. Visually, I have

included edited draft work that has been faintly layered behind the main text of

Tamám that aims to bring into the continually occurring present that process of past

composition, thereby displacing it, moving it out of a fixed time. I have also included

what I call "exegesis poetry" that sits in the margins of the text, photocopied in

having been typed elsewhere, that attempts to foreground and apply the concept of

deferred/different meaning to the translational process through its simultaneous

removal from and inclusion in the main body of poetry.[20]

The difficulty in writing with the purpose of acknowledging trace is that, as I

have presented above, foregrounding a "presence-absence" negates the trace itself.

There is only one explicit mention of trace in *Tamám*: "Trace insists itself heard

hiding / instead I'm talking it out" (p. 11). I wanted to push trace to the front of the

text in order to address its self-erasure both explicitly through its mention and

obliquely through the use of personification, constructing an identity for trace and

deferring its theoretical activity to the poetry that surrounds it. If trace "insists itself

heard hiding" then there is a self-awareness that it is simultaneously trying to stay

hidden but, to the reader, failing to hide properly. Consequently, "talking it out" is a

suggestion to the reader that, as an extension of trace's absent presence, the rest of the

poetry is also in constant deferral of meaning, and therefore of image, and that the

process of trace is continually occurring.

More broadly, there are thematic motifs that metaphorize trace throughout

Tamám: for instance, the presence of the image of "the body" – particularly that of

the Somerton Man – suggests the construction of a new identity after death that draws

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[20] I address parallel textual fragments in 3.2, p. 119 and 3.4, p. 134).

upon but writes over a person's past identity: an identity that is simultaneously present and absent. However, a specific example of trace's influence on poetic imagery in *Tamám* (and as I explore in greater detail in 3.4, p. 136) is the image of "the reel" and "tape" that features through some of the quatrains in varying forms. The "fast tight tape through my fingers" in stanza II (p. 4) suggests the inability to read the tape's recorded meaning as it moves, and this returns later as "deep ferrochrome erasure" in stanza XXXII (p. 9): a cassette tape being erased. The process of wiping clean the data recorded and held on tape, and of overwriting it with new data, is absolutely representative of trace because it is the unfolding of a real-time, protentive recording laid over and erasing the replayed, retentive past recording. Even then, the playback of the tape's recording is difficult to catch; the act of listening is an interpretative exercise for the speaker that is always just beyond reach – "through my fingers" – and the "fast" movement of the tape represents the constant deferral of its meaning to the next recorded section.

The next chapters of the critical commentary of my thesis are also led by key images found in *Tamám* that are drawn from and point towards traces of the theoretical and contextual elements I have presented thus far. In each, I will analyse the process of various poet-translators and poets to demonstrate in their poetry and translations how they have utilized translation and trace in the broadest sense, primarily as a means of producing new creative work; I will then demonstrate how and argue why I believe their work corresponds to the aspect of trace and translation examined in that chapter. This analysis will be accompanied by a reflective evaluation of my poetry and of the creative methodology I used to write *Tamám*, in order to draw a connection between the practice of these poets, the theoretical aspects of trace and translation, and the decisions that I have taken to represent these in my

poetry. The appendix that follows the main chapters of this thesis contains draft

creative work that plots the journey of *Tamám* over the last few years, and I will

make reference to this in my analysis where I feel it is important to draw a

comparison between the fledgling draft work and the final text.

2: The "new & Necessary Fiction"

There are four areas of discussion in this chapter that centre around *la trace* in the

production of new writing: aligning Walter Benjamin's concepts of *Fortleben* and

Überleben (continuing and surviving life of a ST) with the work of the Cambridge

school of poets to demonstrate the furthering of a source poem's meaning between

poets; an examination of the method that the poet Ed Dorn uses to curate sources and

STs in his translations of *The Florentine Codex*, and how this activity is present in his

own creative work, *Recollections of Gran Apachería*; differentiation between *la trace*

and intertextuality so as to argue that trace is a more pertinent means of viewing

reinterpretative translation between sources and a new text; and a commentary of

Tamám's reinterpretation of *The Rubáiyát*'s image of "dawn" that leads to the genesis

of new imagery, metaphor and meaning. Together, these sections are intended to

establish the argument that translation is a process of moving and reinterpreting

meaning through form; and that a translation, as a reconfigured likeness of its source,

is new writing.

2.1 *Fortleben* and *Überleben*

The title of this chapter, a line taken from stanza X of *Tamám* (p. 5), is adapted from

translator Clive Scott's statement: "[t]ranslation, like any other linguistic act, is

necessarily a fictionalization" (33). It acts as a point of convergence and of departure:

when a translator draws together a ST and any outside, influential pieces of texts,

ideas, styles and forms, the translator is fictionalizing, making personal, creative

decisions. A new text is (re)constructed from various sources, allowing it to move to

different places, to metamorphose into new shapes and to find new life. This is

reminiscent of Walter Benjamin's provocation: "[t]he life of the original [text]

reaches its ever-recurring, latest and most complete unfolding in translation" ("The

Task of the Translator" 300), and if one is to align Benjamin's stance with

deconstructionist thought on translation, for the ST to continue its "life", it must be

through the writing of a fiction. The inability for languages to have exact equivalence

of meaning (see Jakobson: 1.1, p. 42) suggests that every translation is a new telling

of a story that already exists, however far removed from the source language, culture

and social context that story might be. Furthermore, if a translation is to bring, as

Benjamin puts it "the seeds of universal language to ripeness"[21] (304), this is only

achievable by an interpretation of a universal language in the chosen target language,

through the *différance* of the meaning of chosen words in both languages.

The German text of Benjamin's preface to his translation of Baudelaire's

Tableaux parisien, "Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers" ("The Task of the Translator"),

provides two terms, "Überleben" and "Fortleben" (VIII), with which Benjamin

reasons that

> a translation, however good, cannot be of any significance to the
>
> original. Nevertheless it has the closest tie with the original: because
>
> the original is translatable. Indeed, this tie is the more intimate since it

---

[21] Benjamin's "universal language" follows the confusion of tongues (the story of the Tower of Babel) from *Genesis* II: 1-9, "[a]nd all the earth was one lip, and there was one language to all" (Brenton 10). George Steiner comments that for Benjamin: "[t]ranslation is both possible and impossible – a dialectical antimony characteristic of esoteric argument. This antimony arises from the fact that all known tongues are fragments, whose roots, in a sense […] can only be found in and validated by […] 'pure language'", a common, "hidden spring" trying to force itself through all our differing languages (64).

no longer signifies anything to the original. […] Just as the

expressions of life are most intimately tied to the living thing […] so

translation issues from the original. Though less from its life than from

its 'surviving life' [*Überleben*]. Coming after the original, translation

marks for significant works […] the stage of their continuing life

[*Fortleben*] ("The Task of the Translator" 299).

For Benjamin, a translation is an "expression" of a ST that is in a "tie" with it by

virtue of the process of translation. Benjamin states that "the life and continuing life

of works of art must be understood not metaphorically but as simple matters of fact"

(299); not that the ST is to be personified as living but that it is an expression of

collected meaning that has infinite potential to be rejuvenated and disseminated

through translation. This is both its "surviving life" and "continuing life".

        As Derrida's translation of these terms and response to Benjamin clarifies:

> [a]t times [Benjamin] says '*Überleben*' and at other times '*Fortleben.*'
>
> These two words do not mean the same thing ('*Überleben*' means
>
> above life and therefore survival as something rising above life;
>
> '*Fortleben*' means survival in the sense of something prolonging life)
>
> […]. Given the surviving structure of an original text […] the task of
>
> the translator is precisely to respond to this demand for survival which
>
> is the very structure of the original text (*Ear of the Other* 122).

A ST's "demand for survival" – the capacity to survive through translation – is part of

a text's potential to be rewritten and renewed. Given that a ST is a "structure", the

fabric of its parts are relational, and therefore each part must be crucial to its survival

("survival" being a part of the structure itself). Derrida argues: "the translator must

neither reproduce, represent, nor copy the original, nor even, essentially, care about

communicating the meaning of the original" (*Ear of the Other* 122). This is because

"it is a question of neither representation of reproduction nor communication", and

that in fact translation "modifies the original even as it also modifies the translating

language"; both are in flux, and the agreed "contract between the original and

translating text […] is destined to assure a survival" (122). *Fortleben* and *Überleben*

– the prolonged life and the surviving life of a ST – are not direct modifiers of a ST.

The modification and metamorphosis of a ST is because of the "contract" between it

and its translation. *Fortleben* and *Überleben* are phenomena resulting from that "tie".

Benjamin's claim that a translation "cannot be of any significance to the original"

("The Task of the Translator" 299) means exactly that: the significance is not from

the translation to the ST, it is from the contractual arrangement in which both the ST

and translation participate. Consequently, *Fortleben* and *Überleben* are the product of

a process of deferred and relational meaning between texts, in a contract subject to

différance and therefore to *la trace*.

   In relation to the topic of this chapter, the question I want to pose is: how can

the continued/surviving life of a ST be evidenced in the practice of composing

poetry? To go at least some way in answering this, I will now examine an instance in

the work of three Cambridge School poets – Andrew Crozier, John James and J. H.

Prynne – where the translation of formal constraint and image, and of the French

word, "bonheur" (Crozier 159), is survived, renewed and continued in an oblique

relationship between the poets' collections.

Crozier's *High Zero* is a synthesis of James' *Striking the Pavilion of Zero* and of Prynne's *High Pink on Chrome*. Crozier makes direct reference to the composition of *High Zero* and the interaction between his work and that of Prynne's and James' poetry in an interview with Andrew Duncan, commenting:

> the poems were not written sequentially but so many first lines, so many second lines, so many third lines and so on. I thought I would complicate that by introducing a more definite constraint whereby some of the lines, which had to sort of graft themselves on to what was there already, at the same time had to fit in the context of two other poems, those poems being based in their format on the last poem in Prynne's book […] and the first poem in James' book, […] poems which were written to constraints I knew nothing of. […] I don't see [*High Zero*] as a reply to them […] I wouldn't go beyond that to speculate whether there's some kind of implied critique of either of the two books mentioned, or of the two poems chosen (Crozier 135).

The poems by Prynne and James that Crozier makes reference to and which inform his own "flanking poems" (135) are James' poem "May Day Greetings 1971" in *Striking the Pavilion of Zero* and the final poem from Prynne's *High Pink on Chrome*, quoted below at length against Crozier's poetry for parallel comparison:

> eating a plate
>
> from day to day
>
> sharper than ever

blow your nose

in authentic

rigorousness

advance to Bonheur (James 131).

Begin life again

from day to day bonheur

snorting and sharply rigorous

at the end of a line

let it begin again

it is a dream before birth

The advance of happiness (Crozier 159).

Crozier's assertion that a "reply" was not his intention when writing *High Zero* at

first seems to contradict the interplay between these two framing poems. They act as

a repartee between both poets, subtly transposing one another; even the form remains

identical across both poems. If one is to read these two poems as a translation of idea

concepts, then Crozier is, as Walter Benjamin states, giving "the latest and most

complete unfolding" (300) of James' poem, which is a source. The poem teases the

idea of translation as a method of poetic composition, as "bonheur" becomes its

English approximation, "happiness"; "the advance of happiness" – an allusion by

Crozier to James' line "advance to Bonheur" – expands and furthers the line by

suggesting that the "advance of happiness" is underway. James' imperative "advance

to Bonheur" is no longer direct, and the translation of "Bonheur" to "happiness" gives

weight to the idea that the "advance" is happening, or has happened.

       The capitalized "B" of James' "Bonheur" presents the word as a proper noun,

a destination to be reached. This is reduced to lower case in Crozier's poem; it also

appears earlier on as "from day to day bonheur", suggesting that the word's primacy

has changed. It has been undercut by being acknowledged on the second line, made

almost tedious and reusable ("day to day"), and no longer the place that James' final

line commands the reader to move towards. Then, Crozier playfully brings "bonheur"

back around to its English translation in the last line of his poem ("happiness") as an

oblique continuation of the term, indirectly echoing James' poem. Translation is, in

effect, advancing the 'life' of the poem.

       Next, comparing Prynne and Crozier:

> The float is criminal; access by
>
> blood spread, dimercaprol 200mg.
>
> Dead right you are as you bleed
>
> for what you see and what you do.

> . . . .

> And for ever the day ruffs out
>
> at the neck, taken with brightnesse,
>
> too brilliant to the touch; inside

the thoughtful sphere of that wrong (Prynne 263).

It would flout its law: saturation by

the contents spread anecdotally (BAL).

Shored up together to breathe

you hear the brain stay tuned to you

. . . .

And for ever and a day runs on

at arm's length, held with scents

too vivid to see: beneath

the reckless apex of that hope (Crozier 143).

It is worth noting here a few specific examples that not only "unfold" Prynne's poem

but do so as an emulation of the underlying formal structure and metre. This is

evident in the lines "for what you see and what you do" and "you hear the brain stay

tuned to you", which, both at eight monosyllables and ending on the same rhyme,

mirror one another with a formal preciseness. This can also be seen in "blood spread,

dimercaprol 200mg" and "the contents spread anecdotally (BAL)", which each have

an exact syllabic count of twelve and mutually reciprocate on a denotative and

connotative level the motif of the drug, British Anti-Lewisite (also dimercaprol).[22]

The "spread" of this image between both poems parallels the action of Lewisite gas,

---

[22] British Anti-Lewisite (BAL); also dimercaprol. A compound developed during the
Second World War as an antidote to Lewisite gas, an arsenic-based chemical warfare
agent.

permeating and altering the composition of verse. This "spread" can also be tracked through the half-rhyme of "bleed" and "breathe" – the action of letting blood is antithetical to drawing breath – and even syntax through "the thoughtful sphere of that wrong" and "the reckless apex of that hope", which diametrically inverts the meaning of the line in Prynne's poem: "thoughtful" becomes "reckless", "sphere" changes to "apex" and "wrong" is turned into "hope".

As each line of Crozier's poem follows an imagistic and stylistic prompt from Prynne's, this demonstrates a simultaneous alteration of and expansion of meaning that forms a relationship – or as Derrida describes, a "contract" – between the work of both poets. However, Crozier's awareness of the source of his poem again results in transformed images of continuation and renewal throughout. Prynne's "And for ever the day ruffs out" is transformed into Crozier's "And for ever and a day runs on"; the steady elongation is in contrast to how the day "ruffs" and bunches arbitrarily in Prynne's poem. The ruff of the day is then stuck "at the neck", whereas in Crozier's poem the day is "at arm's length", just beyond the speaker's reach and free to "run". This metaphor of elapsing, spaced and recurring time parallels Derrida's aforementioned claim that language is "a retention and protention of differences, a spacing and a temporization", and the imagery that Crozier uses to respond to Prynne's poem is that of *différance*, of a relational tie, and therefore "a play of traces" (*Margins of Philosophy* 15).

At what point does one refer to these poems as translations of one another? In such close cultural and linguistic proximities as certain schools of poets, the delineations are complex and not always as clear as translating a foreign language text into a target language. However, I argue that there is no great difference in the type of translational activity effectuated here: the poems of Prynne and James are STs

that are in a translational contract with Crozier's *High Zero*. The web of deferred

meaning, form and style between the poets' work is a contract that binds them. What

Crozier presents is the continued and surviving life of the work of James and Prynne

within language (English) and also between languages (French and English) that

ensures survival; a continuation of all STs and of the translation (in this case, *High*

Zero).

Crozier's statement "at the end of a line / let it begin again" (159) is a telling

summation of the process and aims of his poetry. *High Zero* is, as Crozier says, not a

"reply" to or a "critique" of the collections *High Pink on Chrome* and *Striking the*

Pavilion of Zero. It is not a response collection: it is a collection of *Fortleben* and

Überleben; a relational construct that foregrounds *différance* and *la trace* by retaining

elements of the poems of James and Prynne but furthering, adapting, and

reinterpreting them. In doing so, Crozier forms his own creation with the presence-

absence, the "vital tie" ("The Task of the Translator" 299) of the other two poets'

work, allowing their poems to "begin again".

2.2 Maintaining the Past

Ed Dorn is not a poet ordinarily associated with translation. He did, however,

translate with his colleague and friend, Gordon Brotherston, who transliterated texts

from Nahuatl and Spanish for Dorn. During an interview conducted in December

1998, referring to *Recollections of Gran Apachería*, Ed Dorn states: "I don't need to,

or don't intend to address Indians […] [b]ut attitudes exhibited and displayed from

my own race are my business, and that's the business of any poet" (*Ed Dorn Live*

157). To "address" another "race", interpreting a sequence of historical events[23] from

the perspective of a white, western male was undoubtedly problematic for Dorn. I

believe that his opinion related to "race", and of a poet's "business" therein, informs

his translational process. My aim in this section is to draw a brief parallel between

Dorn and Brotherston's translations of the *Florentine Codex* and Dorn's own creative

work, *Recollections of Gran Apachería*, to demonstrate how the activity of

translation, together with his refusal to "address" those of other cultures, influenced

Dorn's subsequent compositional approach as a poet. Consequently, I will aim to

justify that *Recollections of Gran Apachería* is a form of translation through the trace

of the evidence it presents, the social and historical commentary it offers, and through

the omniscient narration of Dorn's own poetic voice.

Lawrence Venuti's provocation in *The Translator's Invisibility* cites

translation as a form of "ethnocentric violence" (20); that there is a "reconstitution of

the foreign text in accordance with values, beliefs, and representations that pre-exist it

in the translating language and culture" (18). It is from this view of translation as a

mode of cultural distortion – or "violence" – that the sensitive issue of how one might

translate a ST from another, culturally different group of people into a target language

with any validity or authenticity arises. If one is to accept that there will always be

damage inflicted upon a ST while it is in transit from one literary space and culture to

another, is there a point where a translation, in this violent occupation of the ST,

becomes so dislocated from the original that it establishes itself a new text in its own

---

[23] *Recollections of Gran Apachería* presents a selection of poems as an account of the Apaches in the 19th century American-Indian wars. It should be noted that when Dorn uses the term "race" here is likely socially acceptable in historical context, taken to mean culturally different and often indigenous groups, such as the Apache.

right? If so, given Dorn's reluctance to "address" other cultures, who is the speaker in his poems addressing – and how?

Dorn and Brotherston's translation of "Good Times at Tula" from the *Florentine Codex* provides a means of understanding this. The translation conveys a sense of Dorn's own reluctance to be implicated with addressing other culturally distinct groups:

> The toltecs were certainly rich
>
> Food was not scarce enough to sell
>
> . . . .
>
> The toltecs did not in fact lack anything
>
> No one was poor or had a shabby house (12).

A parallel can be drawn between Dorn's narration and the documentation of Bernardino de Sahagún,[24] as each line functions as a commentary on the indigenous Toltecs. Dorn states that the Toltecs were "certainly rich" and they did not "in fact lack anything", presenting what appears to be a factual account. However, this is unavoidably laced with subjectivity: Dorn's use of "in fact" suggests that established fact has been made redundant, and that it is not correct compared to the version that the poet offers. This is furthered through the presence of Dorn's vernacular, as the

---

[24] Bernardino de Sahagún (1499-1590 AD), a Franciscan friar and missionary priest who documented the culture and traditions of indigenous Mesoamericans in the *Florentine Codex*.

adjective "shabby" lends an American mid-west roughness to the tone, widening the

gulf between Dorn's white, western American roots and that of Mesoamerica.

 If one compares the above translation to the stanzas below, excerpted from

Recollections of Gran Apachería, similarities are evident:

   It is bright to recollect

   that the Apaches were noble

   not in themselves

   so much as their Ideas

   . . . .

   The children of both sexes

   had perfect freedom

   And were never punished

   They were wired to the desert

   And they were invisible

   in the mountains (Dorn, *Collected Poems* 368)

Dorn presents us with a distanced, historical commentary through the past tense,

authoritative statement "the Apaches were noble", prefaced by the present tense

comment "it is bright to recollect". This shift from present tense to past enables Dorn

to generate distance between the people he is describing and himself; in doing so, the

Apache wars transmute into sober reminiscences, presented through the lens of

present-day and through Dorn as the poet. The language that connects both the

translation of the *Florentine Codex* and these stanzas also bears a continuation of tone: the Apache children were "wired" to the desert, which is steeped in Dorn's vernacular. However, and crucially, his refusal to speak for the Apache is clear: that they are noble "not in themselves / so much as their Ideas" removes the implication that Dorn is a mouthpiece for the Apache; he does not want to call them noble as a people because he is not one of them, yet he can perhaps form a judgement of their ideas, the product of the Apache.

Consequently, Dorn's prerogative through both translation and in writing *Recollections of Gran Apachería* is not to speak to or for another culture, but to speak of another culture. Such was his intention: the "business" of a poet being to comment from the poet's perspective alone, and so, when speaking for his own culture, the narrative activity present in Dorn's translational work with Brotherston clearly manifests in *Gran Apachería*. As a further comparative example, consider the following extract from the translation "The Aztec Priests' Speech" set against "The Moving, Invisible Spectre of the Phratry On the Traitor Peaches":

> And now what? How is it,
>
> What are we supposed to say,
>
> What shall we present to our ears?
>
>
> Can it be said we are anything at all?
>
> We are small subjects (Dorn and Brotherston 37).
>
>
> Who can tell what a traitor is?
>
> To What? His own comfort?

> Are there any traitors to that?

> Those dying of discomfort

> can accommodate it most (Dorn, *Collected Poems* 374).

The string of emotive, indignant rhetorical questions found in the Nahuatl of the *Florentine Codex* is emulated in Dorn's own poetry; this is notable because in both instances the questions precede an acceptance that "We are small subjects" and "Those dying of discomfort / can accommodate it the most". Even when Dorn uses "we" in translations from the *Florentine Codex*, he is not comfortable speaking for the Toltec: the line "Can it be said we are anything at all?" is perhaps revealing in this case, as it questions whether the pronoun "we" is "anything", and whether it is at all appropriate to be used by the translator. In this case, I would argue that Dorn is writing of a common humanity between different, culturally diverse groups of people that transcends pronouns; and in the example above it is the subjugation of man that becomes translatable above notions of "race", ideology and atrocities of war. These are themes that cannot easily be addressed ("How is it"; "To What?") or, indeed, are not able to be spoken for by another who has not experienced them.

When approaching any poet-translator's work, one would expect to see evidence of a personal, poetic voice in the translation. In Dorn's translations of Nahuatl this is no exception, although what is also clear is the parity of tone and method in both Dorn's translation and his own creative work. To frame the preceding analyses, it is pertinent to revisit Dorn himself and consider his correspondence with the war archaeologist, Karl Laumbach, as he comments on the subject of *Gran Apachería*:

> [Laumbach] is saying that my statements about Victorio are interesting because they, in the poetic sense […] justify and confirm his own work about the placement of the artefacts and the relics of the battle [of Hembrillo Basin] itself […] I'm just saying that the faith in poetry as an instrument [of] maintaining the past is legitimate (*Ed Dorn Live* 160).

It is his belief of "maintaining the past" that informs Dorn's verse. It explains the poet's reluctance to assume and alter elements of the past, and instead to present them as objects curated by the speaker and examined by the reader. In this sense, *Recollections of Gran Apachería* can be read as a translation because it is a simultaneous unfolding of historical trace and a present-day assessment of it, forming a collection that both recounts the endurance of people under forces of oppression and forewarns of its consequences.

Dorn's work is an example of how the creation of new poetry can use the translation of historical sources – pieces of evidence, documents and artefacts – that act as prompts for the poet. To maintain, the *Oxford Dictionary of English* states, is to "cause or enable (a condition or situation) to continue" (1068). It is the utilization of poetry and translation as a method of continuing the past in the present that problematizes the issue of how one might address other cultures – how a translator chooses to speak through a translation – because the past cannot be prolonged or maintained without change. There is a fundamental dislocation between the difficult, collective past experience of a culturally different group of people and the poet's very different, personal present. Consequently, as with the inability to achieve equivalence

in linguistic translation, historical sources can only ever be translated, interpreted and expressed in new and varied ways by the translator. In this way, the work of the poet-translator must be seen as one of curation but also of fictionalization: both to further the discussion of an event or circumstance by presenting fragments of the past (a ST) and to hold them against one another, to examine them, and to (re)tell a story through the context of here and now.

2.3 Intertextuality and Trace

On the subject of creative composition, Mikhail Bakhtin notes:

> [i]t seems […] that it is possible to speak directly of a special *polyphonic mode of artistic thinking*, which extends beyond the bounds of the novelistic genre. This mode of thinking opens up aspects of man — above all the *thinking human consciousness and the dialogical sphere of man's existence* — which cannot be *artistically* mastered from a *monological position* (Bakhtin 228).

His recognition of writers extending beyond a "*monological position*" comes from "novelistic" interlacing: the "*polyphonic mode*". Bakhtin is privileging the awareness of other texts in the writing process and how they are integral to the writer's present "mode of artistic thinking"; a connection between parallel, interdependent and symbolically related parts, which in turn assist in the genesis of a new text's meaning. "Intertextuality", the term that perhaps most aptly represents this extension "beyond the bounds of the novelistic genre", is the identification of a reference to an outside,

textual source in another text. Superficially, intertextuality does not sound dissimilar

to trace and the presence-absence of other sources in relation to the new text.

However, I would argue that this is not entirely the case; the two are separable and

exhibit their phenomena in different ways. Indeed, as Mary Orr posits: "can

[intertextuality] fend off Derrida's related, and equally successful, neologisms to

maintain its distinctive relevance, even difference from *différance*?" (3). In this

section, I want to invert Orr's question and explore whether trace is perhaps a more

relevant lens through which to view the process of translation as a "*polyphonic mode*"

of writing than intertextuality. Consequently, I will examine the activity of

intertextuality in relation to *la trace* to therefore identify its activity in the creation of

new texts from a poet's practice-based perspective.

The philosopher Julia Kristeva, in response to Bakhtin's assertion that writing

is a process that occupies more than a monological position, presents "[t]he concept

of text as ideologeme", which

> determines the very procedure of a semiotics that, by studying the text
>
> as intertextuality, considers it as such within (the text of) society and
>
> history. The ideologeme of a text is the focus where knowing
>
> rationality grasps the transformation of *utterances* (to which the text is
>
> irreducible) into a totality (the text) as well as the insertions of this
>
> totality into the historical and social text (37).

Kristeva's mention of "the text as intertextuality" in *Desire in Language* is generally

acknowledged as the first use of the term "intertextuality" (Orr 20). It signals a

movement towards the necessity for the historical and social contextual positioning of

sources, as well as the content of the texts themselves, as a vital factor in the synthesis of new texts. Textual measurement by way of ideologeme – the point of "knowing rationality" of a text's relation to its source(s) – does not appear to place emphasis on the "totality (the text)" as being able to be read without the absolute necessity of context. The reader must be aware of the text's ST(s) in order to gain the fullest meaning of the text. Kristeva further notes: "the functions defined according to the extra-novelistic textual set (Te) take on value within the novelistic textual set (Tn). The ideologeme of the novel is precisely this intertextual function defined according to Te and having value within Tn" (37), which is an assessment that gauges the worth of sources within the produced text.

It is because Kristeva's ideologeme equation operates on the concept of extra-textual sources having "value" in the produced text that I feel one could be led to confuse intertextuality and trace. How much a source is worth in relation to its offspring is misleading at best when compared to trace, and therefore deconstruction theory, precisely because the structure of trace is non-evident, and masks its prominence. It is, as one might recall, "presence-absence" (Derrida, *Of Grammatology* 70): something that was, a present that never came to be. Whereas intertextuality elicits and depends upon connections between texts, trace and *différance* simultaneously obscure, suggest and defer these connections as a text unfolds. I will now use the framework of the ideologeme set out by Kristeva, applied to my own work and the work of others, in order to examine why I believe that trace is a more pertinent phenomena to observe in these examples of creative writing than intertextuality.

Below is quatrain XXX from *Tamám*:

> for what it's worth
>
> Rafi was right
>
> it is nothing for a man to die
>
> bargain encore & rise (p. 7).

Rafi, a character from James Elroy Flecker's play *Hassan*, is introduced in this stanza. The (Te) of these quatrains therefore suggests the involvement of the play, *Hassan*, and perhaps a requirement to understand the character of Rafi and his significance and purpose within the play. However, this is not a necessity: the quatrain works to convey a particular argument, "[i]t is nothing for a man to die" (Flecker 69), lifted from *Hassan* and repeated in *Tamám*, and does not withhold that information from the reader. The quatrain's independence does not create reliance on the ST because the texts are not necessarily parallel. The reader is not at a disadvantage for being unaware of who Rafi is or what he might symbolize in an outside text; this much is evident within the quatrain. It is supplemental to know Rafi's role within *Hassan* (and the fact he and his wife, Pervaneh, die, and are presented as ghosts near the closing scenes of the play) because that role is mainly supplanted by Rafi's new, independent function within *Tamám*. The worth of (Te) within (Tn) is therefore minimized as one is presented with the consequence of Rafi's belief (he "was right", for example) and the poetic argument that follows is self-sufficient.

As establishing a connection between a text and other texts and sources clarifies the dependency of one upon the other, the obfuscation of a clear link between texts problematizes the concept of intertextuality. Quatrain LXV of *Tamám*, for example, does not provide a clear trajectory from the (Te) to the (Tn):

well. I can't see the stars that sit

behind the sun. I have also repeated

many lines. I have aped poets upon poets.

I have also struggled to lift the wine (p. 16).

The images of "wine", "stars", "lines", and even of the "sun" — images heavily used in *The Rubáiyát* — are present. However, there is a difficulty in demonstrating intertextuality between *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* and these lines because the imagistic content is not obviously recognizable as exact "*utterances*" (Kristeva 37) from the ST. Instead, there is a patterned sense that these lines might shadow various quatrains from FitzGerald's translation of *The Rubáiyát*:

XXXVIII

One Moment in Annihilation's Waste,

One moment, of the Well of Life to taste—

     The Stars are setting, and the Caravan

Starts for the dawn of Nothing —Oh, make haste!

XLI

For 'Is' and 'Is-Not' though *with* Rule and Line,

And 'Up-and-Down' *without*, I could define,

     I yet in all I only cared to know,

Was never deep in anything but — Wine.

LI

The Moving Finger writes, and, having writ,

Moves on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit

Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,

Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it (Karlin, *The Rubáiyát* 35, 36,

41).

In each of FitzGerald's translated quatrains, there are residual images and partially

reconfigured phrases that sit in my quatrain that I would not consider to be

intertextual in the sense that Kristeva offers. While my quatrain contains imagistic

devices that sit within the ST, and it could share with FitzGerald's quatrains what one

might consider to be similarities, there is not a requirement for a referent source. The

quatrain can stand by itself and does not require FitzGerald's translated quatrains to

act as a dependent, parallel text in order to construct the stanza's meaning.

Whereas the intertext, as Kristeva states, "is a permutation of texts, an

intertextuality: in the space of a given text, several utterances, taken from other texts,

intersect and neutralize one another" (Kristeva 36), I posit that the specificity of ST

utterances in the given examples from *Tamám* do not "intersect" the text with a

degree of understanding that permits intertextuality. They are not utterances in the

fully formed, transferrable sense (such as the passing mention of Rafi in quatrain

XXX) and the images introduced in quatrain LXV are reduced to discrete images (for

instance, "stars", "lines," and "wine"). The referents (Te) are dislocated and obscured

within the totality of the new text (Tn). It is more fitting to say that the trace of

FitzGerald's translation – the absence of, and suggestion of, images from his

quatrains – is oblique, implied and relational rather than dependent on the ST of *The Rubáiyát*.

Trace's role in creative writing's relationship with translation is intimate. Derrida's argument that "the signified is originarily and essentially […] trace, that it is *always already in the position of the signifier*" (*Of Grammatology* 73) indicates that the process of signification between an object and its word label is "*always already*" relational from the moment of its conception; one requires the other for meaning. Therefore, the moment a writer puts pen to paper is exactly the moment when the action of the trace is in operation: it is unavoidable precisely because it is ever-present as the signifier and signified of language. As an extension of this, the weight of pre-existing material (contextual, textual, experiential, etc.) comes to bear on the writing process because the process itself is relational; it is the deferral of sources of meaning to one another. For instance, one can hold multiple translations of the same ST against one another and arrive at a similar conclusion:

> […] Thou who in Virgin-founts
>> Delightest, twine me sunny garlands,
>>> Twine for my Lamia, twine a chaplet,

> Pimplea, sweet one! Nothing, apart from thee,
> Profit my honours! Him with thy newest strains,
>> Him with the Lesbian lyre to hallow,
>>> Thee and thy sisters it well becometh (Phelps 26).

> […] O queen of the silvery floods
>
> Wherein thou delightest, for Lamia's hair
>
> Come, weave in a garland thy sunniest buds.
>
>
> Dear lady of Pimpla! my song in his fame
>
> Without thee is nothing. 'Tis only his due
>
> That thou and thy sisters should honour his name
>
> With Lesbian quill on a virginal new (Marris 34).

These lines are a translation from Book I, Ode XXVI of Horace's *Odes* by two translators: Philip Phelps (1897) and W.S. Marris (1912). There are definite similarities in the vernacular used by both translators, and it could be reasoned that the tradition of translating Latin into English, in a scholarly context of the 19th and early 20th century, meant that these translators were required to use a particular voice, style and lexicon. Both translators use "delightest" (*gaudes*) in the second line and mention the "sunny garlands" (*apricos necte flores*). Even though they differ in their phrasing of the closing couplet, which becomes inverted in each case, this does not lift the sense that both of these translations are operating in a similar vein of the poetic, communicating the same images.

One hundred years later, however, this orthodoxy has changed. Tim Atkins' translation of Ode XXVI, written by a poet-translator coming from a totally different time, context and movement, is striking because of his interpretative summation of the sense of the verse's images, coupled with his own poetic and contextual triangulation:

[…]

take joy

in the pistils

of hyde park

horse-chestnuts

the fourth

week of may

or weave them

into garlands

brain steeped with

the bad

fluorescent juices

of love (Atkins, *Horace* 14).

While the "garlands" are still present, Atkins' poem seems to be anchored by very

few closely translated words that cross-reference to the other translations:

"Delightest" becomes "take joy", a much less formal and more compact expression,

and "the bad / fluorescent juices" seem to bear a resemblance to the "Virgin-founts"

and "silvery floods" (*fontibus integris*: "fresh sources"). Atkins also allows elements

of his personal, social context to influence the composition of the new translation. He

mentions "hyde park" and "the fourth / week of may" which, although obviously not

in the other translations of Ode XXVI or found in the ST, become devices that

convey a web of like sentiment, rooted in the poet's composition of lines. Even the

form of Atkins' translation is very different — pared down and avant-garde —

demonstrating the seismic effect that modernist and postmodernist thought have had

on the composition of poetry and other forms of writing over the last century. What

constructs Atkins' worldview cannot be ignored. It is not primarily an intertextual

phenomenon that the parts of Atkins' day-to-day life, such as the image of "horse-

chestnuts", of place ("hyde park") and of time ("may") would be used in reference to

anything established other than the personal moment of poetic composition; it is *la*

trace, traces of memory, sense, and of presence.

For a poet-translator, translation is a rich point of convergence for myriad

sources to bleed into new creative work. It foregrounds writing as an act of likeness,

and of relational meaning, which is why intertextuality, trace and *différance* are

associated phenomena. The final product of artistic expression features

reconfigurations and dislocations of those sources. When Derrida states: "[t]he

inscription is the written origin: traced and henceforth inscribed in a system, in a

figure which it no longer governs" (*Writing and Difference* 143), he is not only

articulating the inevitability that "the written origin" is continually taken up within

the dynamic of "a system", but that the system is relational and therefore not

governed by any one part. It is only logical to assume that any new translation, and

any written text ("inscription") must follow suit. Thus, a new text is a realignment of

parts, where the synthesis of source elements, and of absences, becomes suggestive

and supplemental. The produced text – itself a component of a system of meaning –

bears the almost indiscernible ghostliness[25] of its other, interrelated sources.

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[25] I discuss this further, in relation to the concept of "lost futures", in 3.3, p. 122.

2.4 Interpretations of Dawn

<div align="center">LXXXIII</div>

should it all come to this

in storage aisles & shy night oceans

a still drawn likeness a construction

re interpretations of dawn (*Tamám* p. 20).

In his translator's notes for *The Rubáiyát*, Edward FitzGerald makes reference to

"[t]he '*False Dawn*;' *Subhi Kházib*, a transient light on the Horizon about an hour

before the *Subhi sâdhik*, or 'True Dawn'". He then explains that the "Persians call the

Morning Gray, or Dusk, '*Wolf-and-Sheep-While*' […] 'Almost at odds with, which is

which.'" (Karlin, *The Rubáiyát* 54). The ambiguity of the phenomenon known as the

"*False Dawn*", and of the confusing likeness between dawn and dusk, led the

Persians to create terms to define these periods; terms that represent graduations of

transitioning light at different times of the day. What is superficially similar about the

"*False Dawn*", "True Dawn", and dusk is only a mask: they cannot be the same.

Equivalence between them is not possible because of the time and nature of their

occurrence. Consequently, the terms that explain these differing transitional periods

of light are antithetical: "'*Wolf-and-Sheep-While*'" metaphorizes the ambiguity of

dawn and dusk as the deceptive, predatory nature of the wolf masquerading as the

meek and unassuming sheep. This is reiterated in "[a]lmost at odds with, which is

which" – there is not a clear way to tell one from the other, and so the observer is

caught between the two. The Persians were interpreting dawn, using metaphor and

idiom to give it a new story; they translated it into their culture and language in a way in which they understood it.

In *Tamám*, the image of dawn and graduations of transitioning light is one that I have used in order to echo this ambiguity of time, of retelling, and of telling anew crucial to a ST's *Fortleben*. The first such instance of this is in stanza I: "bowl of eye in blue / a coming noose of light" (p. 4), which begins the *rubáiyát* with a reconfiguration of FitzGerald's "Awake! For Morning in the Bowl of Night" and "The Sultán's Turret in a Noose of Light" (Karlin, *The Rubáiyát* 16). This establishes the timeline at the very start of the day on which the Somerton Man's body is discovered, framed by "a coming noose of light". By stanza LVII, the day seems to be at a close: "Meaning halates like spilt cream opacity / in somehow early twilight now again" (p. 15), where meaning is likened to the semi-opaque quality of cream and the partially obscured light of twilight. The speaker's surprise of time being "somehow early twilight now again" begins a gradual fragmentation of the temporal structure in the poetic narrative. Quatrain LXX states: "draw dawn in the golden ratio" (p. 18), presenting an idealized version of dawn that is drawn and not observed in real-time, displacing and deferring "dawn" as an abstraction; by quatrain XCV, the "spilt cream opacity" of LVII becomes the "False Dawn / almost an egg-yellow filament" (p. 23), explicitly mentioning the "False Dawn" and introducing the idea of an artificial light ("filament") along with it, thus questioning the authenticity of "dawn" in the sequence.

The perception of "half light" (XLIII, p. 12) is a motif that I have tried to keep active by using other images that are transformations of it, because the meaning of all of these images is relational, deferred, and of *différance*. They elicit a kind of half-meaning made clearer by their relation to other images in the text. Quatrain XVIII

draws from "half light" and presents "unspent half-lives" (p. 6), holding the

ambiguity of transitions of light against the transition of life into death, and of

radioactive substances – an oblique reference to the Woomera rocket range near

Adelaide (see 4.4, p. 172) and the decay of the Somerton Man's body. Quatrain LXII

alters this to "like a memory of here bright sun" (p. 16), creating a distortion of the

image of sun through the fallibility of memory. In quatrain CI "halved eyes open" (p.

26), suggesting sleep with eyes half open, furthers the notion of limited "half light" in

vision and of the shifting perception of poetic imagery. These images connect to one

another, prompt and further one another, and work to create a layered text that

continues to renew the presentation of its relational meaning.

I have written *Tamám* with the appearance of chronology[26] as a veneer

covering a somewhat disrupted chronological structure. Its form, while presented as a

series of quatrains that run in numerical sequence, does not have a strict

circumstantial chronology because I wanted to reflect the sense of temporal

ambiguity that is emphasized throughout by the reconfiguration of the image of dawn.

This decision was also informed by the editing and restructuring that FitzGerald

undertook for his translation of Khayyám, by which "[h]e took out of his Persian

manuscripts of Omar those quatrains which would fit into his prefabricated pattern,

and arranged them in groups together" (Arberry 23). In particular, FitzGerald

comments that he wanted to give "Omar's thoughts room to turn in, as also the Day

which the poem occupies", asserting that "[Omar] begins with Dawn pretty sober and

contemplative: then as he thinks and drinks, grows savage, blasphemous, etc., and

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[26] *Tamám* appears to have a chronological structure because it follows the pattern of
what poet Jack Spicer terms the "serial poem" (*House that Jack Built* 52), which is a
chronological unit of writing (as I discuss throughout 4.1, p. 140). This is also
explored in 4.4, p. 169.

then again sobers down into melancholy at nightfall" (*Letters: Volume III* 339). Of

course, FitzGerald's reasoning is all supposition – an interpretation of the evidence

presented in Omar's *rubáiyát* – and it demonstrates his willingness to create a new

narrative arc from the various ST manuscripts that he consulted.

Restructuring the quatrains of a ST to suit a new narrative in a translation

opens up possibilities for the ST, and I felt that this kind of retelling became

increasingly vital as the writing evolved because the nature of translation is that of

creation, and therefore of recreation. The circling variations of ambiguous dawns that

continue to recur provide an opportunity for the process of translation and retelling to

begin again. This was one area I initially struggled to represent, and I wrote the

following draft of free-form poetry as an attempt to restart the narrative and to offer a

newly imagined perspective of the Somerton Man:

what is there to say

when, incomprehensibly

you stand & speak

(how can you?)

………………………..

where there's nothing but a beach

& the sea coming fast onto it

with signs of morning coming

but not ever quite making it (from Appendix A, p. 182).

The problem beyond trying to create an ambiguous subject through the use of the

pronoun "you" is that the poetry becomes too abstract in what it was trying to

achieve: "when, incomprehensibly / you stand & speak" is meant to imply the Somerton Man exhibiting signs of life, yet this is undercut by the use of "incomprehensibly" and the rhetorical question "(how can you?)", which acts as an interjection from the poet and negates the imagery that follows. Even the concrete image of "nothing but a beach" seems drawn back at the mention of "nothing" that pervades the line. The "signs of morning coming / but not ever quite making it" return to the notion of the False Dawn (and eventually these lines did evolve into quatrain XCV, p. 23), but its unfolding in the above lines is not well-formed; it lacks a sustained image, becomes an explanatory statement and therefore diminishes the deferral of imagistic meaning throughout the poem.

To remedy this, the presentation of the development of and recurrence[27] of image was key. As I have mentioned, reusing and modifying dawn and phases of light throughout is one method I used to articulate the continual renewal of a source image set in ambiguous time, further reflecting the retentive and protentive nature of *la trace*. However, the manner in which I present this imagery has been derived in part from that used by Ed Dorn's translational practice of "maintaining the past" (*Ed Dorn Live* 160). In quatrain XXXVIII, the lines "most mornings at this desk to type / so difficult at times to hold / the evidence still to gather" (p. 11) are an introspection from my perspective, reflecting on the evidence-based nature of the sources that have contributed to the writing process of *Tamám*. I wanted to convey the sense that writing from sources, and of sources, is a process that is one of recurrence; the parts continually cycle around, prompting new narratives that start "most mornings", trail

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[27] See 4.1 (p. 144) for an expansion of this subject of image correspondence and recurrence through the poetry of Jack Spicer.

in and out, are "difficult at times to hold" and lead to an increasing number of sources

to be considered ("still to gather").

The presentation of image-as-evidence has allowed me to hold multiple

strands of sources together simultaneously and parallels the main police investigation

and amateur investigations that followed the discovery of the Somerton Man's body

in 1948. I have given one such example of this in the introduction to this thesis, in

quatrain L, where I list key people from the Somerton Man case (see 1.3, p.57). The

quatrains below are a further example of the process of assimilating other sources into

poetry:

LI

life & leads slip I follow not even

circle 'truth' in dug outs market places

Wikileaks & off peak traffic

hits me wasting time lines move

LII

Fedosimov leers

phantoms dance

propped up laying it out too late

this bedside lamp beside my Self (p. 13).

The process of constructing an explanatory narrative for "'truth'" is confusing and

flawed, as emphasized by the inverted commas around it, because the truth is in this

case subjective and built from the scraps of "leads" that "slip": sources that shuffle to

the surface of everyday life – like Atkins' translational approach in *Horace* – such as during "off peak traffic" and "market places", and even on the internet whistle-blower website "Wikileaks". Then, in the next quatrain the overwhelming number of these layered sources culminate in the haunting, leering figure of Fedosimov.[28]

      This is continued through "phantoms dance", a reference to FitzGerald's quatrain XLVI: "Round which we Phantom Figures come and go". The transience of life is mirrored in the flickering movement of light, as FitzGerald writes: "'Tis nothing but a Magic Shadow-show, / Play'd in a Box whose Candle is the Sun" (Karlin, *The Rubáiyát* 39). My transposition of this quatrain is the inclusion of "this bedside lamp beside my Self", another artificial light source (a "lamp") that projects onto "my Self" – a constructed, named identity marked by the capitalization of "S" on "Self" – that simultaneously presents the poet's self as a fictionalized element, a proper noun, but also sets it as a relational signifier amongst changing and cycling images, the deceptive nature of fidelity, and the ambiguity of fabricated light. This again foregrounds the tensions surrounding translation as a "new & Necessary Fiction" (p. 5): a ST is a prompt for the construction of a new text (a translation), but is also part of a relational web of traces, of deferred and deferring sources of meaning.

      With *Tamám*'s form, my deviation from the traditional, FitzGeraldian rhyme scheme of the *ruba'i*, AABA, is a conscious choice to challenge the reader's preconceptions of what a *ruba'i* should be in light of its dominant pre-existing translations, and to present my quatrains as reinterpreted distortions of the form. The metre of lines is also free and various to similar effect; I use teasing half-rhymes and

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[28] Pavel Ivanovich Fedosimov was a Russian diplomat and spy, last seen in 1948. He is a strong candidate for the identity of the Somerton Man ("The Somerton Man Named: Pavel Ivanovich Fedosimov").

occasional couplets spread amongst unrhymed and blank verse to emphasize this. To list a few examples: quatrain VII (p. 4) ends each line with the sibilant "s" sound, linking "parts", "bones", "nights" and "breaths" – a nod to the very occasional AAAA rhyming quatrains that FitzGerald translated. Perhaps the closest quatrain to the AABA rhyme scheme is LVIII (p. 15) that pits the rhyming and half-rhyming "baton", "song" and "on" against "wire" on the third line. Yet even this close patterning is not exact, and interprets the form in a skewed manner. This is also carried through in quatrain LIX (p. 15), which presents a similar pattern of "divided", "Brexit" and "tactics", surrounding 'wipes' on line three. Quatrain LXIII (p. 16) baits the reader by rhyming "'fidelity'" and "'reality'" on lines two and four; in quatrain XC (p. 22) "go" and "Martellos" form a rhyming pair similarly split between two other non-rhyming lines. Throughout, my intention has been to offer an imprecise rendering of *The Rubáiyát*'s form that is ""[a]lmost at odds with" (Karlin, *The Rubáiyát* 54) the ST, trying to keep the spectre of its recurrence present so as to generate a sense of unfulfilled formal expectation, contributing to the poetic tension.

The quatrain that prefaces this section of my thesis, LXXXIII, begins with "should it all come to this" (p. 20). I want to suggest that the line can be read as a focal point of meaning: it acts as a question – *should it all come to this?* – and also as a conditional statement that is left open – *if it comes to this, then…?* In writing this line, my intention was to frame the act of beginning as a process of *différance*, of deferral, that simply leads to more beginnings, and that a ST and any sources that are part of the process of poetic composition are always and already at the point of renewal at the moment of being written. The response is "a still drawn likeness a construction" that gestures to police sketches of the Somerton Man but also to the notion that translation is a creative likeness of its ST, and a "construction" of

interrelated and varying parts. Consequently, the final line of the quatrain, "re

interpretations of dawn" can be read in inverse ways: that dawn as an image is

continually reinterpreted and expressed throughout the poetry, and also that the traces

of related meaning from elsewhere in the text and from other sources are shadowed

here with regards to ("re") dawn; that these threads also renew with each beginning,

as the metaphor of dawn symbolizes.

This chapter has sought to present and join several strands of thought

positioning the process of translation as that of the creation of new texts. Translation

is fictionalization; translation is the maintaining of the past; translation is continuing

life – and it is surviving life too; it is also the contract of relational meaning between

sources. Perhaps more than this, though, translation is writing: it is new writing.

Atkins argues that "there is at times very little difference between translation and

original creative work", and that "the final poem has been subject to so many

decisions […] that it is as much a product of authorial decision as it is the impersonal

product of a process" (*Seven Types of Translation* 8, 43). I agree, but would also

further this view. Translation gives agency to the poet-translator to draw together, to

assimilate and to express parts of pre-existing poems, narratives, theories and

thoughts from other languages and from within the same language into a

fundamentally new text that, as Derrida states, bears the "mark" (*Margins of

Philosophy* 13) of myriad other sources.

Fictionalization is necessary because it is unavoidable: a translation is a

product of the poet's subjective rendering of a web of relational source meaning(s)

that continues to expand. Furthermore, translation both maintains a ST and enables it

to recur anew, just as each dawn maintains a similar appearance and function of

transitioning light but is never exactly the same from day-to-day, from time period to

time period. Thus, it is one's own interpretation of dawn that enables a personal understanding of what it means.

While this chapter has focussed on what is composed as new writing being in a relational tie with its source(s) through the process of translation, thus creating new meaning, the following chapter will expand this premise to discuss that, as with *la trace*, what is lost through the translational process also retains a relational presence – an "absent presence" in the target text.

3: The "edge of Annihilation's Waste"

The sections of this chapter are iterative, exploring the inverse of what is gained through the process of translation – that which is lost – and building on how this perceived loss, as a result of the inability to achieve equivalence between a ST and a translation, remains present, manifesting in oblique and tangential ways. This manifestation therefore becomes an extension of the movement of meaning through form that I primarily believe translation to be. Starting with FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát*, I will contend that the translation's concrete imagery, representative of abstractions, negates the abstractions it points towards, akin to *la trace*'s activity of self-erasure. This is carried through into discussion of Derrida's term *usure*, a fructive erasure that enriches meaning, evidenced in Anne Carson's reinterpretative translation of Catullus, *Nox*, as a means of adding relational meaning to a new text from metaphorical and translational elements of loss.

The final two sections of this chapter address the concept of the 'lost future', the absent-present sense of a future that never came to pass, and Derrida's essay "The Double Session", that discusses relational meaning generated in the space between parallel textual sources. I will demonstrate how these have informed my translational writing process in both the strict formal translations of Yu Xuanji's poetry from Chinese to English that led to free-form "Out Set" poems commenting on the translational process, and, as an evolution of those translations and commentary poems, how these informed the broader composition of *Tamám*.

3.1 Ruins and Toothing-Stones

In his preface to *The Rubáiyát*, FitzGerald comments that he believes Omar Khayyám

> flung his own Genius and Learning with a bitter jest into the general
>
> Ruin which their insufficient glimpses only served to reveal; and,
>
> yielding his Senses to the actual Rose and Vine, only *diverted* his
>
> thoughts by balancing ideal possibilities of Fate, Freewill, Existence
>
> and Annihilation; with an oscillation that so generally inclined to the
>
> negative and lower side (Karlin, *The Rubáiyát* 13).

If Khayyám's instinct when writing his *rubáiyát* was that of diversion from the

"insufficient" perception of reality that his "Genius and Learning" offered, as

FitzGerald suggests, then the idealized, abstract concepts FitzGerald lists – "Fate,

Freewill, Existence and Annihilation" – are temporary points of departure from

physical reality: an "oscillation" from the "Rose and Vine" to concepts far greater and

more ineffable than any for which "Genius and Learning" could provide answers.

However, FitzGerald's mention of "general Ruin" (that in this context stems

from the failure of one's intellect to comprehend such unknowable abstractions) is

part of a wider theme of annihilation in *The Rubáiyát*. This can be observed in

quatrain XXXVIII,

> One Moment in Annihilation's Waste,
>
> One Moment, of the Well of Life to taste –
>
> The Stars are setting and the Caravan

Starts for the Dawn of Nothing – Oh, make haste! (Karlin, *The*

Rubáiyát 35)

where "One Moment" the reader is thrust into "Annihilation's Waste", then the next

to "the Well of Life", and then told to "make haste" towards "the Dawn of Nothing".

What connects these places is that they are all drawn from existential abstractions: the

wasteland of what has been annihilated appears to frame the landscape of the *ruba'i*,

followed by the brief "taste" from a metaphorical "Well of Life", then by a fictional

"Caravan" on a journey towards "Nothing".

Of course, setting the quatrain in a place of annihilation can be seen as self-

defeating, as it locates the concept of destruction somewhere tangible. As Daniel

Karlin notes, "[t]he fertility of 'nothing' is a kind of meta-paradox: it is creation *ex*

nihilo in a different sense. […] FitzGerald [got] a lot out of nothing, and this cannot

help seeming a kind of comic revenge on nothingness itself, even if nothing is going

to have the last laugh" (Karlin, "Much Ado about Nothing in the *Rubáiyát*" 24). But

this journey on which FitzGerald takes the reader serves to highlight the fact that

"Nothing" is the destination, and that the passage through "Annihilation's Waste"

must be a fruitful endeavour; an "oscillation" that simultaneously teases the notion of

a decisive journey towards somewhere concrete at the same time as recognizing its

reductive, "negative and lower side": its "nothingness". It is the presence-absence of

the "Dawn of Nothing" and the remnants of what was in existence before being razed

to "Annihilation's Waste" that shapes FitzGerald's quatrain; and it is the movement

between these dislocated, metaphorical places that presents antithetical abstract and

concrete meaning.

Francis R. Jones describes translation as a process that is "typically non-linear, iterative and multi-tasked" (60). The translator is subject to deviations, or divergences, simply because the translational process meanders through idioms, images and formal decisions between one language, culture and context to another. The translator is, as FitzGerald notes from his own translational practice in relation to his interpretation of Omar Khayyám, "*diverted*" because meaning between languages and sources is diverted, deferred, and at the same time (as with *différance*) relational. The paradox of "Annihilation's Waste" is that it diverts from itself, deferring the property of annihilation in order to exist as a concrete, signified place (a "Waste"). Through that dichotomy, that "oscillation" between existence and non-existence, it becomes another time and place outside of time and place. One cannot read "Annihilation's Waste" without trying to imagine a place of ruin, itself bearing both the mark of a past and its related meaning, and the absence of that past as part of its present.

This duality of the "general Ruin" that FitzGerald presents in his rendering of Khayyam's verse as "Annihilation's Waste" and as the "Dawn of Nothing" can be viewed as a manifestation of the notion that translation operates both as a point of the creation of and the disassembly of meaning. It is a process that is not complete, and therefore fragments of a ST's relational meaning carry over into a translation.[29] A ruin is not eradicated beyond all trace: it is "the physical destruction or disintegration of something", and to ruin is to "reduce […] to a state of decay, collapse, or disintegration" (*The Oxford Dictionary of English* 1555). For poets and poet-translators, the rubble of a textual ruin can be said to be, as Derrida states,

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[29] This activity of the carrying over of ST meaning in a new text is discussed in relation to erasure and the creation of new meaning (*usure*) throughout 3.2, p. 115.

"protruding like a toothing-stone, waiting for something to mesh with"

(*Dissemination* 319). Furthermore, Matthew Reynolds notes that there is always an

activity between writers and texts that demonstrates a point of meshing between these

textual protrusions:

> [a]round and about and in among the floodlit channels of certified
>
> translations are shadowy 'gorielli', rills, runnels or capillaries of
>
> interconnection, translated words, phrases, rhythms, moods. And
>
> because these are such small and fleeting contacts they often cannot be
>
> securely mapped, or even unequivocally seen (7).

The "fleeting contacts" – points of meshing that run into a new text – are "shadowy"

and "cannot be securely mapped". They are without definite location and are not even

able to be "seen" unless they are foregrounded.

There are instances of negation in FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát* that can be traced

through the "capillaries" of other translations of the ST. Ironically, just as his

construction of translated images bears an "oscillation" between the concrete and

abstract, FitzGerald's editorial activity in relation to his translational practice creates

a meshing of the meaning of certain quatrains from the dissection of others.[30]

Quatrain LII is one such example:

> And that inverted Bowl we call The Sky,
>
> Whereunder crawling coop't we live and die,
>
>   Lift not thy hands to *It* for help - for It

---

[30] I have discussed FitzGerald's tendency to edit the work of others in 1.2, pp. 54-5.

Rolls impotently on as Thou or I (Karlin, The *Rubáiyát* 42).

The quatrain's roots can be traced to not one but two of Omar Khayyám's *ruba'i*s, as evidenced in Whinfield's translation:

These heavens methink, are like an o'erturned cup,

Whereto the wise with awe keep gazing up;

So o'er his love, the cup, the bottle stoops,

Feigning to kiss, and gives her blood to sup!

The good and evil with man's nature blent,

The weal and woe that Heaven's decrees have sent,

Impute them not to motions of the skies, -

Skies than thyself ten times more impotent (Whinfield 99, 45).

It is clear that Whinfield's translation, published after FitzGerald's, suggests that FitzGerald was hybridising quatrain LII: the "inverted Bowl" found in FitzGerald's translation is derived from the "o'erturned cup" in Whinfield's version, and the word "impotent" is also present in the second of Whinfield's *ruba'i*s; even the movement of the poem is captured and presented through the "motions of the skies" that are morphed into "Rolls impotently on".

However, the "impotent" skies that refuse to "help" the poet are again an indication of Khayyám's movement between such abstract concepts as "good and evil", "weal and woe", and the concrete image of the sky, which, being reduced to an impotent thing, cannot answer and thus negates the perceived wisdom and power that

"Heaven" holds. The translation and re-translation of Khayyám by both translators, while seeking to present the meaning of these lines in a concrete and imagistic sense, are subject to the diversion and deferral of abstract meaning that such a paradox presents. "The Sky" is simultaneously a representation of the concept of "Heaven" and it is not ("Heaven" is "impotent"); the deferral of its capacity to "help" to elsewhere parallels the deferral of meaning between a ST and a translation. While I have presented the above quatrains to foreground the "rills" that run between the meaning of the ST and the quatrains in translation, they also showcase the deconstructive properties of the process of translation on a ST. The manipulation of content, lines, and of meaning between the above quatrains is a creative exercise that depends upon the ruin (and ruins) of a ST and other sources. In this sense, FitzGerald found the "toothing-stone" of other quatrains in *The Rubáiyát* ST to mesh with and to construct a new verse.

James Elroy Flecker's 1922 play *Hassan* is, I believe, another such point of meshing with deconstructed elements of *The Rubáiyát*. In the closing scene, the following lines are spoken by the character Ishak:

We travel not for trafficking alone;

By hotter winds our fiery hearts are fanned:

For lust of knowing what should not be known,

We take the Golden Road to Samarkand (99).

First, the obvious parallel is of Flecker's ten-syllable lines and regular rhyme scheme that mirrors FitzGerald's metre: there is a sense of familiarity with the *ruba'i* form. However, the rhyme scheme itself is ABAB and not AABA, indicating a deviation

from the FitzGeraldian form. If the metre and rhyme present an initial, distorted

likeness to *The Rubáiyát*, it is the "lust of knowing what should not be known" that

serves as an extension and adaptation of "Annihilation's Waste" from quatrain

XXXVIII: the desire for knowledge is immediately negated by "what should not be

known" that follows, rebutting the speaker's "lust" and creating a tension between the

very real sensation of desire and the abstract, forbidden unknown. Then, the promise

of travelling along "the Golden Road to Samarkand"[31] connects with FitzGerald's

"Dawn of Nothing" – a journey to another place that offers the concrete realization of

an ineffable abstraction, only for the city to never be reached: the curtain falls and the

play ends.

       When Flecker wrote his quatrain in "The Golden Journey to Samarkand", he

no doubt had in mind the arid, desert landscape of Persia. This was linked by the

crucially important trader's route of the Silk Road stretching the east-west axis of the

continent, from China to Europe via the Middle East and modern day Uzbekistan

(where the city of Samarkand lies). It was by way of the Silk Road that "trafficking"

occurred: a "complex of trade, migration, and cultural diffusion [that] was the lifeline

or circulatory system of Eurasian development for over 2000 years" (Frank 2536).

Thus, it is fitting that Flecker portrays this journey as one of seeking the abundance of

knowledge beyond such a barren landscape as that of Persia along a route of cultural

richness. FitzGerald's "Annihilation's Waste" once again reappears, lined with the

"Golden Road" to a destination that simultaneously raises the promise of truth and

---

[31] Omar Khayyám's scant biographical details also suggest that he was briefly a resident of the city of Samarkand c. 1070 AD; Amin Maalouf's novel, *Samarkand*, is partly based on this period. This demonstrates a further, oblique connection between *The Rubáiyát* and *Hassan*.

understanding, yet withholds "what should not be known" by deferring and

continually "trafficking" it elsewhere.

There is tension in the symbology of roads: an on-ness or off-ness, on track or

off track. One can be close to accuracy, an expected path to a destination or

understanding, or far from it. The term "road", as Jackson notes, "comes from the

Greek *hodos*, meaning road or journey" (21), thus causing an interrelation between

the process of the journey and the object of the road. Furthermore, he states that

> [t]he phrase "ways and means" suggests that the word can indicate
>
> resources at our disposal for attaining an end, and in fact two English
>
> words deriving from *hodos* remind us of this: *exodus* means the
>
> departure from a place, and *method* (*hodos* is concealed in the second
>
> syllable) means a regular or systematic way of accomplishing anything
>
> (21).

The translation of the word "*hodos*" reveals in its native tongue a wellspring of

transferred meaning between other terms involving types of movement. "Road" is

derived from "*exodus*" – the act of moving away, of egression – and is also intimately

tied to "*method*", which means a steady progress towards new terrain, or completion

of a task. Consequently, one is brought back to the dichotomy of on-ness and off-ness

within translation, by the accrued and disseminated meaning of the word "road".

As if he were providing a response to Flecker's image of the "Golden Road"

holding the answers to universal unknowns, FitzGerald's quatrain XXXI also uses the

road as a metaphor for movement towards an understanding of unknowable

abstractions:

> Up from Earth's Centre through the Seventh Gate
>
> I rose, and on the Throne of Saturn sate.
>
> And many Knots unravel'd by the Road;
>
> But not the Knot of Human Death and Fate (Karlin, *The Rubáiyát* 31).

The "Knots unravel'd" – the picked-apart mysteries of that which "should not be known" – are cast aside "by the Road", metaphorized as the journey travelled through existence, trying to comprehend one's place in the universe. However, the inability to unravel the most complex knot, the "Knot of Human Death and Fate", is both an admonishment of any attempt to try and know the unknowable concepts of "Death" and "Fate", and, as with the "Dawn of Nothing", the cancellation of the knot's function (to be unravelled) facilitates the deferral of its meaning (of "Death" and "Fate") away from the knot itself, as it can no longer fulfil its intended purpose. Yet, for all this, the quatrain is a text that prompts the construction of a new text, as it colours Flecker's *Hassan*: the negation of the knot's purpose by way of the road in FitzGerald's quatrain becomes the basis of the "Golden Road" for Flecker, and of the pursuit of such abstract, deferred concepts as "Death" and "Fate".

Translation, like the constant use of self-negating imagery in *The Rubáiyát*, can be viewed as an act of oscillation: a poet-translator requires the simultaneous disintegration of a source's meaning and the creative impetus to assemble a new text that bears the mark of the ST and other textual fragments. As mentioned in 1.4, a trace "dislocates itself, displaces itself, refers itself" and "it properly has no site – erasure belongs to its structure" (Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy* 24). FitzGerald's "Annihilation's Waste" is an apt signification of this self-displacing and erasing

structure. It is in the space of textual deconstruction and reconstruction that meshing occurs, and that a "toothing-stone" protrudes as a point of contact between language fragments, texts, and relationships of meaning.

3.2 *Usure*

The concept of the space of one text being the site of multiple and simultaneous other texts and traces is often embodied in a physical sense by the object of the palimpsest, defined by the *Oxford Dictionary of English* as "a manuscript or piece of writing material on which later writing has been superimposed on effaced earlier writing" and "something reused or altered but still bearing visible traces of its earlier form" (1279). Sarah Dillon observes that the palimpsest is the product of partial erasure, of "effaced earlier writing", that is then written over with new text; it "cannot be the province of any one discipline, since it admits all those terrains that write upon it to its body" and it becomes the site for "involvement, entanglement, interruption and inhabitation" of layered texts. She further proposes that the palimpsest "contains within its structure and its definition both the wearing away of the 'original' meaning […] and the productive creativity that results from that erasure" (2, 54).

In *Margins of Philosophy*, Derrida presents the term "*usure*" as

> erasure by rubbing, exhaustion, crumbling away, certainly; but also the supplementary product of capital, the exchange which far from losing the original investment would fructify its initial wealth, would increase its return in the form of revenue, additional interest, linguistic surplus value (210).

This frames "erasure" as a palimpsestuous process that wipes and erodes, but also as a process that will simultaneously "fructify" a source's "initial wealth" as a consequence of that erasure. Thus, one might view translation as a process of *usure*: this is evident in the addition of "wealth" to a ST's relational meaning with each produced translation, and as such across and between the accumulated meaning(s) of its various translations. Derrida is aware of the inability to disentangle creation as a consequence of erasure, and that this simultaneity is constantly at work within the act of writing a new text. In this manner, translation both erases and enhances the original source(s) of meaning that serve as prompts for the produced text.

In this section, I propose that the process of translation can be seen as a palimpsestuous practice of *usure* because it involves not only the trace of an "effaced" ST and other sources but the creation of new meaning from the marks left behind from that erasure, which itself is never a total erasure. By framing loss in the sense of erasure ("exhaustion, crumbling away") as a fructive and necessary attribute of the composition of new writing, the question that perhaps should be asked is: how have poets and translators responded to loss, the palimpsest, and to *usure* in the creation of new texts and translations? I argue that *Nox* by Anne Carson is a vital case study for the construction of a new text from the textual, translational and thematic concept of loss through the method of its composition.

At the beginning of *Nox*, a textual elegy for her late brother, Carson writes:

> I wanted to fill my elegy with light of all kinds. But death makes us
> stingy. There is nothing more to be expended on that, we think, he's
> dead. Love cannot alter it. Words cannot add to it" (1.0).

Carson's desire to construct an elegy is at odds with her admission that "[l]ove cannot alter" her brother's death, and "[w]ords cannot add to it" either, which implies that the death of her brother is final and irredeemable. However, her statement that "we think, he's dead" suggests doubt at the notion of his death, even while knowing he is certainly dead, and that "[w]ords cannot add to it" is seemingly a contradiction of the act of writing, of adding words. What Carson is perhaps articulating is that "nothing more" to be said on the subject of her brother's death is the starting point for the writing of elegy precisely because it is the personal, creative articulation of loss – an interpretation of the continuous, replaying fragments surrounding his life before death and after – rather than an explanation or reasoning of death itself. His death cannot be added to, but the process of dealing with the aftermath of loss perhaps can; thus, it becomes the foundation for new writing.

The form of *Nox* – an album of paper fragments of writing, photographs and letters – is a textual construction that simultaneously holds different scraps of writing together in the same space so as to draw implicit relationships between them. Most prominently, the collection is prefaced with the Roman poet Gaius Valerius Catullus' poem CI in the source Latin, which, fittingly, is an elegy for his deceased brother:

> Journeying over many seas & through many countries
>
> I come dear brother to this pitiful leave-taking
>
> the last gestures by your graveside
>
> the futility of words over your quiet ashes.
>
> Life cleft us from each other
>
> pointlessly depriving brother of brother.

>Accept then, in our parents' custom
>
>these offerings, this leave-taking
>
>echoing for ever, brother, through a brother's tears.
>
>–'Hail & Farewell' (Catullus 213).

The *usure* of Catullus' elegy is that the "last gestures" at the grave of his brother do not appear to be final, as the 'leave-taking" is described as "echoing for ever"; it is a continual process of remembrance and, as the poem implies, an expression of that experience of loss. The "futility of words" over his brother's "quiet ashes" are mirrored by Carson's "[w]ords cannot add to it". This creates a tie between Catullus' poem and Carson's leading fragment through the likeness of the phrases, but also through the sentiment that even though words are "futile" in the context of death and loss, the impetus to write and to create out of the process of grief resulted in the creation of these texts.

Furthermore, Catullus' situation surrounding the loss of his brother is an obvious anchor for Carson's prose fragments. The erasure of the physical presence of each poet's brother is the starting point of a journey to assimilate and manifest an expression of that loss through other physical means: that of writing. Catullus' elegy bears a parallel to the loss of Carson's brother who "ran away in 1978" (2.2) overseas, just as Catullus' brother was overseas at the time of his death. Carson's journey takes her to "Copenhagen" (3.2) where her brother died, and she later speaks of her "brother's widow" who "rented a boat and went up the coast to put his ashes in the sea" (7.2), again shadowing the "Journeying over many seas" in Catullus's verse. The cremation of both brothers is a form of *usure* in itself: the burning of bodies to create ashes cannot be a total erasure. As Carson also notes, she obtains "some old

diaries" from her brother's "wandering years" (3.2) that become important pieces of a past identity carried through into *Nox*, informing Carson's reconstruction of her brother's largely absent past.

Yet beyond these parallels, *Nox* is a work that understands how translation is a process that is one of deconstruction, erasure and recreation, of multiple retellings, of relational meaning from and between sources, and of trace. Throughout the long, concertinaed folds of paper contained in a box that physically form the text itself, Carson intersperses individual word translations of Latin into English for each line of Catullus CI. The reasons for this are manifold: to layer the text as a body of fragments that continually connect to one another and bleed into one another through the seamless folded page; to present the derivations of each Latin word in translation so as to offer a latticework of meanings and associations; to provide a framework for and to punctuate the prose entries that circle around the themes of loss, grief, recovery of the past, reconstruction of the past, and interpretation of textual fragments in the present; and to draw a very direct comparison between translation and elegy, framing them as ceaseless processes that produce infinite retellings and reinterpretations.

One such interaction is between the prose fragment (3.1), "[m]y brother dies in Copenhagen in the year 2000 a surprise to me", and the opposite Latin translation of "*has*" (this): "(indicating a person or thing that is present in place, time or thought) […] (referring to a person resident in the place in question but not actually visible)", among other definitions. The translations of "*has*" listed are a haunting correlation to Carson's statement that her brother "dies in Copenhagen in the year 2000" as a "person […] present in place, time", kept present in "thought" by Carson's elegy but "not actually visible" on account of his death, and consequently of his absence.

However, the absence is an absent-presence in *Nox*, which simultaneously

deconstructs the life of Carson's brother and constructs an identity for him through

the fragments of text and image arranged by Carson. Translation in this instance

offers multiple layers of meaning that are deferred and transferred between the figure

of Carson's brother, Catullus' poem CI, and "*has*", creating a rich and powerful

textual exchange of meaning for the reader. The abrupt nature of Carson's

announcement about her brother's death – "a surprise to me" – is also cut short,

surprised at itself, left forever anticipating that which has been left unsaid.

Towards the latter part of the elegy, Carson explicitly mentions Catullus'

poem CI, stating:

> I have tried to translate it a number of times. […] I never arrived at the
>
> translation I would have liked to do of poem 101. But over the years of
>
> working at it, I came to think of translating as a room, not exactly an
>
> unknown room, where one gropes for the light switch. I guess it never
>
> ends. A brother never ends (7.1).

The difficulty to translate poem CI for Carson is not only that "[n]o one (even in

Latin) can approximate Catullan diction" (7.1) but that the process of translation

"never ends"; it is a process of retelling, and of iterative decisions made by the

translator. By likening translation to "a room […] where one gropes for the light

switch", the act of translation becomes a space for objects (sources) to sit in darkness,

waiting for the translator to learn their positions on the way to finding the light

switch. *Nox*, the Latin word for "night", becomes such an unlit space for Carson to

negotiate texts, images and fragments on the way to finding a source of light ("I

wanted to fill my elegy with light of all kinds" (1.0)) but this is not possible. As

trying to produce a translation of Catullus CI "never ends", so does the figure of

Carson's brother ("[a] brother never ends") and so the ST of Catullus and the sources

that construct *Nox* do not end either. The light switch cannot be found to fully

illuminate these sources; they are left in endless darkness, unable to be totally seen,

and only partially grasped.

Translation, in the sense of text (and therefore meaning) moving through

form, is a process that is palimpsestuous: Carson demonstrates this in fragments such

as (8.5), where the text that comes after "[t]here is no possibility I can think my way

into his muteness" is scrubbed out with black pencil. The act of erasing the fragment

– of "rubbing" it to efface text – is moving meaning through form because it distorts

the ST, adding new meaning. In the case of the above fragment (8.5), the "muteness"

cannot be explored because the physical erasure of the text denies access to it, which

enhances the original meaning of "muteness" (to be soundless) through the attempt to

remove and deface the source. It is *usure* because the "linguistic surplus value" has

been increased through the "crumbling away" of the fragment's original form.

Consequently, one can think of *Nox* as a palimpsest of continued erasure that adds

meaning, creates new meaning from translation and textual layering, and maintains

the relational meaning between those sources. It is a work that constructs new

meaning from the process of assimilating loss, and foregrounds the role of translation

as a component in doing so.

3.3 The "Lost Future"

I met a traveller from an antique land

Who said – 'Two vast and trunkless legs of stone

Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,

Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,

And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,

Tell that its sculptor well those passions read

Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,

The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed;

And on the pedestal these words appear:

'My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings:

Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!'

Nothing beside me remains. Round the decay

Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare

The lone and level sands stretch far away' (Shelley 198).

"[T] he 21st century", writes Mark Fisher, "is oppressed by a crushing sense of

finitude and exhaustion. It doesn't feel like the future. Or, alternatively, it doesn't feel

like the 21st century has started yet. We remain trapped in the 20th century" (8).

Fisher's comments come from a sense of "belatedness, of living after the gold rush"

(8) of cultural innovation that preceded the 21st century. The elements that constitute

a "future" are "buried behind a superficial frenzy of 'newness'", and the future is

now, in fact, "[t]he 'jumbling up of time', the montaging of earlier eras" (6).

Yet the future's constant promise of "'newness'" is accompanied by, as Fisher puts it, "a deflation of expectations" (8) as that promise is not fulfilled. It is the construction of a false ideal that divorces newness itself from the occurring present, and as with *la trace,* what is new is relational and subject to the absent-presence of other meaning(s). The newness of the future is in a continual state of non-fulfilment because what is known as the "future" is tied to what already exists. This non-fulfilment is a kind of death: the death of what would have been a different present. In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida suggests that even after death, "a ghost never dies, it remains always to come and to come-back" (123), yet he states that "to haunt does not mean to be present" (202), and that a ghost is a figure neither present or absent, but both present and absent simultaneously. The present is thus haunted by a future that never came to pass, and a "failed mourning" of it that manifests as "refusing to give up the ghost" (Fisher 22) of the promise of newness.[32]

The poem that prefaces this section, the Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley's "Ozymandias", contains the famous lines "'My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings: / Look on my Works, ye Mighty and despair!'". Ozymandias, however, is presented to the reader as a statue that is a "colossal Wreck", and that his "Works" are "boundless and bare" (198). One is caught between the text on Ozymandias' pedestal that promises an empire filled with the impressive achievements of his leadership, and the contradiction of "Nothing beside me remains", the erasure of the great king's dominance. However, the lost future of Ozymandias' kingdom comes from the failure of its total erasure, as Ozymandias' ruined statue exists as a ghostly prompt for the immense empire that surrounds it; or rather, the idea that an empire perhaps once surrounded it, as there is no proof of its existence other than the broken statue.

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[32] Derrida describes this phenomenon as "*hauntology*" (*Specters of Marx* 63).

Ozymandias is gone, but he "remains always to come and to come-back" (*Specters of Marx* 123) as Derrida puts it, because of the remnants of the effaced statue of Ozymandias and his legacy to which it continually points. The desert refuses to "give up the ghost" of Ozymandias, and even though the promise of his "Works" – a visible testament to the king's achievements – is a failed one, it is an ever-present failure, and becomes an absent-present reality.

Shelley died at the age of twenty-nine in an accident at sea, just off the coast of Viareggio, a town in northern Tuscany, Italy (Blunden 302). His newly acquired yacht, *Don Juan*, "vanished in the haze of a coming storm" and many theories exist as to what happened to the boat and its crew: one account suggests that "'a large hole was found stove in the stern'" by "an Italian boat" (Blunden 301, 302) but most assume that the storm was the cause of the boat's sinking. Shelley's body was almost unrecognizable upon its discovery: "[t]he face and hands, and parts of the body not protected by the dress, were fleshless" (Trelawny 123). It was "the volume of Sophocles in one pocket, and Keats's poems in the other" which convinced Trelawny that "this mutilated corpse was […] Shelley's" (123). On his funeral pyre at Viareggio beach, Shelley's "heart remained entire" even as the rest of his body burned, and Trelawny managed to recover this "relic from the fiery furnace" (137), later passing it to Mary Shelley.

There is a haunting parallel between the discovery and cremation of Shelley's body and his poem "Ozymandias". Trelawny describes Shelley's body as being "mutilated" beyond facial recognition, identifiable only by its clothing and possessions; the statue of Ozymandias' "shattered visage" has also suffered "decay", described as a "Wreck" and only identifiable from the pedestal's text. Then, just as Shelley's heart refused to be incinerated by the funeral pyre, Ozymandias' "vast and

trunkless legs" still protrude almost indestructibly from the statue's plinth. Yet even beyond this, the absent-presence (the trace) of Ozymandias' promised legacy can be seen in the death of the young poet, whose talent was tragically cut short.

One will never know what further poems, essays, and texts Shelley might have created had he survived. The promise of such further creativity never came to pass: it was a lost future. "Ozymandias" is a poem representative of Shelley's lost future because it was written at the peak of the poet's talent before his death, and it is a poet's creative interpretation of trace while itself becoming a trace of the poet. When one reads "Ozymandias", the sense of "belatedness" returns both through its subject matter (we were too late to see the fantastic legacy of Ozymandias) and through the death of Shelley, the poem's creator (we missed the potential best work of a celebrated poet because of his premature death). It is perhaps in this sense of nostalgia that the death of Shelley and the destruction of Ozymandias' kingdom only serve to make them seem more treasured, rare, and celebrated; that similar achievements since are just an imitation of their greatness.

My fascination with the figure of Ozymandias, Shelley's death and its relation to the "failed mourning" of a lost future is that writing which draws from and interprets a variety of sources – and therefore translation – presents the same activity as part of its process. For a poet-translator, to interpret source material (an act of non-equivalence) is to create a texture of, as Mark Fisher describes, "[t]he 'jumbling up of time', the montaging of earlier eras" (6) because translation is the continuing life[33] of texts and sources that already pre-exist. Furthermore, there is a "deflation of expectations" (8) that a ST can be adequately transitioned into a target language, and often a sense that the ST is "buried behind a superficial frenzy of 'newness'" (6), a

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[33] In the sense of *Fortleben*, as discussed in 2.1, p. 69.

work of the past masquerading as a newly conceived text. My belief is that this is

unavoidable. There will always be an element of nostalgia for the sources and ST that

are part of a translation's interpretation of them: such is the activity of absence-

presence, of *la trace*. Consequently, even though a text is a new construction of

relational meaning, it will always on some level be a "failed mourning" (Fisher 22) of

another source.

In *Tamám*, I have presented the concept of post-death as a necessary

continuation of life, and therefore of text, because the Somerton Man and Shelley are

both figures whose narratives extend beyond their deaths: Trelawny's account of the

discovery, identification and burning of Shelley's body is not dissimilar to Gerald

Feltus' account of the discovery of and police investigation into the Somerton Man. I

have also tried to link the circumstantial similarities between the Somerton Man and

Shelley: both bodies were found on beaches, both were initially unidentifiable and

both were discovered with books (or at least some text) in their pockets.

Stanzas I-VIII (p. 4) present the discovery of Shelley's body while drawing

comparisons with the Somerton Man: "your poem tucked / bleeding veinfuls of

chroma" is representative of Shelley's sea-bleached collection of Keats' poetry and

also of the Somerton Man's shred of paper bearing the words "Tamám Shud"; "sea-

changed rich & strange" is a reference to Shelley's gravestone that bears an

inscription taken from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, "*Nothing of him that doth fade, /*

But doth suffer a sea-change / Into something rich and strange" (39). The "sea-

change" that takes place is the decomposition of Shelley's body and identity. As a

consequence of death and of his "mutilated" corpse, Shelley is no longer the living

Shelley but a body, a shadow of the great poet. This prompts a sense of nostalgia for

the poet prior to his death through the absent-presence of his former self. Thus,

keeping Shelley present in the poem constitutes a failed mourning of the poet and permits the image of his death and his poetry to "come and to come-back" (Derrida, *Specters of Marx* 123) with a sense of circling ephemerality.

The image of the body in *Tamám* can be seen more broadly as representative of lost futures. Many of the varied, interrelated sources I have used feature death or life after death, symbolic of the activity of trace. One such source, the inserted poem[34] that sits opposite stanza XXI (p. 6), roots the poetry further in Australian history by referring to "Burke and King / in the desert grassland". Robert O'Hara Burke (1821-1861) and William John Wills (1834-1861) led an ill-fated expedition[35] across the interior of Australia from Melbourne to the Gulf of Carpentaria. Both Burke and Wills perished in the outback. John King, who stayed with Burke until his death, was the only man of the entire expedition to make it to the Gulf of Carpentaria and to return home. Burke's last words to King were: "'I hope you will remain with me until I am quite dead — it is a comfort to know that [someone] is by; but, when I am dead, it is my wish that you leave me unburied, as I lie'" (Murgatroyd 272). Why did Burke wish to remain unburied? It is almost as if he wanted to be exposed to the world, to avoid being covered over and hidden in a nameless dirt grave; yet this act of non-burial is also symbolic of the refusal to accept the process of death, of returning to the soil, and with it, perhaps, the failure of the expedition – Burke's inability to "give up the ghost".

I wanted King's return in the final inserted exegesis poem of *Tamám* (p. 24) to continue the scene of King and Burke after Burke's death as a way of revisiting the body after life, representing its repeating absent-presence. Here, King's

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[34] See 3.4 (p. 129) for an examination of parallel and exegesis poetry in *Tamám*.
[35] Known as the "Burke and Wills expedition" that took place from 1860-61.

acknowledgment that "what he won't bury is no longer / 'human', cannot be carried / 'home' now a stranger" transitions the body of Burke into a state of having no identity or place: it is no longer Burke. The act of King leaving Burke after "two further days" (p. 6) suggests his reluctance to abandon the body of Burke. Through his emotional struggle that begins around stanza XII and culminates at quatrain C (p. 24), King has had to reason with his own interpretation of what death means and the erasure of Burke's identity through the quatrains in between both poem fragments. His movement "forward into wind & walking / in trackless light" is perhaps symbolic of his eventual departure being one of acceptance that the old Burke is gone, and of liberation – he is the sole survivor of the expedition, no longer tied to the suffering of Burke. Yet there is a sense that the "backwash" of "history" is lapping into the present and back out into the past: the expedition's failure to return to Melbourne in rapturous celebration will be judged as a tragic mess for generations, and the figures of Burke and Wills will be forever tied to that judgement.

In the mid 19th century, the uncharted outback of Australia was assumed to be "teeming with zebra, antelope and buffalo, […] herds of quagga and flocks of South American curassow"; it was also considered "a vast wilderness waiting to be filled with the best in fauna and flora from around the planet" (Murgatroyd 31). The truth could not be more different. The outback is "governed by irregular climatic patterns that last for years, not months. It is the driest region of the driest inhabited continent on earth" (42-3). The promises of the undiscovered abundance of life and of the country's geography and climate being capable of supporting copious forms of life were not fulfilled, and the bountiful wilderness that was expected or believed to be possible became another lost future.

Tamám's closing quatrain, CI (p. 26), ends with the following lines: "curled shells of cold & broken Kings / wait, their halved eyes open". As with the composition of my poetry more generally, I intend these lines to be open to interpretation. However, I want to posit two readings in light of this section: first, that the "shells of cold & broken Kings" parallels not only the decay and "Wreck" of Ozymandias but also of John King, who was "'disabled for life – thoroughly shattered in body and weakened in mind, by his great sufferings' and never recovered" (Murgatroyd 360) from the ordeal of the expedition. Second, that these Kings "wait, their halved eyes open", which one might construe as sleeping while not being asleep, or having the appearance of being alive while actually being dead. These Kings haunt the final quatrain – their greatness reduced to "shells", refusing to fade – waiting to return again as a shadow of their former, failed greatness.

3.4 The "tape's dual reels winding"

Derrida begins his essay "The Double Session" by presenting two texts that are held side-by-side on the same page: a section of dialogue between Socrates and Protarchus by Plato, and Stéphane Mallarmé's *Mimique*. In reference to these texts, Derrida says:

> These quotations on the blackboard are to be pointed to in silence. So that, while reading a text already written in black and white, I can count on a certain across-the-board index, standing all the while behind me, white on black (*Dissemination* 177).

That which is standing "all the while behind" is not only the blackboard on which the quotations of text are written; rather for Derrida, it is the presence of the texts and their meanings standing behind one another in the same space of reading that offer a relational "across-the-board index".

As Socrates in Plato's text notes, the internalized process of thought is where one "continues thinking the same thing by himself, going on his way a considerable time with the thought in his mind", replaying the thought as "memory with sensations", like writing "words in our souls" (*Dissemination* 175). The mark of memory on the soul is replayed, but never quite identical to the original experience. The parallel text to this, Stéphane Mallarmé's *Mimique*, responds with the figure of the mime "whose act is confined to a perceptual allusion" (*Dissemination* 175). The mime is the mimic of actions, and therefore of meaning, alluding to the original act through a deferred, non-identical likeness of it. In this manner, the two texts share meaning and supplement one another as a result of their proximity, yet this is deferred meaning, where one text mimes the other in "silence".

By presenting both texts in the same space, Derrida unfolds a new relationship of meaning, and it is this that enables him to write "The Double Session" using the texts' coincidence of meaning as a point of departure. The creation of a space between texts for meaning to exist is, as a consequence of the interrelation of simultaneous and discrete sources, one way of perceiving "The Double Session". In *Tamám*, I wanted to pursue the deferral of meaning between different texts held in the same space as a method of writing to mimic the process of translation, which is of the deferral of meaning. As discussed in 1.4 (pp. 61-2), a ST and its translation(s) are subject to *différance* because they constantly point to one another, which is what I intended to create through the integration of multiple textual fragments in *Tamám*. In

this section, I want to draw from the aforementioned aspects of erasure and *usure* to

discuss their activity in *Tamám*; how the integration of parallel and overlaid textual

fragments have shaped the project over time, and their importance in the space of

meaning that is created.

The first and most obvious use of multiple and simultaneous texts in *Tamám*

is the inserted fragments of poetry that I also term as "exegesis poems". The original

idea for these came from footnotes and endnotes that rise from and comment on the

process of composition. In other creative work that utilizes translation, I have written

poems that comment on the translational process, thereby creating new poetry. Much

of this desire to comment on the translational process using "exegesis" poetry came

from my practice as a poet-translator, translating classical Chinese poetry from the

T'ang Dynasty with the aid of Dr. Lin Su, a native speaker of Mandarin Chinese. The

poet we settled on translating was Yu Xuanji, whose poetry is mostly lost, limited to

just forty-nine poems.

> Yu Xuanji led a varied and troubled life: she was, as David Young states,
>
> > a concubine in a family where her literary talents were admired and
> >
> > encouraged; she was a Daoist 'nun' in a community where
> >
> > concentration on spiritual and intellectual issues was part of the way of
> >
> > life; and she was, apparently, a courtesan, which meant she could
> >
> > associate with well-to-do men, many of them highly educated and
> >
> > powerful (Young and Lin xi).

Consequently, much of her poetry expresses emotional engagements with men,

"[m]issing her husband, flirting with other writers and with lovers", but also of "the

poet's conflicting and resolving emotions" (Young and Lin xi, xv). The challenge of

translating Yu Xianji's poetry is not only trying to capture the emotionally charged

metaphorical imagery that she uses, it is also in acknowledging and interpreting the strict and seemingly "untranslatable" form of *lǜshī* (regulated verse) that I will discuss at length in 4.2, p. 149.

I found that having a rigorous five or seven character-per-line form to retain aspects of while representing the emotional restraint and the delicacy of the imagery found in the Chinese to be only half of the translational story. Working closely with Dr. Su, through conversations about the verse and the process of translation itself, our discussions about the ways in which Yu Xuanji uses imagery in such a strict form acted as a catalyst for the composition of new poetry in tandem with the translations. One such example of this is my translation of "Poem for the Riverbank Willow" that is accompanied by "Poem for the Riverbank Willow (Out Set)" (pp. 28-9). The first poem – a translation that interprets the Mandarin Chinese more or less as creative imitation (as defined in 1.1, p. 39) – is the product of the process of translation. However, through the process of decision-making, distortion, erasure and creation that is part of translating a ST, I found that my internal commentary of translating the text became poetry itself; a captured expression of the translational process. The prevarication over whether to break "fisher/men" or to leave the word "un/broken", for instance, resulted in the word "fishermen" being left intact in the main translation. This uncertainty also manifests in the large semantic space between "I'm here" and "just", emphasizing the precarious emotional situation of the poet. Then, the restrained emotion caught in the delicate imagery of the Chinese translation finally bursts from my "Out Set" process poem as "Stay! Don't go!". Consequently, the poems share deferred meaning as each informs the writing process of the other.

This approach of including the translational process as poetry became much more apparent when Dr. Su and myself were reminded of other poems when

translating. In "The Fragrance of Our Nation" (p. 32), Yu's mood tires of "parties"

and the lifestyle that creates lovesickness and "yearning" from romantic liaisons; this

is a sign of the times in T'ang Dynasty China, represented by "The Fragrance"

pervading the country. The lust for renewal, "for spring" to come and renew Yu's

"heart of Autumn" triggered reminiscences of T.S. Eliot's "Little Gidding" from *Four*

Quartets. Eliot's observation "This is the spring time / but not in time's covenant"

evokes dysphoria in the speaker that the true nature of spring, of warmth and renewal,

is stuck "[b]etween melting and freezing", leading to the rhetorical "[w]here is the

summer, the unimaginable, / Zero summer?" (Eliot, *Collected Poems* 200). Yu

Xuanji's long wait for "springtime grasses", and therefore better times, forms a

tangential link to Eliot's poetry, which I then explored in "Fragrance of Our Nation

(Out Set)". "[T]he striving ideogram: / 'Little Gidding'" and "renews redolent renews

/ melancholic" (p. 33) signals to the restrained manner in which the imagery of the

Chinese ideogram offers suggestive, metaphorical imagery of autumn and spring,

thus drawing together the process of translation, Eliot's poem as a tangential source,

and the translation itself to synthesize a new poem.

These "Out Set" poems are therefore, in part, an expression of frustration; that

the process of translation for the translator is often one of limitation and compromise.

It was an attempt to capture the overspill from the translational process that Dr. Su

and I undertook; the conversations we had regarding the deliberations over cultural,

imagistic and metaphorical parts of the final versions I regard as part of the process of

poetic composition itself. It is also common in classical Chinese poetry for

"matching" poems – poems as a means of correspondence – to be sent between poets,

which is echoed in the interaction between my translations and their "Out Set"

counterparts.

In *Tamám*, I had initially intended to use exegesis poetry in this manner, as a

comment on the process of reinterpreting *The Rubáiyát* and on the theory that informs

my practice. Early draft work of *Tamám* (see Appendix A, p. 182) shows the initial

idea of commenting in this manner: the left-hand poem "Babel" presents the "divided

Word"[36] and the right-hand poem responds to this with the Tower of Babel's

"collapse". Then, a further footnote poem addresses translation theorist George

Steiner, famed for his theoretical work *After Babel*, asking him "what do we do in the

After, […] you've got to know?". However, I felt this style of footnote commentary

was not an effective means of expanding and layering the poetry, and that the use of

poetic image was a more powerful way of illuminating the theory. Eventually, most

of the poetry in the right-hand poem and footnote of Appendix A became

metamorphosed into the "dakhma shadowed horizon" where "Babel peaks over" in

quatrain LXXVIII (p. 19). The image of a Zoroastrian sky burial[37] tower, also known

as a "Tower of Silence", aligns on an imagistic level with the Tower of Babel; it also

represents the slow dissemination of the body (and therefore meaning) elsewhere, to

the natural world, just as the Tower of Babel's fall precipitated the confounding of

tongues and the proliferation of different languages.

While many of the early drafts of exegesis poetry in *Tamám* have largely

survived, through the editing process, the quatrains became substantially more image-

based and consequently more tangential to the theory. Appendices B, C and D (pp.

183-185) demonstrate that my approach was to use a framework of parallel texts

separated by a dividing line to allow the structured sharing of space between

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[36] See footnote 21, p. 70.

[37] In a sky burial, the corpse is left exposed to weather conditions, decomposition and
scavenging wildlife such as carrion birds. In Zoroastrianism, corpses are left exposed
on the top of a large tower (a "dakhma"; also "Tower of Silence") for the sky burial
to take place.

quatrains and exegesis poetry. I feel this had the effect of both texts being more directly referential to one another as they share equal space on the same layer of the page. One can see with Appendix D, while the right-hand poem remains similar to the final inserted poem in *Tamám*, quatrains XXVI-XXXI (p. 7) have been moulded by the exegesis poetry, evolving the concept of "never never" into a "promised land" that is home to Mallarmé's son Anatole – subject of the poet's unfinished *Pour un tombeau d'Anatole* (*For Anatole's Tomb*) – who died at the age of eight. Anatole's death "frustrates" Mallarmé's language, and the incomplete fragments of his elegy are felt here through the eternal "watching over" of Anatole. The mention of Mallarmé is also a suggestive nod to *Mimique* in Derrida's "The Double Session", thus forming an oblique gesture towards deconstructionist theories of deferring, parallel texts.

Although presenting two texts in parallel that inform one another led to reciprocity in the editing process (one text needs to consider the other, structurally and on an imagistic level), I also wanted to present *usure* as a key process of erasing, layering and adding meaning to text. Supplemented by incorporating and adapting the textual layering of Carson's *Nox*, the very structured, formal method of presenting parallel texts began to morph into a palimpsestuous insertion of text. This happened in two distinct ways: first, through the obvious exegesis poetry fragments that are laid at the side of the main body of quatrains and photocopied into place.[38] Second, by using faded and hand-edited draft poetry from earlier incarnations of *Tamám*. This presented both the repetition of certain images, lines and words that have persisted

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[38] To photocopy is also to create a representation of – a likeness of – an original document. I feel that this is akin to the "perceptual allusion" (*Dissemination* 175) that Mallarmé speaks of in *Mimique*: the photocopier is the mime; its photocopies the act of constant mimicry.

through various drafts, and prototype writing that has been pared down in the final quatrains.

The two techniques of inserting and layering text to form a palimpsest are most prominently inspired and reinforced by the image of "deep ferrochrome erasure" (p. 9), the consequence of "a tape's dual reels winding" (p. 12). As I explained in 1.4 (p. 61), the erasure of tape is pertinent because the action of overwriting retentive recordings is a protentive, continually unfolding act. Yet as with magnetic recording tape, the act of overwriting a piece of retentive information is not total erasure: it is the layering of new on old, and it is therefore palimpsestuous. I wanted to expand the notion of a tape's overwriting to focus on the space between two constantly moving reels so as to mirror the ongoing deferral of meaning between layered and relational texts. More specifically, I found that the imagistic space between two "reels" of text is also protentive/retentive, caught in cycles of presented imagery and a "near indefinite wait" (p.12) for the next space of meaning to occur. As the "8-Track coils"[39] in quatrain XLVI playing music on repeat as it turns, the parallel inserted text speaks of the calm, "storm's-eye pause" moments before Edward FitzGerald's body was discovered "face down in blankets" by the Clergyman George Crabbe in 1883. The period of Crabbe's obliviousness to FitzGerald's death, assuming his friend to be alive, is "the continuing" of life "in spite of" death. It is the protentive period of waiting for something (FitzGerald rising and attending breakfast) that does not occur, and loops until a new space of meaning (the body's discovery) is created, writing over the preceding period with new meaning.

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[39] An 8-Track is an infinitely looped cassette tape that contains sound recordings; thus, if left playing, it will continue to replay the same recording infinitely.

To conclude this chapter, I want to suggest that the act of waiting is a retentive and protentive exercise, as is trace, because it is the simultaneous retention of an objective (waiting) and the expectation of the unfolding outcome of that objective (what one waits for). Thus, translation can be seen as the retention of a ST's relational meaning and the protentive creation of new meaning(s). To layer parallel and palimpsestuous texts is also to create spaces of retention and protention: recorded text and its potential relational meaning to other recorded texts. The "sterile waiting room" (p. 12) of quatrain XLVI is symbolic of this space; it also extends the metaphor into medical and surgical lexicons. The Somerton Man's body intersects here, preserved as a result of being "injected with formaldehyde" (XLVII p. 12) – the gradual replacement of tissues with a chemical preservative – a retentive and protentive undertaking, as the body's physical form is retained but its chemical makeup is continually altered and replaced.[40] I have also used the image of "prolonged surgical corridors" (XXXIII p. 9) to metaphorize the ongoing liminal space stretching between two points, as with two reels of a tape or two texts, culminating in the penultimate stanza as "just miles of this, in corridors, standing" (C p. 24).

The title of the second section of *Tamám*, ~~MLIAOI~~ (p. 8), is taken from the second line of code written in the copy of *The Rubáiyát* associated with the Somerton Man, discovered by Adelaide police soon after his death.[41] Nobody can say exactly why the line is crossed out: it could be an error that the author wanted to strike through, or an indication to something else, a signpost, a coded gesture. In this

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[40] A similar process happens in nature through permineralization, the replacement of soft tissues with minerals over time. I refer to this in quatrain XLVII, p. 12.

[41] This particular piece of handwritten code that was in the copy of *The Rubáiyát* found by Adelaide police can be seen in an adapted form on p. 8.

manner, the run of quatrains in the section (XXXII-XXXIV p.9) draws from this act

of erasure by presenting quatrain XXXIII as torn out, ghosting the words "writing

over" until they manifest in the next quatrain. The "the lost future", "a salt lake empty

promise", is dried, unfulfilled, yet still realized as a place. Thus, the "great white

ocean" of quatrain XXXIV is perhaps a space of crystallized, ghostly, absent-present

meaning that laps at the edge of "Annihilation's Waste" (Karlin, *The Rubáiyát* 35),

caught in its endless motion of washing back and forth, erasing, writing and rewriting

itself; always crossing itself through, deferring its meaning elsewhere.

This chapter's aim has been to contend that relational meaning is generated through

the erasure of preexisting textual sources, parallel STs occupying the same space, and

through the presence-absence of those STs in new writing. This is, as I have argued, a

phenomenon associated with *la trace* and with translation; that the impossibility of

fidelity to a ST means that the loss of meaning is inevitable, and that the new text's

meaning is relative to its source(s), thus a movement of meaning through form. In the

next chapter, I will explore a related aspect of this erasure and reconstruction of

meaning: the distorted likeness of sources and STs that manifest in new translations,

and therefore in new writing, and how this in turn forges new runnels of meaning

between them.

4: The "shaded & coded returning image"

The basis of this thesis, as I have established, rests in part on the notion that equivalence in translation is not possible. It is not only the text of languages that fail to bridge the crevasse between one another with exactitude; it is also the meaning of each word, with this meaning being relative, fluid and shifting as a result of *différance*. In this chapter, the notion of equivalence is scrutinized through the lens of translation. Jack Spicer's collection of translations, *After Lorca*, suggests correspondence of image and recurrence of image, albeit in a distorted likeness of its source, is necessary in translation because of non-equivalence between languages. I will discuss how Chinese regulated verse poetry – deemed "untranslatable" by poet-translators and translators – can utilize a path of corresponding likeness to produce a translational solution in English; similarly, by analyzing Tom Raworth's collection of his own back-translated poems, *From the Hungarian*, I will foreground the formal and linguistic distortions of the poet's original poems in English, thus positing that new writing and translations cannot be anything other than an altered facsimile of the ST.

Rough correspondence of ST imagery to that of a translation is framed in this chapter by the image of "radar", a system of beaming out and receiving back an emitted signal that has distorted from its original state. Like radar, I argue that translation is also process of receiving and interpreting a transmitted signal, a likeness, from a source or sources. As with *la trace*, the absent-present source or point of origin is displaced, deferring its meaning elsewhere through form; and I explore my interpretation of deferred geographical and historical sources that coalesce in *Tamám*.

4.1 Correspondence and the Serial Poem

The poet Jack Spicer, theorizing the act of writing poetry, states that poetry comes

"from the outside rather than from the inside" and that a poet should not be

considered "a beautiful machine" that historically "did everything for itself — almost

a perpetual motion machine of emotion until the poet's heart broke or it was burned

on the beach like Shelley's" (*House that Jack Built* 5). Spicer's comments draw from

the poet Charles Olson's essay "Projective Verse", in which Olson states "[a] poem is

energy transferred from where the poet got it […] by way of the poem itself to, all the

way over to, the reader" (40). Poetry as an act of creation originating from the poet is

displaced; instead, words and their relational webs of meaning are the signposts that

form a poem: they are sources that shape the poet's mood from the outside, and

prompt emotion through their deferral of meaning. Consequently, the transferral of

poetic energy – "the *kinetics* of the thing" (40) – from source to reader positions the

poet as a conduit for those sources to pass through.

In a 1965 series of lectures in Vancouver, Spicer articulates the movement of

energy through the act of writing a collection of poetry as the "serial poem": a series

of poems that uses "the book as its unit" (*House that Jack Built* 52), running

chronologically with recurring and interdependent variations of themes. He states:

> I think for the ideal serial poem you don't reread the poems before it.
>
> In other words, if you've gone, say, five poems and you're beginning
>
> to have a suspicion that there's a section. […] There's a great
>
> temptation to look back and see what material you have to connect
>
> together. […] Not looking backwards. Letting the poem look forward.

Just following the bloody path to see where it goes. And sometimes it

doesn't go anywhere (*House that Jack Built* 54).

It is in the movement forward, the "[n]ot looking backwards", that the "*kinetics* of the

thing", as Olson puts it, are able to transfer through the poet to be translated onto the

page. Yet Spicer's admission that "sometimes [the path] doesn't go anywhere" is

seemingly a contradiction of the "forward" motion of poetic energy. If the energy

derived from sources "doesn't go anywhere", then the production of poetry must

surely respond to that stasis.

Through the lens of this kind of translation of energy, of sources and STs,

Spicer's collection *After Lorca* – a collection that presents a playful relationship

between Spicer and Federico García Lorca's ghostly figure through the translation of

Lorca's poetry – can be framed as a serial poem. In doing so, the questions I want to

pose are: first, what does Spicer imply by a path that "doesn't go anywhere"? And

second, what does Spicer's method of translational practice and of the serial poem

offer for poet-translators? I propose that the nature of the serial poem (only looking

ahead and not back to that which has already been written) generates writing from

protention and retention (as with *la trace*), and that this is a result of the recurrence

and adaptation of poetic imagery as the collection progresses.

It can be evidenced that the activity of the serial poem, as Spicer defines it, is

present in *After Lorca* because the poet writes with a sense of duration. This is

punctuated by interspersed letter poems that become increasingly disaffected with the

poet's project, most poignantly culminating with "Dear Lorca, / This is the last letter.

The connection between us, which had been fading away over the summer, is now

finally broken" (*My Vocabulary* 153). Spicer's need to declare the mode of thought,

the impetus, or energy with which he composed each translation to be "broken"

should perhaps – if taken as a full stop to the collection – be the final piece written.

However, it is not. The final "postscript" poem in *After Lorca*, "Radar"[42] (a poem

written by Spicer and not Lorca), functions not so much as a full stop but as an

ellipsis:

> No one exactly knows
>
> Exactly how clouds look in the sky
>
> Or the shape of the mountains below them
>
> Or the direction fish swim
>
> …………………………..
>
> They are going on a journey
>
> Those deep blue creatures
>
> Passing us as if they were sunshine (*My Vocabulary* 154).

The lack of finality in each image is telling, as "No one exactly knows / exactly how"

introduces uncertainty to the poem's temporal structure. To not know is ambiguous

and indeterminate; an ongoing process of internalized thought from the feedback of

outward perception. Spicer's use of the image of radar in the poem's title is therefore

entirely appropriate: the searching sweep of radar can be compared to the poet's own

scoping of his problematized landscape, awaiting a response.

One is presented with fish, although Spicer goes on to strip out their identity

by referring to them as "creatures"; they are moving "on a journey" which is

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[42] Spicer's postscript poem forms the basis of 4.4, p. 169.

inscrutably vague, and they are "passing", elapsing like the flow of time. Through

writing a collection of translations of García Lorca's poetry, Spicer is confined to

rewriting poetry of the past, stripping down its identity and replacing parts with his

own lexicon. Yet as time moves on, so does the poet's relationship to the poetry being

translated. Consequently, as Spicer notes, the "connection between" the poet, his own

poetry and the translation becomes "broken" as he looks out in search of new poetic

territory. Images become self-doubting and wandering: they are elliptical, pushing

onwards, outwards, yet also recurring as they move through the lines and poems in

different forms.

      In the preface to *After Lorca*, Spicer masquerades as the deceased poet Lorca

and states: "these poems are not translations. In even the most literal of them Mr.

Spicer seems to derive pleasure in inserting or substituting one or two words which

completely change the mood and often meaning of the poem" (*My Vocabulary* 107).

While Spicer is primarily being droll here, putting indignant words in the mouth of

Lorca, this is a coded message about Spicer's own translational practice: that of

"change" through "substituting" words, distorting images, and therefore creating new

meaning. As a further clue, Spicer (as Lorca) states that his poems are "not

translations" even though in terms of the movement of meaning through form, they

are. The mask of Lorca enables Spicer to issue a challenge to his own translational

practice, thus performing a covert attack on translation orthodoxy. Yes, of course

"Radar" can be at the end of a collection of translations. Yes, it can be Spicer's own

poem. Yes, Spicer can also speak as Lorca, denouncing his own poetry in translation.

There are no boundaries because a translation is a distortion of a ST's relationships of meaning, and because translation is both a retentive and protentive act of creation.[43]

This is also evident in Spicer's thoughts on translation: to establish equivalence between poetic images runs counter to what Spicer believes about the interrelation of poems. In his third letter poem, he writes: "[t]hings do not connect; they correspond. That is what makes it possible for a poet to translate real objects, to bring them across language as easily as he can bring them across time" (*My Vocabulary* 133). Spicer makes an emphatic push towards the idea that translation operates through correspondence rather than exactness and the specificity of connection.[44] The poet-translator, rather than saying: "the source image must mean this; I have connected it to the closest, most exact word I can in my language", instead says: "this image is impossible to equate to anything I know of in my language; I will instead use the form of another image that is a corresponding likeness".

Clayton Eshleman recognizes this in Spicer's translation of Lorca's poem "Debussy": "Spicer seems to enjoy mistranslating a word in such a way that the ghost of the equivalent is present, e.g., 'acequia' (canal) is rendered as 'ditch.' While 'ditch' is hardly even close to 'canal' in meaning, their shapes do correspond" (100). If *After Lorca* is about correspondence of images, meaning, and indeed the poets themselves, and not an exactitude of translated connections, then it is worth considering how Spicer's creative agency in the collection troubles the process of translation through the activity of the serial poem; how the rough form of "shapes"

---

[43] As discussed in 1.4 (p. 61) and 3.4 (p. 129), where retention and protention are attributes of trace.
[44] As in the basis of non-equivalence between languages and texts (1.1, p. 42).

that superimpose but do not elicit an exactness of meaning affect the serial poem's

forward motion.

At the mid-point of the collection, Spicer prompts a shift in the focus of *After*

Lorca, as he begins to allow his personal poetry to move into the foreground. Marked

by the poem "Aquatic Park", the contextual bearings of Spicer's life[45] seep into his

process of poetic composition. Below is the poem in full:

A translation for Jack Spicer

A green boat

Fishing in blue water

The gulls circle the pier

Calling their hunger

A wind rises from the west

Like the passing of desire

Two boys play on the beach

Laughing

Their gangling legs cast shadows

On the wet sand

---

[45] Aquatic Park in San Francisco was one of Spicer's habitual haunts. It was a place of liberation where homosexuals could gather free from persecution (Infante 106).

Then,

Sprawling in the boat

A beautiful black fish (*My Vocabulary* 131).

Spicer dedicates this poem as a translation to himself, which clearly denotes the beginning of a directional change for the collection that has thus far has only dedicated translations of Lorca to others. "Aquatic Park" is the only poem in the whole of *After Lorca* to be dedicated to Spicer himself; such is the importance of its statement. Furthermore, "Aquatic Park" is not a translation of any of García Lorca's poetry, although it is a translation in the sense of the transferal of meaning through form; it attempts to find a tone and process that facilitates a clear continuation of the mode of thought that Spicer, as poet-translator, was driven by while composing the collection.

The gulls "calling their hunger" introduce a sense of urgency – a suggestion of Spicer's voraciousness to write a personal poem that is freed from Lorca – yet this is immediately dampened by the lines "A wind rises from the west / Like the passing of desire". Spicer's "hunger" to write is swept by the "passing of desire", the shadow of having to translate Lorca, which is a constant check on that urge. This is an apt presentation of image, as the boys' legs that "cast shadows / on the wet sand" in the following lines serve as a reminder that the act of translation is still heavily pervasive in Spicer's writing methodology. This is noted by Ignacio Infante, who comments: "the poem ['Aquatic Park'] is populated by boys equivalent to those who were singing and showing their bodies in ['Ode for Walt Whitman']" (Infante 108); the

boys persist like a hangover from the previous translation in the collection through their "gangling", maturing presence.

In the closing lines of the poem, Spicer's presentation of the "beautiful black fish" corresponds with recurring images in *After Lorca* that act as partial echoes: a subsequent letter poem states that "[e]ven the objects change. The seagulls, the greenness of the ocean, the fish…" (*My Vocabulary* 150), and this is qualified by the ambiguous "direction fish swim" in presented through "Radar" (*My Vocabulary* 154). It is poignant that Spicer specifically documents the phrase "objects change", as it is not only his relationship with and reference to translation that change over the span of *After Lorca*; his manipulation and deployment of images (for instance, "fish", "water" and "shadows") also shifts over time. There are instances where the motif of movement in and out of water is initially conjured in translations such as "Debussy": "My shadow moves silently / Upon the water in the ditch" (*Vocabulary* 112), and in "Frog": "And a climax means a splash in the pool […] And your heart is full of water" (*Vocabulary* 113), but it feels as if the thought — the image itself — has yet to fully emerge from beneath the surface of these premonitions.

The "black fish" is "sprawling" across the whole of *After Lorca*, not only on the boat's deck in "Aquatic Park": it surfaces in Spicer's thoughts at the critical mid-point in the chronology of the collection to become centre-stage and, in a sense, arrives with perfect timing. One can detect something below the surface stirring long before the fish is reeled in. Even then, once surfaced, Spicer playfully describes the fish as "black" — as inscrutable and shadowy as if it were still beneath the water's surface — a suggestion that translation can only correspond to the form of the fish's shadow: it cannot be described with exactness.

These instances of image correspondence, Infante claims, "turn ['Aquatic

Park'] not so much into a hybrid 'unwilling centaur,' but rather into a literal 'time

mechanism' established through a series of striking poetic correspondences produced

by Spicer" (Infante 108). Consequently, the real significance of "Aquatic Park" is that

it indicates *After Lorca* is a serial poem precisely because the poem simultaneously

moves forward along "the bloody path" (*House that Jack Built* 54) yet it is laid on top

of and corresponds with parts of what has come before it, also reverberating through

that which is yet to come. Spicer's "Aquatic Park" can be seen as a translation of his

personal lifestyle, places of familiarity, his mood, and methodology of working with

translation. It is written for and dedicated to himself: an expression of self, deep in the

imaginative realm of Lorca's imagery rather than the specifics of Lorca's text. It is

Spicer's attempt to reel himself out of that realm while still sitting in a boat that bobs

on its sea. I argue that this is what Spicer means when he states that the path

sometimes "doesn't go anywhere" (*House that Jack Built* 54): the poet is increasingly

confined to a methodology as time moves on. The images that recur, adapt, distort

and correspond are caught in an imagistic cycle, symptomatic of that confinement.

Hence, Spicer eventually ends his translational relationship with Lorca because it is

creatively restrictive rather than productive.

This is how I believe Spicer views the serial poem: a book-length "unit" with

an internal chronology that tracks the tone and trajectory of the poet's work as it

progresses. If the poet looks back, attempting to edit and rearrange its arc or structure,

the chronology is broken and the serialization is falsified. *After Lorca*, in this sense,

seeks to defy that paradox: it tries to look back to its source, to Lorca's poetry, while

simultaneously moving ahead in series through Spicer's own poetry. As a result of

the manipulation and transformation of like imagery, one is dragged along the

"bloody path" while still retaining a sense of the past, a sense of Lorca's poetry.

For a poet-translator, this retentive and protentive space that *After Lorca*

creates as a longer unit – a serial poem – is a demonstration of a poetic form that

translation can produce: a form that manifests translation as a transference of energy

from the ST through the poet to the reader; as a correspondence of imagery between

texts; and as a representation of the flow of a translator's methodology and practice

over time. "Aquatic Park" is a sea change of expression in that transferal of energy. It

is Spicer's desire to write a personal serial poem that, while masquerading as Lorca,

originates from him, surfacing like the "beautiful black fish".

4.2 Tonal Memory[46]

> That is the land of lost content,
>
>   I see it shining plain,
>
> The happy highways where I went
>
>   And cannot come again (Housman 57).

Chinese regulated verse, *lǜshī* (律诗), is a strict eight-line penta– or heptasyllabic

Mandarin Chinese form of tonal patterns that rose to prominence in the T'ang

Dynasty (618-907 AD). It is widely deemed untranslatable in English because of the

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[46] This section is taken from a published chapter I wrote: "Remembered Hills: Tonal Memory in English Translations of Chinese Regulated Verse" in *Untranslatability: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. In the chapter, I cover the issue of the perceived untranslatability of regulated verse in far greater detail, which is beyond the scope of this thesis.

tonal basis of Chinese. Translator Wan Liu, for instance, makes a stark observation about "the irreconcilable discrepancy between a tonal language and a nontonal one; the prescribed tone pattern that dictates the variation of tones from line to line cannot be translated" (156). G. W. Robinson, translator of the T'ang Dynasty poet Wang Wei, puts forward a similar opinion: "it is impossible to reproduce the various tonal intricacies [of Chinese] in translation" (21-2). This is rehearsed once again, almost verbatim, in Chinese literary translator Lucas Klein's assertion that regulated verse is "to some extent untranslatable, because its prosody relies on sonic elements more or less unique to the Chinese language" (78).

The creative response that translators and poet-translators have provided in light of the supposedly untranslatable elements of regulated verse has been various, ranging from overly formal to very free-form. In this section, I will demonstrate that in attempted English translations of *lǜshī* one can observe instances – traces – of the original tonality of the Chinese language through other means. One must ask whether the gaps left behind by the elements deemed untranslatable are in some way filled with corresponding likenesses; whether the memory or echo of such untranslatable elements are still at work within a translation. In doing so, I argue that the notion of total untranslatability is flawed, as the movement of the ST through language and form is still present (thus it is translation), and this provides a space of creativity in which translators may exert their creative agency in.

The tones of Mandarin Chinese are a method of pitch-bending how words are spoken. There are four distinct tones modern Mandarin: the level (ˉ); the rising (ˊ); the falling-rising (ˇ) and the falling (ˋ). All of the tones dictate not only the sound of how each Chinese character is pronounced but also the meaning of each character. A basic example of this: the adjective "good", *hǎo* (好), has a falling-rising tone,

whereas *hào* (号) with a falling tone is used to indicate ordinal numbers and dates. A word in Chinese is formed by its logogram, its tone and the combination of an initial and a final: "h-" is the initial and "-ao" the final for *hǎo*. There is no equivalent to this in English. While it is possible to place emphasis on certain words in order to change the tone with which they are expressed, this is not a replication of the Chinese tonal system. This can be observed rather simply by using the same phrase twice but with differing intonation in each: "You're sure", for instance, indicates certainty, whereas "You're *sure*?" is questioning the speaker's own assertion through the italicized emphasis on "sure". This kind of expressive, tonal change in English is infrequent and only partially affects the implied meaning of a sentence. Whereas English uses intonation in a sparing fashion, Chinese constantly utilizes a variety of tones on same-sounding combinations of initials and finals to change meaning entirely. It is a language system that affects the meaning of every word, not a technique that is inserted within an utterance to change the contextual meaning of the sentence.

The poetic form *lǜshī* contains extremely strict tonal patterning that alternates between two tonal types, the standard level tone and deflected tones (rising, falling-rising and falling); mandatory end-rhyme in regular schemes that match pairings of tones; either seven syllable or five syllable (characters) long lines, with a poem being either four lines in length (known as the "curtailed" poems) or the full eight lines for a complete poem. The poet would also need to be aware of certain categories of Chinese characters in order to create parallelism (such as "hot" being parallel to "cold" or "high" mirroring "low") between lines. This kind of parallelism, *duì zhàng* (对仗), is "a required feature of the regulated verse", where "at least two pairs of lines […] have to be parallel in syntax and antithetical in meaning" (Liu 155) that result in "noun corresponding to noun, verb to verb, and so on" (Hucker 238).

For a poet-translator of Chinese poetry, the challenge to translate what is regarded as not easily translatable is one that surfaces frequently. It is often a perceived necessity to replace the ST with broadly similar idiomatic, allusive and metaphorical devices in the target language, or to rely heavily on footnotes to clarify certain moments in the translational process that would otherwise be unintelligible or missed out entirely. Translator of Chinese T'ang poetry, David Young, admits it is problematic that there is a "multitude of place names and specialized references to be found in the poems" and that he has "tried to incorporate into the poem itself explanatory phrases or interpretative elements that might otherwise show up in footnotes". Young has even gone so far as having "simply avoided trying to translate many poems because of the amount of material of that kind they contain" (15-16). The translation of Chinese T'ang regulated verse is arguably an even greater undertaking of compromise and concession than other forms of classical Chinese poetry because the correspondence between the strict tonal form and English forms of poetry is only very slight.

The temptation for poets and translators of the form is to drift into habits of appropriation. As Eliot Weinberger says, this is akin to "stuffing the original into the corset of traditional verse forms" (11) that might offer an easy, or, at least, a logical way forward. It is therefore not surprising that translators have resorted to using English metre as an attempt to represent *lǜshī*. As there is no exact method of replicating Chinese tonal patterning in English (and because equivalence itself is impossible, as discussed in 1.1, p. 42), the use of English metre is a convenient stand-in for – or homage to – tonal patterning. One can find both a lamentation and warning in Lawrence Venuti's claim: "[t]he aim of translation is to bring back a cultural other as the same, the recognizable, even the familiar; and this aim always risks a

wholesale domestication of the foreign text" (*Translator's Invisibility* 18), whereby

the sheer dominance of established English verse forms and metres would wholly

swallow the tonal function of Chinese regulated verse.

Weinberger's forensic analysis of Wang Wei's four-line curtailed *wǔlǜ* poem,

"*Lù zhái*" 鹿柴 ("Deer Park") corroborates this, particularly in pre-Poundian, English

metrical translations of the poem, such as that of W. J. B. Fletcher. Weinberger goes

so far as to say that Fletcher "feels he must explain and 'improve' the original poem"

and even more critically, issues the accusation that the translation "has no meaning"

(12). Fletcher's version, abstractly titled "The Form of the Deer", is an excellent

example of the desire to domesticate form:

So lone seem the hills; there is no one in sight there.

But whence is the echo of voices I hear?

The rays of the sunset pierce slanting the forest,

And in their reflection green mosses appear (Fletcher 123).

The amphibrachic metre gives the translation a whimsical pace that is somewhat

unsuited to the poem's originally demure and contemplative tone. Wayne Schlepp

suggests that "[r]elief of agogic monotony is to be found in the tone system of

regulated verse. The effect is accomplished by elongating a level-tone syllable when

it falls in even-numbered positions and reading, by contrast, the other feet more

evenly" (607). While an amphibrach might share some similarity to this kind of

rhythmic appraisal of regulated verse, the precision with which lengthened syllables

fall on certain level tones in regulated verse is far more intricately designed than

Fletcher's metre suggests: the impossibility of finding an equivalent to tones seriously impedes any corresponding utilization of English metre.

However, there is at least an understanding in this translation of the urge to fill the vacated space that the strict formalism, the musical quality of the tonal differentiation and the monosyllabic rhythm of Chinese characters have left in the English: the rhyming of lines two and four, for example, ("hear" and "appear") still correlate with the original rhyming of *xiǎng* (響) and *shàng* (上). The internal rhyme of "voices" and "mosses" also has the effect of mirroring the sound patterns between the two lines. On the first and third lines, there is a heavy amount of sibilance – "so", "seem", "hills" and "sight" on the first and "rays", "sunset", "slanting" and "forest" on the third – that could be an attempt to emulate the distinctiveness of deflected tones against level tones.

In the introductory notes to *Gems of Chinese Verse*, Fletcher comments: "I have usually followed closely the original form of the poems, frequently keeping their [metre], but I fear that I have lost much of their *nuances* and fragile delicacy" (i). The problem is that Fletcher is not "closely" following the poem's original *lǜshī* form because there is just no equivalent to the Chinese tonal patterning. This kind of domesticating translational approach into English can only go so far before it suffocates the original Chinese poem's "*nuances*" through heavy use of the target language's own formal and metrical requirements. As such, it is difficult to agree with Fletcher: there is not a great deal of parity between the pentasyllabic *wǔlǜ* and the alternating twelve and eleven syllable lines of tetrameter he uses.

The question that should be asked is how the elements that constitute *lǜshī* might be of service to English translations of Chinese T'ang poetry, so as to provide innovative variations of the poem in translation. To go some way in addressing this, I

will dissect several more translations of Li Po's poem, "*Sòng Yǒurén*" / "Taking

Leave of a Friend" (送友人), so as to highlight the elements that I feel are reminiscent

of aspects of regulated verse in English translations that could be considered

corresponding 'echoes' of the Chinese tonal system.

Beginning with Pound's transliteration of Li Po, it is hardly surprising that

given Pound's predisposition for the "strongest and most poetical English" (Fenollosa

and Pound 105) based on the imagery found in the Chinese, any tonal similarities are

an inscrutable afterthought. By drawing the first four lines of his translation against

the Chinese *Pīnyīn* and Wai-Lim Yip's transliteration (in square brackets), it is

obvious that there is only a minimal attempt to carry across the metrical, regulated

nature of the Chinese poem:

Blue mountains to the north of the walls,

White river winding about them;

Here we must make separation

And go out through a thousand miles of dead grass (Pound, *The*

Translations 198).

qīng shān héng běi guō,

[green mountains lie-across north outer-wall-of-city]

bái shuǐ rào dōngchéng.

[white water winds-around east city]

cǐdì yī wèi bié,

[this place once make separation]

gū péng wàn lǐ zhēng.

[lone tumbleweed ten-thousand mile/s travel] (Yip, *Chinese Poetry*

180).

Most notable, and easiest to observe, is that the five-character lines in the Chinese

total five syllables. This is an almost impossible task for English to fulfill consistently

due to its syntax, and so Pound predictably exceeds five syllables per line in his

translation. The closest line that fits the Chinese metre in this regard is "White river

winding about them" which has a syllable count of eight, although as a point of

comparison does manage to use five words; Yip's transliteration of the same line

numbers nine syllables and uses the compound word ("winds-around") to replicate

the tight five-character line.

Wai-Lim Yip presents the two most popular patterns of *wǔlǜ* (五律) – five-

character regulated verse – as "level start", which contains a level tone as the second

character on the first line:[47]

L/D	L	L/D	D	D/L
D/L	D	D	L	L
D/L	D	L	L	D
L	L	D	D	L

(*Chinese Poetry* 174).

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[47] Both the level tone and deflected tones are abbreviated here as level (L) and
deflected (D). Where a choice between both is given, the first listed is preferred. The
deflected tones are the rising, falling-rising and falling tones: the tonal types are
described on pp. 150-1.

The second category, "deflected start", begins with a deflected tone in the same position:

D/L	D	L/D	L	D/L
L	L	D	D	L	
L/D	L	L	D	D	
D/L	D	D	L	L	

(*Chinese Poetry* 173).

The source Chinese for "*Sòng Yǒurén*"contains aforementioned end-rhyme which follows the most likely fit of Yip's "level start" tonal pattern. Lorentz and 罗梧伟 categorize this pattern as "nonrhyming first line" (94) where the first and third lines do not necessarily rhyme but the second and fourth do; in this case "*chéng*" at the end of the second line rhymes perfectly with "*zhēng*" at the end of the fourth. However, there is no such replication of rhyme in Pound's translation: the use of "them" on the second line and "grass" on the fourth line prove this. It is therefore difficult to claim that Pound considered the tonal form in his translation, as even a comparison of stressed words to deflected tones and unstressed words to level tones is not wholly convincing. The alliterative "m" linking "must" and "make" on the third line could, at a stretch, mirror the two level tones that follow Yip's "level start" pattern, but due to the lack of consistency in this approach, it is ambiguous as to whether this was a conscious decision by Pound to parallel the Chinese tones.

Other translations of Li Po's poem demonstrate different creative approaches. David Young's translation removes formal constraints and splits the first four lines of the source poem into two stanzas:

> Here at the city wall
>
> green mountains to the north
>
> white water winding east
>
> we part
>
>
> one tumbleweed
>
> ten thousand miles to go (Young 58).

However, Young does appear to be restricted to keeping a tight metre over the first three lines, which offer three iambic feet each, reprised again in the sixth line. This gives a feel of pared-down syntax, and perhaps attempts to shadow the "level start" tonal pattern of *wǔlǜ* through its rhythm, only to be capped off by the abrupt, disyllabic "we part" for emphasis. By his own admission, Young claims that: "English lines try to approximate the Chinese in length and structure, even though the effect is far less compelling. My own solution has been to admit that an English line is a different kind of unit and to treat the Chinese line like a stanza, breaking it up into smaller units of two or three lines" (13). While evidently more free-form that other translations, Young's approach contains moments of tonality that linger mournfully on the tongue: "go" on line six bears a likeness to the level tone of '*zhēng*', high and long at the line's end, echoing the whinnying of the friends' horses at parting: "your horse / whinnies / twice" (58).

Similarly, Harry Gilonis' poem "taking leaves (1)" also echoes this form with tight diction and adopts an imagistic presentation in doing so:

blue green remembered hills

white water circles walls

here one makes separation

planted uprooted drifting floating (F.1).

The heavily stressed "blue green", coupled with quickly shifting images ("hills",

"water", "walls") are reminiscent of the Chinese transliteration offered by Wai-Lim

Yip (*Chinese Poetry* 180): the sparse, rhythmic and tonal quality of the five-character

line. This is further adopted on the fourth line, where the list of four strong past and

present participle verbs, "planted   uprooted   drifting   floating", gives the same

kind of movement and ambiguity to the poetic line that Li Po generates in the

Chinese. Gilonis also allows more leading between lines and spacing between words,

further hinting at the monosyllabic nature of regulated verse.

Gilonis' offering is interesting to compare to other translations precisely

because in his collection, *eye-blink*, he questions whether his poems are translations

at all: "[t]he poems in this book are by eight well-known T'ang dynasty poets. This is

not a book of translations from the classical Chinese. Neither of these statements is

wholly true" (1). This is chiefly because Gilonis admits to having "made no attempt to

duplicate effects specifically – nor […] have I taken stock of character-count,

caesuras, parallelism or rhyme-schemes", allowing the source poems to be "prompts

and constraints" (2). Yet using Li Po's original poem as a prompt, Gilonis

demonstrates an awareness that bringing across the source poem's tonal past into

present-day English requires resonance in the target language in order to be, as

Young says, "compelling" (13).

The line "blue green remembered hills" not only tries to reclaim the more

exact definition of *qīng* (青), "green/blue", but presents these "hills" as "remembered"

–an almost word-for-word replication of verse XL from A. E. Housman's poem "A

Shropshire Lad":

Into my heart an air that kills

From yon far country blows:

What are those blue remembered hills,

What spires, what farms are those? (57).

The memory of "hills" in Housman's poem functions not only as an imagistic link

between Li Po's poem and Gilonis' version but as a cultural resonance that permeates

the reading experience of the poem in translation. As *qīng shān* (青山), "blue/green

mountains", triggers the poet's own process of remembering, Gilonis finds in the

iambic metre and ABAB rhyme scheme of Housman's enduring poem a reverberation

– a likeness – of the Chinese tonal regulated verse that he obliquely addresses in his

own transposition of Li Po's poem: the landscape undulates with the sparse syntax, as

it does with the music of Housman's poetry. Both poems are of dislocation – from the

rhetorical question "what farms are those?" of Housman's emotional recollection to

the turbulent "uprooted drifting floating" of departure in Gilonis' version of Po –

and in each case the landscape is the anchor that stabilizes their verse. It is telling that

Li Po starts the poem with the image of "mountains to the north" so as to triangulate

his poem with geological familiarity; nor do I believe it is coincidence that

Housman's longing for "yon far country" immediately leads to the recognizable

solidity of landscape. The mountains are a kind of "remembered" poetic music that

both Li Po and Housman felt compelled to express, and this is again captured in

Gilonis' poem.

While these English translations do not attempt to replicate the exact tonal

patterning of regulated verse, the strength of what I would call the tonal memory of

Chinese regulated verse is arguably dependent upon how creative translators have

been in utilizing fleeting snatches of sound-rhythms and corresponding glimpses of

intonation. This is partially aided by the application of a domesticating metre and

form; by translators who pay careful attention to their choice of diction, the timbre

and positioning of words on each line, and by the use of corresponding, suggestive

cultural resonances.

As with any poetry written in another language, it is through translating,

interpreting and reimagining the T'ang poets' work that translators and poet-

translators can understand with greater clarity the rigour and beauty of poetry in the

source Chinese. The movement of regulated verse across languages and forms also

demonstrates the strength of parallel, domestic cultural references and allusions in the

translational process that create a sense of familiarity and foreground the absent-

presence of source material for readers in the target language. Furthermore, the

impossibility of equivalence between languages and sources becomes a fruitful

constraint that presents a creative opportunity for translators and poet-translators.

"[T]he land of lost content", as Housman's verse XL of "A Shropshire Lad"

continues, "where I went/And cannot come again" (57) is actually the starting place

of new writing, where a translation simultaneously draws from and renews its source,

at the point of its "most complete unfolding" (Benjamin, *The Task of the Translator*

300).

4.3 Back-translation; Forward Motion

       grab it all and don't slow down

       never leave the road for what's

       in a shop or a store

       the road's enough (Raworth 100).

Tom Raworth's poem "Songs of the Depression", with a sense of finality, insists on

the path a poem should take: movement should not be influenced by "what's / in a

shop or a store". In his words, a poet should "never leave the road"; "the road's

enough". Yet the implied wisdom of Raworth's stanza is administered while

surrounded by stanzas that undermine its authority:

       while four lines and a stapler?

       why an address book?

       a bottle of brandy? why

       a key ring? an ashtray?

       . . . .

       why exclamation mark four

       lines and a stapler glue

> kleenex an envelope
>
> shards of god
>
>
> this is my table today
>
> this is the sound
>
> this is the noise through
>
> my eye that spins around (Raworth 100).

It is in this fragmentary list of deviations where objects ("four lines and a stapler") and abstract images ("shards of god") attract the attention of the poet that one can sense the sarcasm with which Raworth claims "the road's enough". As Raworth demonstrates, poetry is a synthesis of the aspects of the journey of writing the poem, with the layering of image, the questioning observations and the variation of thought as evidence of that journey.

This is what forms and shapes Raworth's poem, which would not exist without its sideways glances and diversions; stores selling their contents at the roadside. The displacement that Raworth demonstrates in his poem is a hallmark of any kind of textual transmission and translation. Raworth translates the "noise through" his eye that which is externally around him, colouring his thoughts – all from various snippets of sources — in his poem. The stanzas, disjointed and generally unpunctuated, are held together by the form itself; the language has a momentum behind it that drives the reader to each subsequent line. The poem moves onwards with pace, blending myriad elements into one single, taut form. As with translation, meaning is continually moving between a ST and its translation(s). Furthermore, the point of origin and the destination are not fixed, and constantly dislocate. When a

poem is written, Said states, "there is a distance transversed, a passage through the pressure of various contexts as the idea moves from an earlier point to another time and place" (226) and it is this "passage" and potential "pressure" which moulds and forms a translation, echoed in the tension between Raworth's command, "never leave the road", and his frenzied, dislocated "eye that spins around".

From the Hungarian is one of Raworth's most intriguing experiments with translation, in terms of movement, of the transferral of language, and the production of new poetry resulting from that process. Three of his poems were translated into Hungarian, then Raworth translated them back into English (in collaboration with his wife, Val Raworth). This process is known as "back-translation", which "is done by having another translator who masters the languages involved to translate a resulted text back into [a source language] and he should not read the ST. This enables the second translator to know what the first translator [has] communicated in his/her translation" (Rosyidah et al 26). However, as I briefly stated in 1.1 (p. 43), for both Tom and Val Raworth Hungarian was "a language of which [they knew] nothing" (Raworth 118). This means that the process of back-translation in this instance is one performed by the author of the ST, not a translator, and the translation's primary aim is that of creativity, not intelligibility.

The three poems were back-translated into English six times over with "no peeking" (Raworth 118) to form a sequence, then shuffled, creating further layers of abstraction from the source Hungarian to their new reconfigurations in English. Each of these sets of translations appear autonomous; their relation to one another is obscured. This is demonstrable in many cases throughout *From the Hungarian*: the poem "Sally to See You, Tacitus", for example, opens with the line "amok among Sicilians" (Raworth 119), which, through sound and form alone, roughly matches

with the first line of the poem "Starlight Utilities", "atomic minds caliban" (Raworth 121). Both lines share nothing in terms of overt meaning with one another, only a suggestion that they might stem from the same source through the appearance of similar word-sounds and patterns: the heavily alliterative "m" carries across "amok" and "among" into "atomic minds", which is then followed by the "an" present in both "sicilians" and "caliban".

The metre of these lines also matches closely, just one syllable out – eight and seven respectively – and is roughly iambic. Raworth is aware that, in his own creative process, these poems hinge on moments of recognizability within their obvious differences; that there is a constant level of *différance* in action, as the meaning of one line defers to the line of another translation forging relational semblances. This manifests in the occurrence of similar image-forms between translations of the same poem. The third line of the first stanza of "Wandergut", "hiding ecstasy in cement works of Webern" (Raworth 119) compared to the same line in the poem "What Do You Say", "hiding jokes in mud bricks" (Raworth 123), demonstrates an interplay of image likeness through the action of "hiding ecstacy" and "hiding jokes" in "mud bricks" and in "cement works". These share the properties of materials used in construction, although they are considerable distortions of one another: the first being a rudimentary mud brick and the latter being presented as the mechanized, industrial "works" of the man-made product "cement".

Identifying the original poems that were translated into Hungarian offers a further instance of how far the back-translations have come through the "pressure" and "moulding" of their translational journey. The identification procedure is itself an imprecise art: to establish the link between Raworth's original poems and the back-

translations in *From the Hungarian* (and without the source Hungarian[48] available to

do so), relying on the recognition of alike phrases and words alone is insufficient.

There must also be a consideration of fit and form; of line length and the quantity of

stanzas. "Sally to See You, Tacitus", for example, contains three stanzas of five lines

each, which begins to narrow the number of poems its source poem could be. Another

distinguishing feature found in the translations is an instance of quoted speech, "'holy

mitred veil/of tulsa pray for us'" (Raworth 119), on lines thirteen and fourteen. The

only poem of Raworth's that fulfils these criteria is "Delivery Instruction", which also

contains three stanzas of five lines, and the speech "'where hast tha been/since i saw

thee?'" (Raworth 113) on lines thirteen and fourteen.

      Although the instances of quoted speech are mismatched in terms of meaning,

with no immediate recognizability, the similarity of form is too great for these poems

to not be related to one another. Furthermore, the first line of "Delivery Instruction",

"atoms in every star" (Raworth 112), correlates with "atomic minds caliban"

(Raworth 121) from the poem "Starlight Utilities" through the use of "atomic" and

"atoms". As previously ascertained, "Starlight Utilities" and "Sally to See You,

Tacitus" both derive from the same source; thus, the span between these poems can

be bridged and a translational relationship uncovered.

      In a similar way, the root of "Wandergut" can be tracked by the elimination of

possibilities. The poem is twelve lines long, in three stanzas of four lines each. There

are only three poems by Raworth[49] that fit these criteria prior to 1973: "Gibil – Burn

the Wizard and the Witch!" (Raworth 44), which contains no areas of partial

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[48] Despite extensive research, I could not find any documentation relating to the
publication of these poems in Hungarian circa. 1973.

[49] This is according to the Carcanet edition of Raworth's *Collected Poems* (2003).
There may, of course, be more poems prior to 1973 which fit the specified
formal/linguistic criteria that have gone undetected and unpublished in English.

resemblance of meaning in terms of diction compared to "Wandergut" (the two poems are totally incomparable other than by form), and "You Can Stroke People with Words" (Raworth 62), which features repetition of one word over lines ten and eleven, "sable / sable", that is not reflected even slightly in those particular lines of "Wandergut" in *From the Hungarian*. The closest correspondence to "Wandergut" is a poem titled "Western World", which ran in the same collection as "Delivery Instruction", *Act*, further giving credence to the theory that it is the source poem for "Wandergut".

The likelihood of this being the source poem is not only due to the number of lines and stanzas. This can be further evidenced if we compare the language and phrasing of first stanza of each of these poems:

horse's breath mists the hitching rail

fire reflects in both eyes

cold night along cement walls

everywhere men are doing their duty (Rawoth 113).

slovak intellectual appears to Cyclops

resembling your face

hiding ecstasy in cement works of webern

cutlass banana-scar on amber mind-nuts (Raworth 119).

While the majority of the language used between these stanzas – particularly in the first and fourth lines – has no kind of coherent matching, "reflects" and "resembles" definitely do share at least some commonality in the act of mirroring. Furthermore,

"both eyes" and "face" are not so far removed from one another as to be totally alien images. Raworth's "cement walls" also reappears in the form of the aforementioned "cement works", which establishes a link between the third line of each stanza. Then, there is the development and distortion of meaning between "everywhere men are doing their duty" and "cutlass banana-scar on amber mind nuts", a leap between the controlled order of "duty" reminiscent of disciplined soldiers, and the chaotic, piratic "cutlass" that leads to the insanity of "amber mind-nuts". The images of control and violence, be it through anarchy or order, defer themselves between both poems. While these are tenuous links in terms of linguistic translation, and of glimpses of corresponding meaning, the evidence is there to allow one to compare both poems for the purpose of catching those glimpses. They appear in roughly the right region of each poem so as to be distorted products of the translational journey the ST has taken.

In undertaking this kind of guesswork, a set of assumptions can be formed about the ancestry of the translations in *From the Hungarian*. First, as with pockets of similarity in language, translation can also provide this kind of recognizability through form and structure. It is the synthesis of these formal and linguistic attributes of recognizability that permits a translation to have some kind of (albeit occasionally distant and difficult) relationship with its ST. Second, there is a sense, at least, that Raworth is privileging movement, allowing each produced back-translation to push into new linguistic territory. It is an exploration of language in the presence of what has already been translated; a game of "no peeking" that produces new poetry out of its (mis)remembered source(s).

Meaning in *From the Hungarian* does not come from words themselves but in the relation of words to one another; the return and metamorphosis of imagery and meaning across lines and the unit of the stanza; across the poems as translations, and

across languages. Movement between each of the translations allows the reader to

accumulate a sense of position, of orientation, and of sequence, so as to better

construct an awareness of poetic and translational process: the journey from (and of)

a source is a continual forward motion. It is never done. Consequently, when one

reads "Songs of the Depression", "never leave the road" (Raworth 100) could be

considered an imperative, but it can actually be taken as an admission of fact: forward

is only ever the movement of writing and, therefore, of translation.

4.4 Radar

<div style="text-align:center">XCI</div>

in taut masts low master signals

xeroxed back to me set to seeking

& still in shapes the Black Beacon comes

antennae down, attenuated (*Tamám* p.22).

Edward FitzGerald, departing Woodbridge aboard his yacht, "*Scandal*", "would sail

along the [River] Deben and up the coast to Lowestoft" (Sebald 203). On his regular

voyages up the Suffolk coastline, he would have passed the small, outlying coastal

village of Bawdsey, followed by the even more remote hamlet of Shingle Street; he

would have then navigated past the River Alde and around the desolate foreland

shingle spit of Orford Ness, moving north past Aldeburgh towards the beaches and

ports of Norfolk. Today, the coastline familiar to FitzGerald still has the same

geography, but since the mid 19th century it has been the site of technological and

military upheaval; in particular, the successful development and implementation of radar.

The system of radar – its name "a contraction of the words *ra*dio *d*etection *a*nd *r*anging" (Skolnik 2) – is "an electromagnetic system for the detection and location of objects" that works by "transmitting a particular type of waveform, a pulse-modulated sine wave for example, and detects the nature of the echo signal" (1). It is the name, as discussed in 4.1 (p. 142), that Jack Spicer chose for the final poem in his collection *After Lorca*, "Radar", which sits listening for the reverberations and echoes of previous images that are developed throughout the preceding translations, poems and letter poems. To Spicer, the technology of radar was symbolic of the kind of poetic practice he was undertaking: the correspondence of imagery and tone between a ST and its translation is much the same as a signal that is transmitted, reflected back, and listened for – not the exact same signal that was sent but the detection of its distorted, returning echoes. Consequently, this chapter has also sought to expand the concept of likeness, correspondence and reverberation in translation and poetics through the passage of a ST into a target language.

In *Tamám*, however, radar has become an important metaphor for the progression of the sequence of quatrains on structural and imagistic levels. The significance of place through the lens of radar – in particular local place and historical connections – forms one aspect of *Tamám* that is transmitted over the arc of the quatrain sequence. *Tamám* is written between the places of Essex, Suffolk, Australia, Viareggio (Italy) and Persia, without set time periods or borders: the effect of this is to layer the different places in a palimpsestuous manner but to also draw through their corresponding likenesses and connections to one another. Shades of these places are bounced back and return in distorted forms.

The geographic connection between Somerton beach in Adelaide, Viareggio beach, and the east coast of Essex and Suffolk is a superficially simple one: the shoreline is a common image. More specifically, the images of sand, earth and dust are further signals that are broadcast across *Tamám*. Quatrain XI conjures the "dull empire" that "tips / its foundations in the sand" (p. 5), which then returns as "silence aching the Victoria Desert" in quatrain XVII (p. 6); this is carried over to "Burke & King / in the desert grassland" (p. 6), which by the time of quatrain XLVII has metamorphosed into "bunkers dust & black screens" (p. 12), continued through quatrain LIX as " data falls ash wipes / quickly scorched earth tactics" (p.15). By the end of *Tamám*, sand returns but instead of consuming the foundations of a "dull empire", there are just "broken sticks" (XCII p. 23) in it, fragmented, bare, and symbolic of things going "back to dust" (XCIV p. 23). The final quatrain CI (p. 26) begins with "[d]eep at the sand's edge", which is lifted directly from the final stanza of Spicer's "Radar":

> […]
>
> I crawled into bed with sorrow that night
>
> Couldn't touch his fingers. See the splash
>
> Of the water
>
> The noisy movement of cloud
>
> The push of humpbacked mountains
>
> Deep at the sand's edge (*My Vocabulary* 154).

This returns the imagistic signal back to its source, but also distorts the "push of humpbacked mountains" in Spicer's poem to become the buried "curled shells of cold

& broken Kings" beneath the sand. The "sorrow" that Spicer feels at no longer being in a communion with Lorca ("Couldn't touch his fingers") is reframed as "lost scenes & stone memories" (p. 26) haunting the quatrain.

There is the constant presence of, as quatrain LXXXVII states, "a blocked & local history" (p. 22): "blocked" partly because historical sources are interpreted and therefore distortions of truth, yet also because this gestures to the trespassing of places that are off-limits, concealed, and kept secret. The spectres of veiled military activity in east Suffolk and the encrypted code associated with the Somerton Man are raised here; this interpreted "history" is a received signal from various sources, and forms webs of relationships between places and times that I have used as toothing-stones for writing new poetry.

W. G. Sebald notes that "Bawdsey Manor itself was for a long time the domicile and research centre of the team under Robert Watson-Watt that developed radar" (227), and that with the onset of the Second World War "technicians at Bawdsey built radar masts along the east coast" (230). These were "eerie wooden structures more than eighty yards high", and "[n]o one knew what purpose they served" (230-1) at the time. Orford Ness, just a few miles north of Bawdsey, was one of the main sites of British military research into the development and use of radar throughout the 20th century. In 1928, the imposing "Black Beacon"[50] was constructed "by the Royal Aircraft Establishment, Farnborough, to house an experimental 'rotating loop' navigation beacon" (*Orford Ness* 6). The large charcoal-coloured wooden tower was "later used by the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment (AWRE) for telemetry during bombing trials" (6), which was in operation alongside "Cobra Mist", "an over-the-horizon (OTH) backscatter radar" (4) throughout the Cold

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[50] An image of the Black Beacon can be seen in *Tamám* on p. 22.

War period. Both of these structures are mentioned in *Tamám*: quatrain XVII (p. 6)

presents Cobra Mist as "a skeleton listening / deaf to noise", which refers to the

facility's eventual closure in 1973 rendering it "deaf" and wasted like "a skeleton".

Then, in quatrain XCI (p. 22) "the Black Beacon comes / antennae down, attenuated":

a shadow of its former use as a radar tower, its image is now "attenuated", stretched

out, difficult to intercept and distorted like "low master signals".

Beyond the development and use of radar at Orford Ness, more than nine-

thousand seven-hundred miles away the isolated village of Woomera in South

Australia's Victoria Desert was the site of similar, parallel military testing. The

official name of the site, the "Anglo-Australian Long Range Weapons Establishment"

(also the "Woomera Rocket Range"), was first used in 1947 for "parachute trials",

quickly expanding to "bomb ballistics work, which began as an extension of what the

British were doing at [Orford Ness]" (Morton 376). The link between Orford Ness

and Woomera deepened in 1949 with the arrival of George Hicks, "a mathematician

and Senior Scientific Officer in charge of the bomb ballistics section at [Orford

Ness]" (156) who "pushed ahead with installing the instruments from [Orford]"

required for ballistics testing. This period of Hicks' development and organization of

the Woomera site led, as a consequence of the Second World War, to "[d]isplaced

persons from the Baltic states" who were migrating to Adelaide "under the auspices

of the International Refugee Organization" finding work at the Woomera Rocket

Range (Feltus 27). One of the suspected identities of the Somerton Man was believed

to be one of these "Balts" (197). However, it is more likely that the Somerton Man

was actually a spy associated with the Soviet Union: the military activity at Woomera

would have drawn such agents to the area in light of the Cold War.

I began to bring the secretive, coded aspect of these military operations into

Tamám as a means of presenting them as imagistic echoes from these distant yet

related historical sources. The quatrains are occasionally layered with faded

photographic images that come from the site of Orford Ness (most visible on p. 6, p.

13, and pp. 22-3) to provide a point of contact between the text and the physical

location through distorted, photocopied representations. Quatrain XLVIII (p. 12)

raises the inevitable fallout of the ballistic bomb tests at Woomera and Orford Ness

through the nuclear "bunkers", one of which was constructed at "Kelvedon Hatch",

Essex, operational throughout the Cold War period. This was a future that never came

to pass (a lost future), as the British government never used the bunker for its

intended purpose. This is furthered by the reappearance of "dug outs" in quatrain LI

(p. 13) which later, in quatrain LXXXVI (p. 22), metaphorically become the "guarded

phrases" and "covered paths" obscuring and deferring meaning (and therefore truth).

I felt that the Somerton Man's code should be used structurally in *Tamám*

because of the reciprocal relationship many believed *The Rubáiyát* to have in

breaking the code, using it "as a 'key'" (Feltus 115) for the code's decryption. I

eventually decided to split the quatrains into runs of varying length, divided in further

sections by the lines of the code; this also included the erased "~~MLIAOI~~" line, a

Kuza-Náma section represented by a pair of drawn lines,[51] and a final coda quatrain

(CI p. 26) that is denoted by the single line drawn under the written code in the

Somerton Man's *Rubáiyát* (p. 25). Although, frustratingly, I was not able to further

use the code itself as a means of effectively randomizing or interacting with the

---

[51] These drawn lines (seen on p. 14) overlay one another with a cross drawn at the intersection. I saw this as a fitting representation of radar: it is almost as if the extending lines with the marked cross is a point where sources deflect back to the receiver.

poetry, this structuring of the quatrains allowed a narrative arc to form not dissimilar to Spicer's concept of the serial poem (as noted in 4.1, pp. 140-1). This meant that the quatrains could be serialized into distinct parts that carry through and develop interrelated images chronologically.

Temporal ambiguity, subjectivity and the inability to equate evidence with understanding are, for instance, chronologically recurring motifs in *Tamám*. The section "MRGOABABD" focuses on the events at Somerton beach and Viareggio, starting the sequence with "Tamám Shud" (I p. 4), beginning with "the end" of the Somerton Man and the poet Shelley so as to indicate the fluid temporal structure of the poetry.[52] It also introduces "liminal tangos" (XV p. 5) of the sources and texts that the poetry is drawn from. Section "MTBIMPANETP" begins to lay out the evidence from various sources with logic and reasoning ("questions breed questions", XXXV p. 11); then section "MLIABOAIAQ" develops the tension between proof and conjecture: "nobody exactly knows / what happened to fidelity / it lost itself in circles" (exegesis poem, p. 18). The disembodied voice of a lover (perhaps Jestyn[53] or Pervaneh[54]) cuts in with "o but I was in love she says" (LXXIV p. 19) to heighten the sense of frustration, longing, and regret, only to be put on ice in the penultimate section "ITTMTSAMSTGAB" with "where love's kept in cool bags" and "estranged partners" (LXXXVI p. 22). The voice is led away as the clinical, interrogative "full body searches" (LXXXVI p. 22) interject, which are then countered by the vague and recurring conclusion: "No one can know exactly" in quatrain XCII (p. 23).

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[52] Initially, I had intended for various "timelapse" poems to be used at points in the quatrain sequence (see Appendix E, p. 186) but I felt that this would be too obvious to the chronology and disruptive to the activity of the quatrains and exegesis poetry; these were eventually subsumed into the main quatrains.

[53] Supposedly a lover of the Somerton Man (see 1.3, p. 59).

[54] Pervaneh and Rafi feature as lovers sentenced to death in Flecker's play *Hassan*, as briefly noted in 2.3, p. 88.

The "Kuza-Náma" (p. 14) is my translation of FitzGerald's similarly titled

section in *The Rubáiyát*. As Karlin states, it is also known as the "'Book of Pots', a

made-up phrase which FitzGerald put in 'for fun'", which was based on "biblical and

classical antecedents for the 'Relation of Pot and Potter to Man and his Maker'" (*The*

Rubáiyát 162-3). I have tried to introduce elements of divine creation into the section,

through lines such as "'God' flicks grooves from tongues" in LVII and "the Word

divided" in LIX (p. 15) – both references to Babel (see footnote 21, p. 70) – to hint

towards FitzGerald's translation, however, I decided that the Kuza-Náma would be

better reinterpreted as a mid-point of imagistic deflection, signaling change similar to

Spicer's "Aquatic Park".

In *The Rubáiyát*, the Kuza-Náma marks a variation in the flow of quatrains as

the key motifs of life, death, universal unknowns and *carpe diem* are ruminated upon

and spoken of from the perspective of pots. Consequently, the corresponding section

in *Tamám* is the point from which established source images rebound; it is a

reframing of the preceding quatrains, beginning with a reconfiguration of "Aquatic

Park" (quatrains LIII-LVI p. 15). The section's provocation, "Nobody told you it

would work / this way" (LIII), is a precursor to the line "No one exactly knows" in

Spicer's "Radar" (*My Vocabulary* 154), colouring the run of quatrains with a sense of

uncertainty and anticipation about the disfiguration of the returning source imagery.

The line "Two boys play on the beach" (131) in "Aquatic Park" is distorted to

become "two men bent over drinking" (LV p. 15) and the "shaded & coded returning

image" (LV) coincides with the resurfacing of "a body wide legged" from quatrain

VII's "I read a body as a translation of parts" (p. 4).

The "beautiful black fish" (Spicer, *My Vocabulary* 131) of "Aquatic Park" is

introduced in quatrain LVI as "the tape slackens reels / nothing perhaps not even a

black fish"; the protentive and retentive act of waiting visits once again, as the image

of the black fish is not pulled onto the boat's deck as anticipated. However, it still

persists underwater, returning later in quatrain LXXX (p. 19) on "a fresco excavated

from the '40s", metamorphosed into a "beautiful grey fish": a buried, faded, painted

likeness of the original that keeps returning in different, distorted forms.

At Orford Ness, the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment (AWRE)

Laboratory 1 is a derelict shell of a building that was once "used for both mechanical

and vibration testing" (*Orford Ness* 7). It is now open to the public, overgrown with

weeds, moss and other foliage.[55] The ceiling has since collapsed, leaving the metal

bars that hold together the structure exposed to the sky and shafts of sun. In this

space, footsteps of visitors echo in the deserted, rubble-strewn laboratory corridors.

This was where I composed quatrain XCII (p. 23) of *Tamám* while waiting, and in my

mind listening out for the "audio lines" and "degraded masters" of test signals that

once reverberated the structure. Later, looking out to the North Sea from Orford

beach, I imagined FitzGerald sailing by, still standing "on the *Scandal*'s deck"; the

clandestine figure of the Somerton Man, laid out stiff and supine on a distant

Australian shore; and then, wrecked somewhere across the vast, endless blue, Shelley

rolling lifeless with his "*Don Juan* in the ocean" (XCIX p.23).

Throughout this chapter, I have sought to further the previous arguments I have

made: that translation is new, "productive" writing, and that it is a process of

inevitable loss but also of gain, through a reinterpretation of a ST. Moreover, a

translation is also subject to the almost ghostly presence, or trace, of its ST; it is a

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[55] The AWRE structure can be faintly seen in monochrome on the title page to
Tamám (p. 1).

transposed likeness that repurposes imagery and dislocates meaning from its source(s).

As with radar systems, the received signal that is deflected and received back is changed, distorted in some manner by the far-off target it strikes. As I have discussed, for a new text or translation that is in a relational tie with its ST and other sources, the signal that is received by a poet-translator is interpreted as a changed signal; a returning image that is a shaded likeness, an altered image. The meaning of new writing, therefore, is always relative to and haunted by the existence of other writing and sources, enriching and layering the new work's web of meaning as it moves through form.

5: Conclusion

Throughout this thesis, I have sought to examine the role of translation in terms of the movement of writing, and therefore of meaning "from one form or medium into another" (*The Oxford Dictionary of English* 1889). This translational movement, as I have argued, is a metamorphic process that can only ever result in writing which assumes a new identity from the correspondence of relational meaning between a translation, its ST or its multiple sources. The peripheral space where translation and new writing meet is liminal precisely because language (and meaning) is relational; it would be a ceaseless task to assess where a line might be drawn between the two modes of writing. I have demonstrated how poets and poet-translators often use native and foreign language STs as tangential prompts for the genesis of new poetry and writing instead of the dogmatic "word by word and line by line" approach of Dryden's "metaphrase" (145). However, their work is still movement of meaning from a ST as a point of origin to another destination.

In light of this, the discussion should perhaps not be whether to rigidly categorize what is and what is not translation, rather it should be to situate translation more broadly as an activity that on some level continually operates within the act of writing, as with *la trace*, and that it occurs to a greater or lesser extent in a produced text. To claim that my thesis exhausts this premise is certainly untrue, and work to recast translation in this manner would require the space found in a much lengthier critical work. My research could not, for limitations of space, include forensic analysis and evaluation of emerging terms such as "re-visioning" and "re-imagining": terms that will most likely become used with increasing frequency in relation to translation as a broad and constant activity in the writing process.

However, I feel I have presented a robust foundation for the argument that this reframing of translation can be justified by Derridean deconstruction. *La trace* is the result of *différance*, and builds from the differing deferral of meaning between words, texts and forms, establishing how the absence of another pre-existing text leaves a mark of presence in a new text. And, as I have shown, a ST is in a constant relational tie with its translation, yet the translator must simultaneously deal with how to present the absence of that ST within a finished translation.

I believe that the translator's creative agency is something that should be privileged and encouraged precisely because it is an unavoidable part of any writing process. Furthermore, the variety and scope of translations is vital for the expansion and enrichment of a ST's relationships of meaning, so that it might be viewed in new ways. My own translation of *The Rubáiyát* is a reinterpretation of the ST and of the many sources discussed throughout this thesis; a creative assimilation and expression of my engagement with the fragments that construct it. To translate is to interpret, and to interpret is to present through the lens of subjectivity. *Tamám* is my attempt to raise this spectre: to demonstrate the aspects of a text that continually defers meaning back to its ST through an interpretative, distorted likeness of the ST. In doing so, I am confident that I have succeeded in forming a text that engages with trace and foregrounds the role sources and STs play in the composition of new poetry.

As a field, it is my opinion that creative writing must continue to champion its unyielding engagement with translation. As Edward FitzGerald, Ezra Pound and other poets have shown, creative writers must continue to present the argument that translation is not simply the dominion of academics in translation studies or translators of scholarly texts. Translation needs to reach beyond those disciplines for STs to appeal to new, diverse audiences. I believe that writers, poets and poet-

translators are setting a trend of consulting established translation theory and other supplementary theories, such as deconstruction, to present more radical practice-based translational approaches in coherent and justifiable ways. In doing so, the peripheries of translation will continue to be pushed outwards and to expand; and with them, so too will the range, scope and innovation of contemporary poetry.

Babel

Having fallen far
somewhere in the early twilight
the language, God-wiped
from its stubborn grooves

gets shuttled like a baton
to the last spent runner
in the back of the throat
of the tongue of the mind.

And all along, the divided Word
was Click yes 4 Brexit
found nested in the shreds
of the last ever dawn

What's left to say†
having beaten the lodestone
to stand in the rain
of blocks, artifices, mortar,
having smashed the lungs
of every willing body
that dared to own a language
by falling so hard, so fast
as if to prove your point
that broken things shout

What is there to say
when, incomprehensibly
you stand & speak
(how can you?)
that even the killed-off talk
of lost futures [now]
they drift in them, drag them
epistemically to the moment
where there's nothing but a beach
the sea coming fast onto it
with signs of morning
not ever quite making it
through the split fingers
that shutter your eyes
from the tower's collapse.

(Exegesis)

†You said, Steiner, we must each decipher, intangible, reckless, comprehend that self-same vision, not science, but an art, a black exact art, the magician's hat that fails to contain the rope's endless coil when pulled and pulled to excess. But I could not touch those fingers deep at the sand's edge, fell to theory instead, Steiner, what do we do with the body, Steiner, and what do we do in the after, tell us, you've got to know?

I want to pick the bones
of your terrible time
(or was it exquisite)
& file the remains

on the edge of
Annihilation's Waste
so that you (n)ever existed
Exit Stage Left.

When the signal terminated
did it blink to standby
draw to a dot
the wash bag's neck

or did the power supply shut
off, totally off
no notice of closure
cord ripped from the wall.

(Exegesis)

Out to sea
that point of no return
passes beyond the scope
of expectant people

Stage Right is the binding in the heat
the bag to take it away in
& the hand to write 'deceased'

shells cupped to ears
repeating to them
nothing like the air's noise
turned back to air

I think of Burke and King
in the desert grassland
discussing their mortality, so
casually, as if it were possible
to overcome by talking
for hours to a dying man

Annihilation's Waste

but this is what happened
I'm sure
before one left the other unburied
stayed for two further days
then left

Trace insists
the book is pressed open
but tucked into itself
at the leading edge

So when I think of how
the body is laid, named
folded & cast
the root is dug out.

This morning
overwrites one day ago
as the half-light halves
a fog screen goes up

& the ghost horizon of the Colne
leads an inquisition
into what's 'real'…
What I find is that yes

He who Giveth
must also Taketh Away
like the dual winding
of a tape's reels

spooling the dictation
of a dead
voice speaking.
Behind the sterile

waiting room
with a near-indefinite
wait
falls the slow

drip-fed
permineralization.
The Human Mould injected
with formaldehyde

(Exegesis)

Was the ride to Purgatory rough
were the forensics good enough
did the bleed through stains
bleed through or
did the lignin fox
I ask of You

straddling your two-way grace
in the mercy period
of that final Realm of Language
am I allowed to go over the
end, or has this half-way
house levelled the earth
& nailed the casket shut
for good

Preparation Room

There is something
heart breaking
when the Vital Organ halts
& you sit impatient

for a response
the callback
from Origin, from Source
but nothing comes

& you hoped
for revelation
in the deep
freeze of the chiller

the half expectation
of a living thing
shaking off
its plastic cover

for what it's worth
Rafi was right
it is nothing
for a man to die

he said
we are each qualified
to interpret the
Necessary Fiction

even the parts that gave
up The Ghost
or so
to speak

& he came onto the scene
just when the line cut out
& the hanging receiver went past
even the dial tone

Mortuary

Ontology suggests the removal of covers
frustrates language

the body vacated
its tongue
doesn't know what to do

- - - -

Or rather
I don't know what to do
with you

now you are blown
asunder
borne on that wave of air
to never-never

But what I would do if given the chance
if not to do with l-l-love or rrregret

(Exegesis)

Somerton
(timelapse)

Ten-four	Blue beach light,
ripped out	Bowl of Eye. Tamám Shud.
the precious	A coming noose / of light.
source-smokes	The ember of a Kensitas.
language	
the folded	In drug dreams a Right
forward man	Hand takes the sky, grabs
slides away	It All — Fingers bent like drunk
the coded shred	beachwalkers into the night
of origin text	
stuck jumping	Time's split either way
in the freeze-frame	7pm. Quarter-full
of language	Pack of Bryant & May to the
stuffed	Wind / Breezeless closing day
under the tongue	
do you copy	Sea wall - direct sea
do you read	view. Last Thing seen / & each
tap the source	Will Walk It All The Way
moment to moment	(100 metres) from bay shelter
the grounded wire	
of bad transmission	Juicy Fruit / half used up,
stuck jumping	a half-smoked cig / on his
do you copy	cheek. One Narrow Aluminium
do you	American Comb / No hat.
do you copy	
one-two	More (no more) endless light
one-two	on the tips of waves, sailed on
ten-four	Tobacco Wind Air / incarnadine
ten-four	the day's spleen High, Engorged
ten-four	
ten-four	Spring fire sulphur / match strikes
	a toast to the horizon
	May It Keep On Top of The Sea
	cupped silent / blue-handed

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