Tales Told Through Translation

The art that fosters shared imaginaries between translator and ethnographer identities

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Abstract

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Having spent so many of my free hours immersed in the worlds of translated fiction, I set out to create a research project designed to better understand the entanglements of the imagination behind this art. This thesis aims to explore how literary translators construct their identity and how multiple forces create instability in the professional self. It continues to dissect how these identities both impact, and are impacted by, literary imaginaries; the idea of other places as imagined through the literature they translate. Given the nature of this research and its close relation to literature, I present my thesis in a narrative form and discover the extent that fiction can be used in ethnography. Harnessing traditional qualitative data collection and presenting material via experimental ethnofictions, I demonstrate the bridge between scientific analysis and artistic praxis in the realm of translator identities. By understanding the pervasive invisibility process upon translators I contextualise the precarious nature of their sense of self in the publishing industry. Working with theories of the imagination I then explore their relation of the self with the other they translate. The knowledge and methodology developed in this thesis will help translators to navigate their field and create ideas for ethnographers to reflect on the nature of translation in their work.

Keywords: literary translators; creative ethnography; translation studies; ethnofiction; imagination; identity construction

Acknowledgements

For *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers, The Erstwhile,* and *My Tender Matador. To All the Boys I've Loved Before* and those *Human Acts* across *The Map of Knowledge.* It has been a *Number9Dream.* From *Death in Spring* to what can now be a *Beautiful Summer,* caught as *Children of the Cave* during *A General Theory of Oblivion* for what felt like *One Hundred Years of Solitude*; I am finally *Uprooted, The Salmon who Dared to Leap Higher, Crossing* into the *Cloud Atlas.* Now, like *A Moth to a Flame* this thesis finally brings *The Sense of an Ending.*
Thank you.

Lund, 04-06-2020

Matthew Short

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Prologue | *On my bookshelf are many books…*

A literary translator translates text, an ethnographer transcribes their material, a student writes a thesis. Pen to paper, fingers on keyboard, words fill a page and the act of writing is shared amongst all three. We write to be read. A literary translator produces a book, an ethnographer submits an article, and a student emails their thesis to be examined. There are entanglements within these written forms that connect us as wordsmiths. What once was a boundary between myself as a reader of a translated book and the person who brought the words into my native language becomes blurred as I step into the same territory of writing, of transcribing, of translating ideas and experiences. It is through literature that I, as a student and ethnographer, adopt the position of a translator and as such begin to explore who exactly is a literary translator, and how do we imagine the world in which they occupy?

On my bookshelf are many books. Many of them are works in translation from elsewhere, from Japan to Argentina, Iceland to Mexico. And it is with one book in particular that sparked a chain of events which led me to sit here now, contemplating the ways-of-being that connect me, literary translators, and other writers out there. At lunchtime on the 9th March, 2020, I left Goodenough College in London for a small independent bookshop to pick up three books that I had ordered over email a week before. Living in Sweden where imported books are agonisingly expensive, I knew that I needed to make the most of buying some greatly anticipated reads at the more comforting British price. Having chatted with the bookseller and swiping my card, I rushed back to the college where a translator's symposium was being held and I was collecting data. My bag was weighed down with the three new books, two of which were translated by people in the same room I was headed back to.

It was the other book that I was most excited to read. The cover bore the image of a young man's naked shoulder sloping downwards, his head buried in a splash of red cloth. His curved shape is framed by black, such a sleek design which highlights the simple white title, *Crossing.* As I returned back to Sweden that evening, I placed this particular book on my bedside table. Exhausted, half asleep, I knew the next day I would start to read it. My time with the book was brief but intense, by 11th March I was finished, placing it spine out on my shelves. As I turned away from it, I opened my laptop and started writing my thesis, knowing the direction I wanted to take, feeling that even its title alone could guide me in how I would present my research. Crossing boundaries, bridging genres, exploring writing and telling tales… All of this to better understand what makes a literary translator and how their work influences, and is guided by, collective imaginaries.

Chapter One | *Crossing Paths and Introductions*

Early in February of 2020, a translator I was interviewing for this research said that "translating titles is a good example of novel-level translations. Although you are translating the words of the title, you're also trying to translate the summing-up of the book that the title represents." Inconsequential at first, it wasn't until I finished reading *Crossing* (2019) by Paijtim Statovci, and translated by David Hackston, that I realised the reality of this statement and how often titles are overlooked. In its original language, Finnish, the title reads *Tiranan Sydän* which directly translates as The Heart of Tirana, a stark difference to what the English title then reads and implies. Yet *Crossing* is a title that truly encapsulates the depth of what this story represents: it follows a character who moves from country to country and weaves in memories and folklore of their home country, Albania. This character changes name, gender, and identity with fluidity in an attempt to find themselves. They, and the story itself, cross borders that are becoming more blurred in our contemporary world; it represents the precarious nature of identity construction, the doubts this process can create, and the role the individual plays in imagining another life, another place. As a book it brings this story of elsewhere, elsewhen, and someone else to a place of familiarity that the reader occupies. And herein lies the crux of my thesis.

Like the main character of this book I find myself moving through this text and crossing borders; the borders of previous research and theoretical frameworks. I move through this chapter exploring the different necessities of an introduction to a masters thesis, trying to find myself as an ethnographer whilst locating the identities of translators. Glimpses of the imaginary colour my text, and all this evolves throughout the words to follow. I am guided by my research questions, and these are my goals.

How is a literary translator's identity created?

In what ways do literary imaginations shape perceptions of the world at large?

As I explore these questions, the thesis will become populated with characters, the literary translators, the books that represent imaginaries, the authors from other places, confronted with myself as a researcher. I aim to trace the connections that bring these characters together in three distinct ways. First of all, I will provide insights as to how translator identities are constructed within the context of the English language publishing industry. The analysis will highlight the precarious nature of this identity and the movements currently emerging that help to stabilise it.

Following that I will then discuss how translators are affected by the imagination of other places through books as cultural objects. This is supplemented with a discussion on how this also affects readers' understandings of the other. As I work through these key areas, I shall continue utilising the narrative voice that has so far presented this introduction. Since literature, translation, and writing are so deeply entwined with the nature of my research, so my thesis is shaped by the art I examine. And so my final aim is to present a thesis which emulates the disruption to convention that translated fiction can represent.

Many times throughout the process of writing this thesis have I felt the bristle of uncertainty when I mention using narrative devices and fictional retellings in a cultural analysis. It is, however, important for me to portray my research in this way to highlight the translational nature that binds the ethnographer to the literary translator, and how the gap between academic and literary writing can be bridged with creative methodologies. When professor of translation Leo Tak-Hung Chan says 'translated fiction usually offers distinctive, foreign models of reality' (2006:66), one can note how the notion of reality is disrupted by introducing the idea of another alternative reality. The "foreign models" create a sense of alterity which can highlight the differences between a hegemonic literary landscape and a "minority" one, in this case a non-English language literature. As shall be explored later in this thesis, English language publishing often domesticates foreign literature to reduce that sense of alterity for readers. In opposition to this, when describing Lawrence Venuti's theory of the translator's invisibility, Beatriz Penas-Ibáñez says '[r]eading a foreignising, non-standard translation may be challenging, but it also benefits readers by raising their awareness of the status of the text and its alterity as a translated text.' (2017:139) This highlights how a translation which celebrates rather than diminishes differences can help to instil the possibilities of a different perspective. By solidifying the status of the text as one that has been translated from a foreign language, it can be treated as its own particular unique literary narrative that is not subjugated as something bound in servitude to the original.

My own writing becomes one of alterity too. I grapple with the literary lines that connect different forms of writing, and try to make sense of how imaginaries not only impact translation, but impact the production of ethnographies. This stylistic choice is determined so as to challenge the reader to consider the way translation can be used to disrupt hegemonic ideas and to represent alternative realities. I shall go on to discuss this in greater detail not only in the next subsection which will highlight the disposition of this thesis, but also again with more rigour in the methodological chapter following this one.

Disposition and Design

The path of this thesis leads forwards. Despite the entangled complexities of themes in this thesis, I shall present a precise outline of the avenue my argument follows. I have designed it in a way that follows a narrative structure of chronology; past, present, and future are presented in the following chapters. Following this subsection, I will glance behind me to show what has come before. This will be the previous research, contextualising my thesis' placement within the academic field that already exists. Then I will explore the theoretical framework that has also been presented in the past, that situates this text in the field of cultural analysis. I shall then close this chapter with a crossing into the present, where my analysis begins.

Chapter two of this thesis melds together the methodological argumentation behind my thesis, whilst critically analysing the nature of narrative and ethnofiction within my research. As one aim of this thesis is to demonstrate a different form of ethnographic presentation it is important for me to provide insights into how this style of experimentation has been practiced before and to analyse the possibilities that it may present to ethnography. French anthropologist Marc Augé (1999) discusses how, globally, we have struck upon "the new regime of the imaginary which nowadays touches social life, contaminating and penetrating it to the point where we mistrust it". This idea describes the way images and fictions have woven themselves deep into the core of our social experience of the world, structuring new forms of connectivity and isolation. This projection of images as fiction upon our sense of reality is what has propelled me to work with the idea of ethnofiction as representations of my fieldwork. As a design, the use of ethnofiction will act like a vignette. This word is especially apt to denote a brief window of story and also a picture without such structured borders, seeping into its background. The meaning of ethnofiction will be explained fully in the following chapter, but to imagine it as a vignette will help you to see the descriptive nature of short stories and how writing is not confined within borders, and the way narrative fades into every facet of this research.

In chapter three, the narrative will progress with the first ethnographic short story. This will highlight the nature of identity creation that translators undergo. This shall form the basis for my analysis of precarious translator identities as a cultural phenomenon shaped by the English language publishing industry. Following on from this, chapter four will also begin with the second ethnographic short story. The second story highlights the use of the imagination in translators' experiences and my analysis will expand on this topic. Exploring the imaginaries involved in translation, from the imagined cultural other embedded in text, to the collective imagination of

nations, I will present the way translators are affected by, and then affect, the power of the imaginary.

Finally, in the final chapter of this thesis, I will reflect upon the nature of the imagination, the assemblage of identities, and how utilising creative writing as a methodology shows the embedded nature of translation in ethnography. By assessing the linkages between these topics and tools, I will be able to present the applicability for my research and argue for the further development of ethnofiction as a creative practice in academia.

Previous Research

Considering myself as crafting an ethnography of translation, I searched for the work that came before to help guide me in my research. As the sociology of translation grows, there is a distinct lack of the ethnographic praxis in the field, and so I find myself wondering why. In her doctorate thesis, Perihan Duygu Tekgül (2012) notes that there 'have not been comprehensive studies on translations in the UK from the point of cultural sociology or media/cultural studies' (p. 15) particularly through ethnographic methodologies. Searching further, I found that translation theorist Daniel Simeoni (1998) discusses ethnographic methods as part of the "descriptive translation studies", however, the results that were displayed which suggested translators are happy to view themselves as subservient to playwrights clashes a lot with my own findings and casts his work as somewhat outdated. Where Simeoni focuses on the habitus of the translator, Tekgül's focus for her paper is to examine the readers perspective on the idea of translation and how this impacts not only translators but the wider industry of publishing translated literature, illuminating another avenue of study. By demonstrating the way that such ethnographic methods can be used to examine this sociological field of translation studies, she has highlighted the potential for how this area could expand into a more systematic and empirical approach to the topic at hand. And it is here that I feel it is ever more important to utilise my ethnographic methods within this field, to help the ethnography of translation grow.

Despite this aforementioned lack of literature on ethnographic praxis in translation theory, I wanted to find the aspects of my field of cultural analysis that reflected specific areas of the translation theory area. The interdisciplinary nature of applied cultural analysis has allowed me to explore this thesis topic through multiple lenses, and to best define the position of my research in comparison to a wide array of previous work. The nature of my subject field lies at the crossroads of translation studies, sociology, literary theory, and anthropology. In tandem, translation studies is a

multidisciplinary field in similar ways to cultural analysis and has its roots in various subject areas. The two areas had started to overlap more explicitly in the 1990s when what is often described as the "cultural turn" of translation studies happened. This cultural turn is defined by a movement away from translation studies' 'formalist phase and was beginning to consider broader issues of context, history and convention' (Bassnett, 2003:433). Theorist and translator Susan Bassnett saw this turn as the opportunity to develop practices which considered the cultural contexts behind translation, and notices how the field has since started examining the processes of translation as impacted by the translator's being in the world. Now, as one of the pioneering theorists of this cultural turn, she goes on to make a call for the need of the translation turn in cultural studies.

As a translation theorist, her development in the field in cultural studies has been limited to that of comparative culture through the study of literature, and there are some notable gaps of meaning-making when it comes to her use of the word culture. She does admit that whilst there have been some use of translation theory in cultural studies (e.g., Nida, 1954), her belief is that the anthropological nature of this study somewhat sullies the field with its colonial attitudes. She goes on to state that '[i]n terms of methodology, cultural studies has abandoned its evangelical phase as an oppositional force to traditional literary studies and is looking more closely at questions of hegemonic relations in text production.' (Bassnett, 2003:442/3) This demonstrates a rather limited view of the scope of cultural studies, particularly as it implies her equating literature as the mode of culture, and not expanding the view to adopt a more critical case for what culture is.

In my attempt to find a more rich understanding of the term culture in regards to translation studies, I stumbled across the sociology of translation, who one of its most vocal proponents is the translation theorist and practicing translator Michaela Wolf. In the introduction to *Constructing a Sociology of Translation* (Wolf & Fukari, 2007), Wolf gives an extensive overview of the history of the culture turn in translation studies and how this necessitated the expansion of the sociological turn of the field. She ends the introduction by expressing how 'the domain of "translation as a social practice" is still under construction, its outlines are most certainly beginning to come into view.' (Wolf, 2007:31) This highlights the academic inquiry into this field which has been occurring since the late 1980s, that prompted the cultural turn. She also alludes to the disjointed efforts which have not culminated in a systematic analysis of the research possibilities within the new branch of sociology of translation. There is a note of disjuncture between the separation of "culture" and the "social" in regards to translation studies, and Wolf highlights the need to bring together these separated fields and examine how they are intrinsically linked. This will allow an examination of the various entangled ways that the study of translators, translation, and other players in the

publishing of translated literature are linked. Wolf has written extensively on the topic of a sociological approach to translation (i.e., Wolf, 2011; 2014; 2015) which has started to broaden the academic enquiry beyond the use of limited sociological theories: I have noted that there is extensive reading of the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu in this specific field, and only recently has Wolf started to introduce new and different kinds of theories.

As Wolf points to the disjointed efforts of creating a more empirical examination of the cultural factors behind translation studies, I find myself considering how applied cultural analytical examination can help to connect these fields. Moving on from the lack of theories used in the sociology of translation, I can bring in alternative theories to demonstrate the way different perceptions can create a deeper analysis of translators and their cultural contexts. So what better time to glimpse the theoretical framework that supports my arguments?

Theoretical Framework

Upon sitting down with my material, reflecting on what my participants said, and reading between the lines of their experiences, I turned to various different theoretical books to help define my thoughts and create a dialogue between empirical data and my idea for argumentation. Since I have already discussed how I aim to examine translator identities in chapter three, and the imaginary other within books for my fourth chapter, I shall now explain which theories underpin these topics and why they were necessary for me to pursue my exploration.

In order for me to analyse the identity construction of translators I need to examine two key things first: how do people construct their identities, and then how have translator identities already been examined? I turn to sociologist Richard Jenkins to get a clearer understanding of how identities in general are constructed. His book *Social Identity* (2004) provides an insight into the social nature of identities and how they are shaped by the world around us, but also by the world within our heads. He is inspired by various sociologists before him which have helped to create his grounded theory of 'internal-external dialectic of identification' (2004:18). What this theory presents is the opportunity for me to understand identities through the dialogue of internal awareness of the self, and the external definitions from others which shape how individuals and collectives constitute their identity. I find this dialogic analysis to be most fruitful in understanding how translator identities are constructed within the social sphere of the publishing industry, and can use qualitative data to examine the social ties which help to create the identification processes. This

concept is the foundation of my examination on identity, and can be read both explicitly and implicitly in my analysis.

In order to then bring this identity analysis closer to the subject of the literary translator, I have turned to Lawrence Venuti, an established translation theorist and a translator from Italian, Catalan, and French. His theoretical discussions are deeply impacted by his personal experiences of translating which helps to localise his concepts in the very particular act of translation. Translation, however, is a highly contested concept with various meanings attached to it. The slippery nature of translation and what it means to be a translator is something I have experienced when talking with my informants, so trying to define what translation is in the context of this thesis becomes difficult. Venuti mentions how translating is 'a derivative or second-order form of creation, intended to imitate or recreate a foreign-language text' (2005:801). It is difficult to then determine to what extent he has essentialised this meaning for clarity, because it seems at odds with his working theory. For the purposes of this thesis, I feel I must do the same. I have to define a literary translator and the act of translating. In the context of my research, I discuss literary translators as people who translate prose fiction in the form of novels through traditional publishing systems. Translation in this case is then carrying meaning and narrative across from one language into another, in this thesis that is from various languages into the English language.

There is a long history of translation and as such the art and practice of it has taken many forms and designs. In his book *The Translator's Invisibility* (1995), Venuti outlines an extensive history of translation from the 17th century to the time that his book was produced. Through tracing this history he argues that the machinations which have controlled the process of translation have worked in a domesticating manner which subsequently makes the translator invisible. In other words, translation in the English language publishing industry focused more on creating "fluent translations" which reflect the use of language in the contemporary spoken English setting. By avoiding Britishisms, or Americanisms, and even language that best *reflects* the source text, a fluent translation domesticates a foreign text by giving the impression that it could have been written in English from the start. This process then allows the opportunity for readers and critics to misinterpret the text as directly spoken to them from the original author, rendering the translator invisible. Given Venuti's in-depth analysis of this invisibilising process, I am able to examine how this theory can still be found today, creating a precarious sense of identity amongst contemporary literary translators.

In terms of these above theories, the identity process, and the casting of the translator as an invisible figure is shaped by the role that the imagination plays in understanding ourselves, and

understanding the world around us. To examine the imagination I have decided to gain insights from psychological anthropologist Claudia Strauss. She critically assesses some of the leading theories of the imagination, such as Cornelius Castoriadis, Jacques Lacan, and Benedict Anderson, and provides an insight on how they are typically used in the anthropological field. She described the focus of Castoriadis' theory of the imaginary as one about social imaginary and cultural ethos. This is depicted in the way his theory tends to be about *how* a society imagines collectively as opposed to how a society *is* imagined. His notion is a unified description of creative imaginary which demonstrates a culture's ethos. On the other hand, Strauss discusses how Lacan's theory of the imaginary, as influenced by Sigmund Freud, is an exploration of the illusionary imaginary as fantasy which is created to fulfil a psychological need. She notes on how he finds a link between the personal psyche and the society at large, something which is missing from Castoriadis' theory. Then she discusses Anderson's theory of the imaginary in a way that at first seems similar to Castoriadis, but deviates in a particular way. She describes how Anderson focuses on an example of reading print media for an individual to feel a connection with a community, like the community reading the same text in opposition to the other community who read different texts in different languages. She highlights how the shared imaginaries here are similar to cultural models constructed from 'implicit schemas of interpretation, rather than explicit ideologies' (Strauss, 2006:329).

   Having outlined these three key theoretical concepts of the imaginary, Strauss goes on to discuss the potential of using a hybrid form of all three concepts at once in a "person-centred approach". This approach is important to Strauss as a psychological anthropologist to ensure a critical analysis of how the imaginaries of real people are lived as opposed to those of imagined people and societies that exist in theory alone. Utilising the theories together in this way opens the opportunity to measure imaginaries as unbound and fluid. This is key to the work of ethnography since ethnography is very much based in the qualitative data evoked by individuals. As such my analysis of the imaginaries will develop Strauss' call for a person-centred approach, and explore these themes of the imaginary in a way that utilises the multiplicity of understandings to reflect the multiplicity of individual experiences.

   Whilst the theories of identity and the imagination are discussed at greater length in their separate chapters, they are deeply entwined throughout the analysis of my research and have guided me in understanding my material in deep and intriguing ways. As I move through these more localised and embodied understandings of the translators' experiences, I examine their roles in the global context since the art of translation is also transnational. In order to examine their work in this ever growing arena of global flows, I turn to anthropologist Ulf Hannerz's theories of

cosmopolitanism. In his 1996 book titled *Transnational Connections,* Hannerz explores the people who could be described as cosmopolitans. They are the people who can embrace foreign cultures, become competent in moving through the spaces belonging to the foreign cultures, but the involvement is not a complete immersion in the other culture for a cosmopolitan is always anchored to their own cultural sphere, ready to make an exit from the foreign land as and when it is necessary. This reflects the nature of the translator's work through the way that they are competent in foreign languages and the cultures of the texts they translate. Yet still they are working within the English language industry, showcasing how their investment in the other is always limited and never fully committed. It is with this in mind that I can look to the present and move forwards with my analysis.

An Interlude

This thesis is not a literature paper. However, due to the nature of my participant's work and the closeness of text and fiction within this study I am inclined to blur boundaries between literature and ethnography in this thesis. In *Crossing* (Statovci, 2019) there is a presence of Albanian myth and folklore woven through our main character's past. The presence anchors the reader in understanding how the character's life, regardless of the body travelling abroad, is inextricably linked with the stories of their past and their home country. Similarly the presence of literary writing will appear throughout my forthcoming thesis to provide an awareness of the ties that bind this work. As highlighted in this section, translated fiction can play with the realms of our imagination and cast the sense of another state of seeing the world around us. The stories I bring in help to illuminate the role that the books play in the movement of ideas across the globe, as shall be examined later. The text that I am producing, whilst specifically a cultural analysis, can be located at the crossroads of various fields which focus on literature. Having located the context of this thesis, and highlighted the position of the reader in what is to come, I will now move forwards to introduce the main methodological foundation of this thesis. As I discuss my methodological practice, it will become more clear as to just how interrelated literature, writing, translation, and ethnography are and why the creative aspect of these crafts have designed my thesis in this way.

Chapter Two | *Practical Magic*

Reflecting on my fieldwork and trying to verbalise the experience of my methodologies brings to mind a city populated with shadows. It is a city of my own design, where I've created the roads and built the houses. The shadows are people I slowly learn to see throughout the process of interviewing them. Navigating this city and trying to define its layout and borders was a difficult process, but this is the field in which my research takes place, as much imagined by me than it is by those who soon begin to move through it.

By tracing my journey to this imagined place, and the conceived field that it represents, in this chapter I will provide an overview of the ethnographic methodologies I used to collect data. These methods are the tools I carried around with me, as if in a briefcase that travelled by my side. Demonstrating the way I used them helps to build the following narrative of why I then chose to present my fieldwork using ethnofiction; a method of exploring empirical material that acknowledges the storytelling aspects that participants use to express themselves. The shape of this analysis will highlight the boundaries of the "real" and the "magic" through the process of creating ethnographic short stories. These are my ethnofictions: *representations* of anthropological fieldwork delivered through narrative retellings. The journey to reach this methodology required a movement through experiment, reflection, and defending its cause, and so this chapter culminates in a thorough problematisation of this practice.

I will challenge the notion of ethnofiction as a tool and use it to explore the "magic" nature of fiction and ethnography. Magic, in this context, is from the literary device of magical realism which distinguishes it as a theory of writing as methodology, opposed to the various social theories of magic. Having traversed the city of my making throughout this research, this chapter is my charting a map to help explore it in a reflective way. The stylistic choices reflect once more the presence of literature and fiction in this thesis and instil the necessity for the practical magic which brings forward my material in this text.

Imagining the Field

Text is both at once transient and permanent. Its transience lies in the process of writing and reading where language as symbols are understood or misunderstood accordingly. Its permanence rests in the physicality of its being bound in a book. As I set out to begin my fieldwork in January of 2020 I was struck by how the field was also a slippery concept of transience and permanence. Locating the

field in an ethnographic study is a key part of the research project as mentioned in various literatures on fieldwork (i.e., Green, 1999; Marcus, 1998; Burrel, 2009). It was not so easy to define the field in this project. I moved in and out of different imaginings of what the field could look like, but the actors who would form my research participants were not bound to any physical space that connected them. Their transience defines the field as ever changing, moving from place to place, project to project, language to language. The permanence they create is the texts they produce. And so their craft, the written space in which I could find permanence, became my field.

As 'text is a process proceeding between the consciousness of the maker and the consciousness of recipients: the beginning and the end of the process are hidden in human mind' (Torop, 2003:274), it left me realising the extent to which the field was embedded in the imaginations of myself as researcher and the translators as participants. Understanding this became useful in harnessing the power of the imagination to build relationships quickly, access the world of others, and gather data during a period of busyness. Translators are a busy people, especially in the run up to the internationally acclaimed London Book Fair. This period of time unfortunately coincided with the months of my fieldwork.

Given the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic that is now defining 2020, the London Book Fair was cancelled. The day before it was due to begin, however, I was fortunate enough to attend one of the last literary gatherings in the first half of the year. On the 9th March, I joined a translators symposium where speakers discussed various topics around the theme of "translating well". The talks examined different facets such as financial wellbeing, translating trauma, and what makes a "good" translation. I took notes on all the talks and made observations of the social occurrences happening within this space. This connection with a physical location, and the gathering of so many translators in a room, was a fleeting moment but my journal and the text I produced within it is permanent. These observations, a commonly acknowledged method within anthropology, have helped to shape my understanding of how my participants manage their personal experiences within a collectivised group.

Since this represented only one day of in-person fieldwork, I had to negotiate a more short-term, adaptable ethnography that I could assemble within the confines of the translators' time/space limitations. Together, Sarah Pink and Jennie Morgan wrote an article outlining the short-term ethnographic practices that they have utilised before. They argued for an understanding of the limitations afforded to many ethnographers in fields outside of traditional anthropology that required more intense ways of knowing the lives of their participants. They mention how this form of ethnography needs to 'use more interventional as well as observational methods to create

contexts through which to delve into questions that will reveal what matters to those people in the context of what the researcher is seeking to find out.' (Pink and Morgan, 2013:352) In line with this I needed to practice various data collection methodologies to interact with the space of the mind and imagination of my informants.

Alongside the observational data, I also held three one-hour long semi-structured interviews over Skype with two literary translators and one editor who has worked closely with translated fiction before, these are contacts I found using keywords on Twitter. Whilst I had more interventionist questions, necessary to ask for key information in the time frame, I also allowed space for the participants to guide the conversation and would ask improvised questions inspired by their comments. I also collected five email interviews with various literary translators which presented a more rigid survey type of questioning where the interviewees were able to mediate their answers over a longer period of time and in which I asked the same questions to each participant. Only one informant then provided some further insights after the initial interview when I reached out with further questions. I also utilised netnographic research since '[d]igital media are increasingly central to everyday life experiences, activities and environments' (Pink, 2012:124). I mention Pink's *Situating Everyday Life* (2012) here as she provides an insightful chapter on analysing online networks as constituting space and place. By collecting descriptive data about definitions of translation and professional translators from Twitter and the online collectives of the the Society of Authors and the Emerging Translators Network, I was able to gather a more sharp image of the social ties in the translators' identities through the online spaces they engaged with.

This descriptive data was gathered through previous connections I had built on Twitter which then shaped the algorithm to recommend profiles of various literary translators. Since translators require an online presence to aid their visibility for freelance contracts, their bios on their profile were what indicated to me that they perceived themselves as a literary translator. I gathered their email addresses off their websites, and also looked at other profiles they engaged with. I saved multiple tweets into a folder that demonstrated their social ties and represented key findings for my research. I also got to know the various institutions that aid them through their sharing of posts from the Society of Authors and Emerging Translators Network. I used the websites of both of these collectives to gather more information, particularly from the Society of Authors which has a much richer range of documents available.

As a masters student, I feel conscious for not problematising these methods further. Since they are more accepted methodologies in the field of cultural analysis, however, I felt it is more important given the scope of this thesis to explore my use of a more unconventional method. The

narrative of this chapter relies on a deeper exploration of the use of storytelling, fiction, and the blurred lines between the real and the unreal. Regardless of whether I gathered my data through video chat or email exchanges, it designed the project in the realm of the virtual. This occupation of the online sphere presents 'the possibility of awareness and analysis of spaces beyond what can be physically inhabited' (Burrel, 2009:185), providing myself as the ethnographer the opportunity to interpret the imagined worlds in which my research was happening. From the pseudo-intimacy of seeing a translator's living room over Skype to the idea of what someone looks like based on the way they typed their answers I was negotiating the boundaries between the reality and unreality of our conversations and of the material created through this process. Once more realising the importance that text had to my research.

Fictionalising "Reality"

The prologue of this thesis ends where this subchapter begins. I've returned from London, I have finished reading *Crossing,* and I sit down to start writing my thesis. But what I start to write is not what you are reading here. It is an ethnofiction. As a term, ethnofiction is most commonly used in visual anthropology, but I use this section to trace its presence in different mediums and how I visualise it as a written form. Johannes Sjöberg developed a thorough investigation into the use of ethnofiction throughout his doctorate dissertation and has since been writing on it, practicing it, and teaching it in his academic career. He points to the emergence of ethnofiction in the 1950s when French visual anthropologist Jean Rouch created films that were not completely documentary style narratives, nor were they fictive stories developed solely from the imagination. Sjöberg describes how Rouch 'would fuse improvised documentary film-making with the improvised performances of his protagonists' (Sjöberg, 2008:230) which highlights how the "projective improvisation" captures the fictional retellings of Rouch's participants' lives. As a tangible experiment of ethnofiction as method, Sjöberg created a film titled *Transfiction* (2007) which is an ethnographic film about the trans experience in Brazil, not only based upon Sjöberg's understanding of his research but created through the imagined performances by two of his trans participants. He views this method as something that 'enhances the protagonist's freedom to tell their own stories in their own way' (2008:236) whilst also then taking the opportunity for dialogue between himself and his participants to reflect on the epistemological nature of the work. It is the blending of the two that allows the fictional aspect to be situated in the more academic setting of produced knowledge.

Following the work of Sjöberg, a doctoral student he supervised also examined the role of the ethnofiction as a methodology in her research. Alexandra D'onofrio completed her doctorate thesis through creative practice and as such presented a fifty-minute ethnographic film to complement her dissertation. Whilst discussing the process she writes:

> I filmed the protagonists as they instinctively reacted to the environment and, in their improvised narration, previously implicit information became explicit… and new imaginative associations were made regarding other existential paths as alternatives to the life lived. The gap between the stories told and the empty places through which the actors moved is consciously reproduced in order to invite the audience to recreate these experiences in their imagination.

(D'onofrio, 2017:136)

This description of the methodology highlights two things that felt important to my understanding for the potential of ethnofiction. First, D'onofrio's explanation of how the participants/protagonists' improvisation made implicit information more explicit. When presenting ethnography, the interpretive nature of the work that the ethnographer does should, in my opinion, be as visible as possible so as to ensure the integrity of the subjective understanding. This aligns with the "literary turn" of anthropology as developed through Clifford and Marcus' anthology *Writing Culture* (1986). As I gathered data, I realised there were some things that I interpreted as implicit but would then have to express explicitly in this thesis. Negotiating that boundary can be difficult if you want to have authority over the work you produce, but the improvisational aspect which then fictionalises the narrative creates an interesting element. The fictionalisation not only allows the implicit to become explicit, but it also positions it in a way that clarifies the nature of its subjectivity without having to consistently reiterate a personal judgement from context clues that a reader cannot necessarily access. Secondly, D'onofrio writes how, through her ethnofiction, she creates the space in which the audience can recreate the experiences in their imagination. Here I find myself excited by that perspective in which the audience, or in the case of my work, the reader, can also gain a sensual experience of the imagination which is such an integral concept underpinning this thesis. Despite the possibilities that these works present, I must consider how to translate this specifically visual medium into the written word, and how ethnofiction works in the form of literature.

Whilst working on his research on contemporary writing in South Africa and Argentina, Oscar Hemer noticed a stark difference between the writers he was analysing, and the writers he was aware of at home in Scandinavia. The former were not only fiction writers, but often also

academics 'whereas in Scandinavia it is much more common to combine literary writing with journalism.' (Hemer, 2016:null) Since I am writing in a Scandinavian academic context, this particular observation resonates with me. Hemer's chapter from *Methodological Reflections on Researching Communication and Social Change* (2016) discusses the correlation between literary texts as ethnographic data and creative writing as methodology. One of the writers that he examines in his research, Juan José Sear, wrote an essay in which he proposed a concept that caught Hemer's attention: fiction as "speculative anthropology". 'Sear points to fiction's constitutive dual character, which inevitably blends the empirical with the imaginary. The paradox of fiction is that it takes refuge in the false in order to augment its credibility' (Hemer, 2016:null). This reference highlights the way that the literary spheres can touch upon the more academic and empirical world, and Hemer seems confident of the space that could be opened up for the use of fiction writing as an ethnographic methodology. Yet, where fiction can be seen as speculative anthropology, Hemer's chapter is also speculative as it is not developed into method in practical terms.

The practical use of fiction writing as a tool in anthropology can be found in the work of Tobias Hecht and Samuel Veissière. These two researchers have both produced ethnographic novels as part of their anthropological corpus. Hecht published *After Life: An Ethnographic Novel* (2006) and Veissière supplemented his doctorate dissertation with *The Ghosts of Empire* (2007). As Hecht did not reflect so much on the theoretical aspect of his novel, I have chosen to focus here on the potential displayed in Veissière's work. His work, whilst inspired by Hecht, is also greatly inspired by the author J. M. Coetzee, a South African writer who is often mentioned in discourse on the crossover between fiction and anthropology. Coetzee's more topical book *Elizabeth Costello* (2003) follows an Australian author called Elizabeth as she travels the world giving lectures at various institutes. The lectures she delivers are also excerpts of talks that Coetzee has himself delivered at particular universities. This work presents interesting points of departure in analysing the auto-ethnographic potential of fiction writing, especially when dealing with the philosophical and anthropological topics that this book explores. Taking this as a case for the ethnographic power in fiction, Veissière noted the potential for extrapolating the concepts raised from Coetzee's work and actively pursued an anthropological methodology of writing ethnofiction.

Where Coetzee presents an alter-ego in his work, Veissière produces an ethnographic novel from the first person narrative, giving it a more traditional auto-ethnographic scope. Upon reading *The Ghosts of Empire,* the title of Veissière's novel, I am still struck by his binds to the academy, to his performance as a cultural elite. Compared to the work of Coetzee, it is difficult to read Veissière's writing as particularly literary or compelling, it still just feels like a piece of narrative

academic writing. It is lumbered with anthropological theory, clunky academic language, footnotes to showcase his relation to previous research, and a lack of awareness that can diminish the value of auto-ethnography. The attempted realism of the novel, hindered by his devotion to the postcolonial, posthuman, Marxist theory, doesn't make this story feel like a piece of fiction that is separate from the conventions of the academic genre. So whilst this can then ensure a sense of stability in presenting the work in the academic anthropological arena, it loses touch with the sense of being a novel. The line between what is actually fiction and what is just field notes taken directly from his journal becomes blurred and it runs the risk of hiding the interpretative and creative nature of such methodology. And so I am made to wonder how can this fictive and novelistic aspect of the ethnofiction method be taken further?

Magicking Fiction

'We live in a world of many kinds of realism, some magical, some socialist, some capitalist, and some that are yet to be named' says Arjun Appadurai (1996:53). It is this evocation of the multiple imagined realities that Appadurai describes which inspires my work. When facing the mesh of realisms that are perceived and imagined, where larger portions of global populations 'consider a wider set of possible lives than they ever did before' (Appadurai, 1996:53) it becomes a key role of the ethnographer to examine the fantasies that are becoming more embedded into the social practices of everyday lives. It is the world of the magical realisms which we consume that has captured my interest.

Magical realism has come to be known as it is now from the Spanish *"lo real maravilloso"* which would directly be translated closer to the marvellous real/marvellous reality (Ríos, 2020). There is contention about the history and evolution of magical realism as a literary device/genre, however, its roots can be traced back through the European art movement of the early 20th century, the term itself also dating to 1798. It has metamorphosed in the imagination of many to become multiple things at once, but notably as a postcolonial tool in Latin American literature. It's definitions are tricky to truly outline because it is 'about possibilities, so that trying to define it is a way of wounding or diminishing it' (Ríos, 2020:51). In his article about magical realism and its sociological value, Alberto Ríos delivers a striking link to the deconstruction of the term magical realism and the reflection this has on an idea of culture and the other.

> If an explanation of Magical Realism is first an explanation of culture, we
>
> can see that the stakes are high. The stakes are high because, in a word, we

do not believe other ways of living. Reality is our reality, whoever we are.

Magical Realism, rather than being multicultural, is something closer to otherculturalism, culture of the other, with culture taking the place of magic.

(Ríos, 2020:52)

This conception of the interlinking of magical realism and culture is within the context of the oppositional forces between the North American imaginaries and the Central/Latin American realities. It does ring true with other tools of imagination being used to demonstrate the reality of "otherculturalism": I am made to think of *Refusal of the Shadow* (Richardson, 1996) which is a collection of essays and poetry culminating in the description of how surrealism was utilised in the Caribbean to allow minority voices to exist in a reality that had otherwise made them invisible. My thesis, however, does not take this postcolonial perspective. Its nature instead is to reflect the imaginaries of the self and other cultures through translated fiction.

There are plenty of magical realist books, most notably from South America, that one can use to exemplify the way magical realism looks and can then be utilised in this context, but I think most appropriate for this analysis is the Latin American Trilogy by Louis de Bernières, the British novelist. His three books, *The War on Don Emmanuel's Nether Parts* (1990), *Señor Vivo and the Coca Lord* (1991), and *The Troublesome Offspring of Cardinal Guzman* (1992) were heavily inspired by the magical realist literature that he himself had read. These books could also be argued to have the undercurrents of ethnographic potential. They are set in an unnamed South American country that bears resemblance to Colombia, a country in which de Bernières worked as a young man. His time there and the experiences of things he witnessed helped to inspire moments of his stories and the way that the characters would behave and speak. '"Every weekend the locals would go out, get drunk and cut each others' arms off with machetes," recalls de Bernières, speaking after a reading at the Kilkenny Arts Festival last week.' (McCaughan, 2000) What these books then represent are the potential that magical realism has in presenting perceived realities and felt experiences. They also highlight the power of global imaginaries of place and how the sense of specific countries can be carried across through language. Most importantly, the magical realist elements are a constant reminder that what you are reading is a fiction, and as such should not be confused as realistic presentations of the other.

One of the examples that Appadurai gives in his discussion on the ethnography of the imagination is a work by Cortázar from 1984, a work that is intrinsically magical realist. In concluding what ethnographic information can be gleaned from the extract, Appadurai writes that

'other macronarratives that spin out of this small piece of magical realism… remind us that lives today are as much acts of projection and imagination as they are enactments of known scripts or predictable outcomes.' (Appadurai, 1996:61) The presentation of fieldwork through the use of magical realism can help to represent the "otherculturalism" that is imagined and perceived by the informants when talking about their role in a global ecumene. It highlights the role that the imagination plays in contemporary society, as developed by Appadurai, and it offers the opportunity to unbind oneself from the conventions of academic writing and rigidness by presenting an alternative that best represents the other realities in the consciousness of individuals. By harnessing the possible breadth of magical realism, an ethnographer may liberate themselves from the ties of realist representation and fully embrace the fictional aspect of an ethnofiction.

In his article on art probing and worldmaking, Robert Willim wrote that 'imaginaries have a constant influence on the way reality is perceived, approached and handled, and on the way practices are spawned.' (Willim, 2017:85) From an ethnographic view, his perspective on the role that creative practice can have in evoking the imaginaries of others' perceived realities, or beyond the borders of imagined worlds, has influenced greatly the way in which I examine the imagined other in this thesis. He acknowledges the interwoven histories that art, ethnography, and surrealism have shared, highlighted most efficiently by Clifford (1981), which reflects the above mentioned ties between magical realism and culture from a sociological perspective. This theoretical perspective that blurs the borderlands of the imagined and the perceived-to-be-real allows creative praxis as a methodology to analyse cultural and social practices within the entanglements of others' stories. Where Willim relates to the theory of non-representational methodologies, he creates the space in which art practice and science can navigate the murky waters of ethnographic presentation which are not restricted to the realms of scientifically accurate representation of empirical material. Much like how definitions can be seen as wounding the possible potentials of magical realism, so accurate forms of realistic representation can wound the possible value in perceiving data collected in ethnographic practice. This crossroads of thought intimates the relation with magical realism, ethnography, and the imagination that have embedded themselves in my route of writing ethnofiction.

The Ethics of Storytelling

The role of fiction and literary writing is intertwined with ethnographic representation.When James Clifford brought awareness of the links between fictive storytelling in what had previously been

perceived as objective ethnographies, he made people more aware of the necessity for self-reflection in the subjectivity involved in their writing. (Clifford, 1986) This belief alters the perspective on the idea of objective truth in producing an ethnography, and calls for those who write them to raise awareness on their own position in relation to their informants. Arguments subsequently, in which ethnography read as fiction inverts to fiction read as ethnography, have claimed that ethnographic fiction 'will be a better "translator" of culture than any anthropologists' text' (Ingram, 2012:185). By choosing to present my research in the form of ethnographic short stories, particularly in the mode of magical realism, I am making explicit the consciousness of subjectivity bound in my research.

Traditionally, the argument for fiction as ethnography is stated to provide autonomy to a, typically minority-identifying, individual over the story that they wish to deliver. However, the two short stories that I will present are going to be my construction based on the words that my informants shared with me during our interviews. From an ethical perspective, this could be seen as taking away the agency of the individual in how they wish to shape their own narrative, but as Clifford raises, isn't this what an ethnography does anyway? Whilst considering the implications in my choosing to fictionalise accounts on the participants' experiences I decided to lean further into the notion of fiction. By taking it deeper into the realms of magical realism, I believe that the reader of these ethnographic short stories will be constantly aware of the fictional narratives and thus reflect on the position in which I as an ethnographer, and they as a reader, are tied up with the interpretations that are enmeshed in our own subjectivity. In this way, I do not wish to create the illusion that I am presenting an authentic representation of my informant's lives but instead evoking the interpretation that I have made which is by virtue *not* an objective truth. The research I have conducted has been taking place in the murky waters of translation where meanings can get lost or altered. It has traversed the plains of imaginaries of other cultures which again represent an individual's experience of place rather than a collective reality. And this research has been rooted in the literature produced by the translators I have talked with; not able to escape the role of fiction in these day-to-day lives, I have instead allowed fiction to guide me.

Following the fictionalising nature, I have provided different names for all of my participants in which I strive to stay as close as possible to the gender identities that they have revealed to me. I ensured to abide by the ethical guidelines that have been laid out by my department and consistently checked in with my supervisor to gauge whether my practices in gathering data are ethical. By following the ideas laid out by Carolyn Ellis (2007) in regards to relational ethics, I have no qualms about the representations I have chosen to present in this thesis,

and believe wholeheartedly that I have made every effort to stay as true to the meanings my participant's have tried to portray in their interviews, but also remain wary of the interpretive power I as a researcher have on the meaning being presented.

It is with this in mind, that I not only demonstrate the realism I have experienced within my research, but also the realism that you as a reader will experience in treating this thesis. It is on these multiple realist planes that we experience the imaginaries of my participants. Taking this forward, I shall now explore the way that translators construct their identities within the context of the English language publishing industry.

Chapter Three | *Establishing an Emerging Narrative*

In the great tradition of the masters of applied cultural analysis at Lund University, we are always confronted with the question, "what is a…?" The irony in the tradition is that what appear to be simple questions never are. This project is no different if one were to ask "what is a literary translator?" My material demonstrates that the identity of the literary translator is precarious and vulnerable to various forces, and that is why my first research question is so integral to this thesis. *How is a literary translator's identity created?* By exploring this question throughout the narrative of this chapter I can highlight why this process subjects the identities to a state of uncertainty. The invisibility, the caught-in-a-binary, and the neutralising of language are all forces which create unstable identities, and these are what this chapter traces. My material suggests a disjuncture in the identity making process and I find that this is caused by a history of "traditional" translation identities, a lack of common descriptive language of the collectivised self within the community, and the external pressures from the publishing industry. These three forces culminate in an unstable process that shows the messy nature of creating identity as a professional translator. In order to provide a sense of these topics, I shall begin with an ethnographic short story which introduces one of my lead characters for this chapter, Leigh.

Sew Your Seeds with Thread

When Leigh arrived at the village, they sat down on the hard wooden bed that had been designated to them and sighed. Their suitcase was old fashioned, slightly battered, and one clasp had been loose the entire journey there. The room that Leigh had been given was simple: it was a small square with whitewashed walls, there was a tiny window in an aged wooden frame, a simple dresser, the basic bed, and a single piece of artwork hanging on the wall. It was grim, but it would suffice, at least that is what Leigh told themselves under their breath. They stood up and looked at the little piece of art. It was an embroidered flower which they didn't quite recognise. Almost like a pansy, but not quite. Somewhat similar to a rose, but again, definitely not. Despite the situation, Leigh turned to survey their space once more and allowed themselves a smile. Finally, they had made it.

The village itself was a long way out from the town that Leigh had first arrived in. They hadn't realised just how far away it would be, that certain bit of information was now quite apparent in its absence from the brochure. The bus journey followed the dusty roads that appeared to be

made from the history of others' footsteps. It was a small tin bus, packed at first as it circuited around the town, Leigh was caught up between larger than life characters who took up more space than necessary. The other passengers got off stop by stop, until it was just Leigh left who was then made to endure the heat as the bus continued trundling onwards to a destination not quite known. Leigh watched the deserted plains around them as they tried to assure themselves that everything was going to be alright.

Upon arrival, the nun who greeted Leigh had said very little, just showed them to their room and pointed at the endless hall with a basic statement that dinner would be served in an hour. The woman's voice was reedy and heavily accented. Leigh knew that they were probably the last one to have arrived in the village, but they were struck by the fact that they hadn't yet seen another soul, apart from the nun. In their mind, they had thought that people would already be sat out under the sun, sipping wine, talking and laughing, sharing ideas and discussing what sort of work they were going to be doing. There was none of that. On tip toes, Leigh craned their neck to see through the small window in their room. The glass was smudged, but they could make out a large expanse of land punctuated by only one solitary tree, beneath it sat a figure. That was all it took to propel Leigh out of their room and to meet the other person, they were dedicated to make the most of the situation and meeting others was part of the reason that Leigh had wanted to come, they were certain they would grow more under the guidance of the other residents.

It wasn't a long walk from the village to the tree, and quite early on Leigh had assumed that the person under the tree was a man. As they approached, the man did not look at them, instead he stared ahead humming a song to himself. Then Leigh realised that his arms were wrapped around the trunk of the tree in an awkward way, chained to it in some reverse hug. His feet were also buried in the hard earth. With a clenched stomach, Leigh finally dared to call out to him.

"Er, hello? Are you alright?"

He continued whistling, but Leigh certainly caught him glance at them from the corner of his eyes.

"You don't need any help, do you?"

"No, no, dear, I'm quite fine here."

His response took Leigh by surprise. The voice with which he spoke was smooth and rich, filled with warm tones that didn't quite fit in with the image of his weathered body tied to a tree. He smiled and seemed more than alert and conscious, part of Leigh had assumed he would be raving mad given the situation. The two of them stared at each other for a short moment, he smiling a toothy grin, Leigh trying to assess what was going on.

"I'm sorry," they finally said, "but this is quite odd. Why are you out here like this?"

"This is where I work."

"You work? Out here, whilst tied to a tree?"

"I do indeed."

"And how long exactly have you been tied to the tree? Is this some kind of artistic experiment or something?"

"Oh no, not at all. I've been in this same spot for almost thirty years. I came here once upon a time, much like you, but then the nuns wanted me to leave. Well! I thought, they want me to leave because they didn't think it a worthy endeavour to stay, but I persisted. In the end, when they got a bit more forceful, I decided to tie myself to the trunk of this tree, bury my feet in the soil, and continue working from this spot here."

"That seems a little extreme."

"But finally, they're beginning to take notice of me."

"After thirty years under this tree, they're only just now beginning to take notice?"

"Seems so."

"I hope you don't mind me asking this, but how exactly do you survive out here?"

"We all make do the best we can, slowly and surely we keep on going on until eventually we'll be able to take the bus back to town."

"But didn't you say earlier that you didn't want to leave this place?"

"Exactly, if the nuns force you out, they don't put you on the bus back to town," he laughed at that as if Leigh was foolish for thinking they would. When Leigh opened their mouth to inquire as to where exactly the nuns would have sent him, a bell sounded crisp through the air.

"That's the bell for dinner," said the man. "You best be on your way now."

"I'm Leigh, by the way," they said as they turned to begin walking away.

"Peter."

In the dining hall, Leigh finally took note of all the others who were there with them. They were sat at tables uniformly, either praying over their food or whispering quietly to the people next to them. Leigh grabbed a bowl of corn porridge and sat a table where only one other person was sitting. The other figure was a man who appeared to very much enjoy his gruel. His spoon scraped across the side of the bowl as he tried to scoop up every last drop. He watched Leigh as they sat down and the started to eye their bowl. He seemed particularly hungry.

"Be sure to eat every piece of corn," he said. "They won't feed us again until tomorrow lunch."

"Why?"

"That's just the way it is, keep us hungry, make us work harder."

"Work? I thought this was meant to be a retreat…"

"Of course, but we still have to be producing something to assure our stay here."

"What kind of work do we do?"

"Sow seeds."

"Like a farm?"

"I guess you could say that…"

"But the earth around here is so dry, how could the seeds possibly survive."

"Ah, no, no. Not sow, sew. With a needle and thread."

"Oh," said Leigh rather put out.

Part of the attraction of the retreat was the village's fame in needle and thread-work. All over, people would talk about the beautiful embroidery that came from this otherwise unknown and inconsequential place. Leigh wanted time to improve their own skill in the art, but if the man had felt like the sewing was similar to farm work, then Leigh wondered if they had come to the right place. The words of Peter circled around their mind as they finished their corn porridge and silently headed to their room to sleep.

Everyone was awoken with the rising of the sun by the sound of the same bell that called them to dinner. Leigh frantically ran some water into a basin in the cold concrete bathroom and scraped their skin clean with soap. Then they stepped out into the crowd and followed them to the workshop. Leigh sat down next to the same man from dinner, he said nothing, the dark circles around his eyes indicating the depth of his tiredness. A nun stood at the front of the workshop, and picked up her needle and thread.

"Today, my children, we will be sewing sunflower seeds, the pattern is on your table next to the equipment. I expect you to sew in time with me. And remember… with each pull of the thread, and with each seed you sew, the closer you will get to blossoming yourself like a beautiful flower. Now be sure to follow the rules exactly as they say."

In haste, Leigh shuffled the instructions on their desk, grabbed their embroidery hoop, threaded the needle, and followed exactly the way the nun had started her own design. The man next to Leigh was in synch with the nun, and so Leigh followed suit. Everyone was quiet as they

sewed. Working in this way was actually more pleasant than Leigh had thought it would be. Their mind was able to wander as the needle pushed through the fabric and back out again. Sunflower seeds followed a simple pattern, and Leigh wondered why they only sewed seeds. Surely the flowers would be much more beautiful. And what exactly would they do with the seeds?

Leigh imagined the nuns planting them underground and later digging up to find they had changed into beautifully threaded flowers. They wanted to laugh at the idea, but then they paused, unsure whether that wouldn't be the case. Leigh tried to remember if they had seen before embroidered seeds for sale. The village's art was focused solely on flowers, so then why would they not be sewing those… The questions buzzed around them like a fly until they finished their first seed.

"And now we move on to the next one, we'll only do three today, so keep at it," said the nun.

Sewing three seeds did not take up the whole morning, and so with a few hours spare before lunch, Leigh marched out of the building and back towards Peter. He was whistling. They watched how his hands around the tree were able to continue deftly sewing. It wasn't seeds that he was creating though, he was able to make flowers. Leigh was surprised to see how beautifully they were crafted even though he couldn't see what he was doing.

"What exactly do they do with the seeds we sew?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing? But then why do we sew them?"

"Think of it like training, only when they deem you good enough will you be invited to sew a flower, and only then will they consider sending you back to town or not."

"But you're sewing flowers…"

"And that is why at last they're finally taking notice, I spent years and years following their guidelines, and not once did I feel any closer to returning back to town. But then I realised I could just skip all that and take control of my own fate."

"And this is your fate?"

"Au contraire, mon amis, times are a changing. I can feel it on the wind. One day soon, I'm sure, we won't have to keep jumping through these hoops."

"Do the people in the towns and cities know about what's going on here?"

"Of course they do, but that doesn't matter, to them we are nothing but invisible spirits. It is the

village only that they recognise. That is, until we go back there, until we've proven how well we can sew seeds."

In exasperation, Leigh turned around and left Peter with his flowers to bake under the sun. They weren't sure whether they could trust him or not, but things here certainly weren't as they imagined. They paced around their small room wondering what exactly they could do, trying to work out a way they could let the town know about the people behind the flowers that they all insisted on buying. Surrounded by all these others who were sewing the seeds like them, Leigh wondered if they were similar to the others, if this was really the sort of person they were. They thought about the sunflower seeds the man beside her had sewn, they had looked completely different to their own, but still they were recognisably sunflower seeds. The man had followed the same routine that Leigh had, and Leigh didn't feel one bit like him. They weren't as hungry for the corn porridge as he was, they didn't conceive their seeds in the same way. Yet still, they sat down at the same workbenches and followed the same designs. They wondered whether he could help them.

Leigh tore open their suitcase and pulled out a scrap of paper and a pen. With shaking hands they wrote what they deemed to be quite the subversive note.

Let's work together to make our own flowers. We should be able to bloom now, when we feel ready, not when the nuns tell us. I want us to get back to town and show the people what we really can do.

Invisible Individuals

The above story is a representation of the key findings from my material in relation to identity construction. In this section I will highlight the expressions used to instil the sense of the invisible translator, something that melds together statements made by my participant, Leigh, and the theory of Lawrence Venuti. From the unnamed village that exists on the periphery of towns and cities, to the makers of embroidered flowers that are seldom known by the consumers. The characters of *Sew Your Seeds with Thread* find themselves as "invisible spirits", cogs of a greater machine that is only recognised as the village that produces the artworks.

In his book, *The Translator's Invisibility* (1995), Venuti traces a historical process of translation that has subsequently rendered translators as invisible figures behind the text. One of the key problems causing this is the role that individualisation plays in the Western publishing industry that grants more power to authorial ownership of text than a recognition of a translator's part that is played. It is still a relevant topic for this sense of invisibility is now being challenged by such

campaigns as "#namethetranslator", described by the Society of Authors as a "response to a tendency amongst reviewers and marketers of translated works to omit the name of the translator." (Society of Authors, 2018-19) Despite this, the historic nature which contemporary translators are now fighting against still holds a strong hold on the way translators perceive themselves in the field. The industry is in a phase of being "hungover" from the history of invisible translators, and contemporary figures are definitely pushing through, however, it is key to acknowledge this past in understanding the somewhat fragility of the identity of a translator.

> The assumption that a translation should be "faithful" to the original sets up
> a power dynamic, where the translator 'serves' the original author. I agree
> with many translation theorists that this perceived power dynamic is
> unhelpful and it leads to translators and their work being unfairly
> overlooked… I prefer not to think of the translator as subordinate to the
> author - instead I think of them as collaborators.
>
> (Leigh, Translator)

Leigh is a trained translator from French and Italian who released their first publication at the end of 2019. They were the winner of an inaugural translation prize, run by an independent publishing house that focuses on translated fiction. The prize itself is pitched as for emerging translators who have yet to publish any work and as such will offer their first professional contract for publication upon winning. From the quote above, Leigh states the damaging notion of translators appearing as subservient to the original author, this follows the argument that Venuti makes himself, and it seems likely that Leigh is familiar with his theory. Leigh's first book is also the first from this specific publisher that has placed the translator's name on the cover, part of the contemporary and relatively new process of shining the light on the translator and making them more visible. In response to my asking about this fact, Leigh said,

> This is the first time I've ever had my name on a book, so I'm sure I'm
> disproportionately excited compared to other, more seasoned translators…
> I'm not sure readers always realise how much they are entrusting
> themselves to translators, how much faith they put in our ability to
> understand and communicate what we have understood. I think translators
> should have their names on book covers so that we can take responsibility
> for our work. Partly, this is an egotistical thing - I worked hard, I chose all
> these words… I want to see my name on the cover and feel proud. But I also

> think that it's misleading to let a reader think they are reading the words of
>
> [the original author] when in fact they are reading my words telling [his]
>
> wonderful story.

Having sat with the answers that Leigh provided me, I was inspired to create them as the central character of this first ethnographic short story. The story that was being told through their words not only demonstrated the struggles that a translator has in being recognised, but also the potential that is beginning to be reached in the British publishing industry today. Venuti states that the industry 'shapes translators' self-presentations, leading some to psychologise their relationship to the foreign text as a process of identification with the author.' (Venuti, 1995:7) This is indicative of the history he presented and how this impacts the translator's sense of self. Leigh, however, challenges this theory by acknowledging it as a problematic truth in their first quote, and then presenting themselves as someone separate from the author who can take responsibility for the work they've produced.

This is why, in my short story, the character Leigh begins to make sense of the traditions in the village that they have visited and ends the narrative by challenging the norms and creating the space for potential change. As a young, emerging translator, Leigh is facing the legacy of invisible translations in the industry they wish to work within. The opportunity that was presented through winning the translation prize is not a circumstance that many translator's will find themselves in, yet it does show the start of a change that could help to make translators more visible. I chose to specifically leave an uncertain note at the end of the short story, for simply making translators visible will not help to make their identification process any easier; the character of Peter shows another challenge that my participants face in creating stable identities as professional literary translators.

Beyond the Binary

As a secondary character in the above short story, Peter represents a literary translator in a similar position as Leigh, but with a vastly different experience of getting there. As a participant, Peter provided some useful insights into how he has constructed his sense of self as a literary translator, which reflects an alternative perspective on the issues that may destabilise this formation. He begins by saying:

> It was the only job I'd actually really wanted to do when I started university
>
> long ago… When I was an undergraduate in the late 80s I was constantly

told things like "there was no way in", "you need a lot of life experience

first" and "no-one will even look at you seriously until you're in your 50s"

… Personally, it's a cliché but I've seen it as a calling for all of my adult life

and now, finally and slowly, it's happening.

It is because of this that had me wanting to present the character of Peter as having been tied to a tree for thirty years, trying to have himself seen until finally and slowly, those around him begin to recognise him. The affects of the words told to him when he was an undergraduate obviously impacted the way he perceived finding work as a literary translator, just like the way the nuns in the story originally tried to send his character away. What is prevalent here is how the identity construction then becomes challenged by external forces.

When discussing social identity, sociologist Richard Jenkins mentions how 'selfhood is thoroughly socially constructed: in the processes of primary and subsequent socialisation, and in the ongoing interaction during which individuals define and redefine themselves and others throughout their lives.' (Jenkins, 2004:18) In the context of this thesis, the identities are being defined and redefined within the field of publishing translations. With each publishing deal a translator completes, a process of redefinition on the sense of self is enacted, repositioning themselves within a hierarchy that this creates. Whilst using the term hierarchy, I have perhaps invoked an image of a pyramid. This will indicate a system of multiple layers in which movement can happen across various levels in the aim to move upwards. However, the reality I am dealing with in terms of the translators' hierarchy has been described both personally and institutionally as a binary. The binary of emerging and established.

This binary appears to be a powerful yet contentious understanding within the context of this research. It has not only inspired the title of this chapter, but it is what made me want to present the craft of translation in the short story through the imagery of seeds and flowers, seeds which emerge from the soil, much like Peter whose feet are buried within it, and flowers which have bloomed and established themselves as something worth noting. Yet herein lies an issue that makes the identity construction more precarious: the terms emerging and established are not well defined with blurred borders which create a sense of uncertain movement between the two. Even Peter himself shows how his understanding of his identity as a translator is challenged by this binary, for when I first reached out to ask him for an interview he said:

As you may have gathered, I am only at the start of the long process of

establishing myself as a literary translator, if it will even be possible in the

long run. Translators with a greater portfolio than mine (I currently have one

children's book published, and another not out yet) often still debate whether
to refer to themselves as emerging translators or not. In other words, I really
don't think I have much in the range of experience and practice for you to
pick from at this stage.

This quote represents the difficulty that Peter has in seeing himself as a literary translator, his
reluctance to interview stemmed from an insecurity as to his legitimacy in being seen as a translator
worth interviewing. Jenkins discusses how it is 'not enough to assert an identity. That identity must
also be validated (or not) by those with whom we have dealings.' (2004:19) In this process we can
see that he is understanding the validation of his own identity through the discourse that others,
whom he perceives to be more "established", are having about their *own* identities. That social
setting then dictates how he perceives himself in fitting in. Interestingly, it later came to light that
Peter has, in fact, a masters degree in translation studies which demonstrates his knowledge in the
field and yet to him does not necessarily legitimise his identity.

As Peter indicated, ongoing debates are happening in regards to whether or not to identify as
emerging or established translators. It appears the discourse is happening in various means across
the social arenas that translators move through. Whilst searching for participants who identify as
translators on Twitter, I found a thread of conversation which highlighted the multiple concerns
entangled within this binary. I have selected three tweets which engaged in this conversation that
best demonstrate the uncertainty of these terms.

"I dislike the term 'emerging (literary) translators'. Lumps together
aspirational and working translators, reinforces a division between literary
and non-literary translation, and cements hierarchy between 'established'
translators and the rest"

(Gutteridge, 2020)

"I'm just entering that grey zone where I don't count as 'emerging' when it
comes to grants and competitions, but still waiting for my 'established'
status to kick in"

(Kennedy, 2020)

"I don't find 'emerging' very descriptive of me, and I don't want to go
around defining myself in public as a beginner as I have clients (I refuse to
designate them as 'commercial') where I've got a longstanding reputation to
keep up."

(Lambert, 2020)

Gutteridge is a translator of Spanish, Italian, and Catalan. He has multiple translations published, is a member of various translation institutions, and was an assistant professor in translation at a Scottish university. He initiated the conversation with the first tweet as seen above. There is an opposition in which Gutteridge seems uncomfortable with; on the one hand he doesn't like "aspirational" and "working translators" being 'lumped together', and simultaneously he doesn't like literary and non-literary translators being divided. His opinion then becomes one of creating borders focused to define what makes a translator and what does not. In this way the identity of the translator becomes akin to the way people construct ethnic identities, this identity creation is 'a phenomenon that characterises other people, rather than [themselves]' (Jenkins, 2008:15).

The following two comments in the online conversation confirm the uncertainty involved in positioning oneself as a literary translator, especially when it comes to negotiating the imagined lines that have historically been drawn. Kennedy mentions how he exists in an in-between area which defies the typical definitions of emerging and established, and this shows an impact on his professional life. He is not able to secure funding for grants which are focused specifically on emerging translators in a bid to promote access to the profession, but then he has not yet received the recognition of an established translator which would subsequently allow him to generate an income accordingly. Lambert on the other hand finds it difficult to navigate the language for in her perspective she is already an established translator, only her translation is within the realm of non-literary work, sometimes regarded as "commercial" translation which she clearly rejects. However, as a literary translator, she has yet to really progress in that area of work and as such is then deemed a beginner or an emerging translator. The connotations of these words then become difficult for her to attach herself to as they may affect her reputation in her non-literary line of work. The unclarity of the self within the identity of a translator demonstrates an internal rupture which has unbalanced the definition of the collective through the process of external description.

When talking about the construction of ethnicity as identity, Jenkins talks about the impermeability of such concepts and notes that the markers of difference as created by divisions are 'boundaries [which] are always two-sided, and one of the key issues becomes the manipulation of perceived significant differences in their generation.' (Jenkins, 2008:20) Taking this and examining the perceived differences that Gutteridge creates then disrupts the binary of emerging/established. The disruption is, according to him, to unite translators creating a more inclusive space that makes it easier for others to conceive themselves as part of the group. Yet, when he disputes that binary, he

does in fact create another one, the separation of professional and aspiring translators, which should ultimately be read as published/unpublished. Whilst the emerging/established binary does exist institutionally, it is more common as a signifier of identity amongst those working as translators. If we were to take Gutteridge's new binary of published/unpublished into consideration, it is worth to consider the other party that helps to create these boundaries. As Jenkins mentions the dialogic and socially comparative nature of identity creation, the published/unpublished binary reveals the role that the traditional publishing industry has in this dialogue. Gutteridge appears to be using the binary language of the industry as opposed to the language used by translators themselves.

'Individual identity is located within a two-way social process, an interaction between 'ego' and 'other', inside and outside. It is in the meeting of internal and external definition that identity, whether collective or individual, is created.' (Jenkins, 2008:55) What Jenkins describes here in the formation of the individual and the collective identity can highlight why the identity of the literary translator is at risk; the internal definition is at flux on an individual and a collective level due to its contested meanings. The idea of "us" and "them" becomes blurred when the language used to describe the positions within this identity are deemed too loose, such as Gutteridge's fear of the lack of distinction between aspiring and professional translators. Subsequently, the definitions then become focused on how the other actors apply them, in this case the publishing industry. The issue of the binary goes beyond the community of translators and into the larger social literary world.

In my short story the nuns dictate what the characters must sew, and they also choose who gets to return to town and who doesn't. This demonstrates the power that the publishing industry have in defining translator identities and how their presence impacts the process of constructing the sense of a professional self.

Publishing's Presence

I purposely chose nuns as a representation of the publishers' presence in constituting translator identities as they can be figures seen similarly as editors. As the nuns demonstrated, they exerted control over how the task of sewing seeds was to be done. They created an environment that neutralised those present in order to create depictions as similar as possible, whilst still giving the illusion of difference, as Leigh notes that not all the seeds look the same. Nuns also allude to working for a higher power, which creates a sense of the literary power and the publishing industry's control over the generation of text. There is an omnipresence evoked which imagines the

presence of literary traditions and language norms through the English language publishing industry.

> British and American publishing, in turn, has reaped the financial benefits of successfully imposing Anglo-American cultural values on a vast foreign readership, while producing cultures in the United Kingdom and the United States that are aggressively monolingual, unreceptive to the foreign, accustomed to fluent translations that invisibly inscribe foreign texts with English-language values and provide readers with the narcissistic experience of recognising their own culture in a cultural other.
>
> (Venuti, 1995:15)

Despite Venuti arguing this in 1995, the field still looks much the same. One participant who translates from Dutch mentioned how most young Dutch readers now read books in English given their comfort with the language. Another participant, an editor, discussed how many foreign writers are writing in an "English way" so as to create a greater opportunity for their work to be chosen for translation. What Venuti demonstrates here is the power that the traditional publishing industry in both the UK and US has exerted on the literary field in regard to the experience of the other through translated fiction. He explains how the industry has managed to control what translation is and looks like by perpetually publishing "domesticated" translations which have been designed to be read familiarly and not as something alternative to the home-cultural norms. Whilst on the one hand Venuti argues that it is this process that has created the sense of invisibility that translators are faced with, it also reflects the ability that the industry has on defining what exactly a translator is.

The characters of my short story are sequestered away from the central towns and cities, they are made to work on the fringes of industry where they are deemed out of sight and out of mind. This captures the way that literary translators, who are freelance professionals and not localised to any specific institution within the industry, also then become sequestered as something separate from the non-translated publishing field. One of my informants, a literary translator named Benjamin, spoke of the "ghettoisation" of translated fiction, noting upon the various ways it is kept as something other. The visibility of translated books is increasing due to their presence highlighted through institutions, as Benjamin points out, like Waterstones who "have translated fiction tables", online influencers with "predilections for translated fiction", and the "new incarnation of the Booker International" a prize that awards fiction that has been translated into English. Yet, what these factors present is how still to this day, translated fiction needs to be something separated, it

needs its own tables, its own advocates online, and its own national literary prizes. This separation has some positive aspects on it that Benjamin feels is necessary for the progress of accepting translated literature into the general arena, but it does also carry with it the continuation of decreasing the visibility of the foreign in the home market and creating a sense of monolingualism and the culture specific focus of literature.

By separating translated fiction from the centre of the publishing industry, the translators also become separated. In order to then access the more central folds of English language publishing, translators' texts must be domesticated which in turn "domesticates" the translator's identity. Take for example Fiona, a translator of Norwegian. She says,

> I'm Scottish, and happen to know quite a few other Scottish translators of Norwegian, and we often joke about the various words and turns of phrases that editors balk at: 'wee', 'outwith', and many more! We are usually disappointed to see these removed from our work, but I do get it, editors probably feel that the risk of alienating readers is greater than adding richness to a text in certain instances… Exploring these has the potential to add layers to translated texts, and translators shouldn't be afraid of being creative and employing bold strategies in their work, authors do this all the time, and tone is carried across in so many ways.

Fiona's quote here demonstrates the sense of loss she feels at words which are typically Scottish being cut from her translations by an external editor. She says that their presence adds a richness to a text, and that they can help to carry across specific tones in the same playful way that authors utilise language. Venuti writes that 'the author freely expresses his thoughts and feelings in writing, which is thus viewed as an original and transparent self-representation' (1995:6) and bemoans how the translators must be secondary players who 'playact as authors' (1995:7). The editors who subsequently fetter the language of the translator ultimately play a role in diminishing the translator's personal autonomy to their self. It diminishes the notion that translator's have equal opportunity to creative usage of language as authors do, and it invalidates the opportunity for the translator to present themselves as an individual who is not bound by the author's identity.

When editors cut out Fiona's Scots words from her translation they are alienating her as something different from the "norm" of the centric values of the English speaking publishing world. Her use of Scots slang, turns of phrases, and other words are subsequently not centred enough in the English literary tradition to appeal across national borders to the wider English speaking world. Not only then is Fiona separated from the industry as a translator, but she is also separated from the

centre as a speaker of a non-traditional English dialect. The highlighting of these differences by an external source creates an uneven sense of description-of-self which makes it more difficult for such identities to be constituted within the community.

In many ways this takes away the responsibility of the translator as an owner of the new text for it has been mediated by the editor and neutralised or domesticated to fit the market. Simply putting the name of the translator on the cover book may seem like a remedy to the pervasive invisibility process of translation, however does the editing process not make that action seem somewhat null and void? When talking with Hester, a senior editor of an independent publishing house who has previously edited some titles in translation, she mentioned:

> ultimately we want the books when they're translated to be a success. So, in a way, the sort of faith to the original work is less important… all translated authors want to be a success in an English market, that's kind of the best thing they can hope for.

Hester's quote represents the power that the conventions of the English language publishing industry has, and how it edits text to align with prose which is successful over prose that is more faithful to the original. The entanglements of domestication are connected with the translator's own personal identity because the text they produce is theirs and representative of their own self, as Leigh discussed earlier in this chapter, or seen in the way Fiona loses touch with her Scottish identity through translation when specific turns of phrases are cut.

Navigating these multiple forces which require the structuring and restructuring of translator identities is an ongoing battle which destabilises the sense of the self as a professional. I purposely ended my short story with a vague unresolved plot point. The question of whether Leigh manages to make their way back to the town is unanswered because reconciling their identity is an ongoing process. It reflects Leigh's actual rumination of their translator identity since their first publication. When asked about it, they said:

> Since the publication of [my book], I haven't done any professional translation work… I definitely still think of myself as an emerging translator, since I only have one literary publication at the moment. The question of established vs. emerging translators is an interesting one - I wonder how many other young translators, like me, are balancing a few different career paths. I suppose I would think of myself as established if translation was my main or only job, but I don't know if/when I'll get there! The prize has certainly made me think of myself as 'a translator' rather

than 'a translation student', so it's had a huge impact in that sense, but I think

'established translator' status is still a long way off.

Placing down the proverbial pen from paper of this chapter, I find myself empathising with the translators of my study. The identity construction process that they face is fraught with uncertainty as individuals are made to battle external forces. From an auto-ethnographic perspective, I have found similar experiences in defining my work in the context of academia. Where translated literature exists on the periphery of the publishing field, so too does this particular form of thesis and methodology. Having translated my participants' stories into an ethnofiction, I am impressed by the endurance and work that these individuals are putting in to move closer to a position that is more centred in the industry. It inspires me as I rewrite their experiences to see that despite a history of invisibility, an internal struggle of binary terms, and an external force as gargantuan as the English language publishing industry, literary translators are able to work within the uncertain boundaries of their professional identity. I have laid out how a translator's identity is created; it is a sense of the self on the precipice of the social worlds they move within and around. They are stepping off the edge of the past into a future that is hard to conceive. They are trying to unchain themselves from the binary manacles that they created. And they are conforming to the conventions of the English language literary world, losing touch with themselves, but with the potential to rediscover who they could be in the future. I will address what can be made applicable with these findings in the final chapter, but first I shall explore the concept of the literary other. Since part of the identity creation process is a dialogue with an external body, I will use the next chapter to examine the dialogue between the translator and the text they translate; finding a way of tracing imaginaries and how they shape perspectives of the world at large, and the self within that.

Chapter Four | *Imagine Me Imagining You*

The translated books I have read, that have shaped my relation to this text, have taken me to countries beyond my own borders. And as my research has physically crossed the North Sea, and transported me to the email inboxes, or virtual living rooms of translators scattered across the world, the global nature of this thesis cannot be ignored. Where the previous chapter explores more internal relationships that alter the shape of the translator's identities, it became inherent to explore how the external relationship of the world-at-large also impacts their work. The data I have collected is lined with movement across national borders and embellished with stories of the other culture that translator's have been confronted with. And so it becomes key to ask my second research question. *In what ways do literary imaginations shape perceptions of the world at large?* Narrating the relation to and against other languages and the cultures within them, this chapter explores how text creates imagined places and are subsequently shaped by national imaginaries. The translators then take on a position in which they can also help to solidify this sense of the imagined other place. The imagination in this context is an idea of the other place, an image that is designed through experience of the literature from that place. It adopts a blend of the three key social theories of the imagination to explore national imaginaries through a person-centred approach. I find that intangible feelings drive forward the sense of relation to another place, and these can be reached through physical connection or ideas based on symbols such as text and images. The chapter traces the multiplicities of experience that highlight how different imaginaries can be shaped and created, and what impact this can then have on shaping the larger national imaginaries of the world around them. It can also affect translators who subsequently become the other culture. Once more, I shall start to explore these concepts through an ethnographic short story before going on to provide a deeper analysis.

Little Clay Figures

When Fiona walked into the warehouse she could barely make out the vague outline of Benjamin in the dark. He seemed so far from her, as if an ocean of worktops lay between them. With lumbering feet she slowly made her way towards where he sat, rubbing the sleep from her eyes. She knew she had to start work but it seemed too early, too early for the banging that had stirred her earlier. Other than Benjamin the warehouse was empty. Weak bulbs hung from the ceiling casting little light over the space, most of the windows had been sealed with cardboard from where they had been smashed

by someone or other. The countertops were clean though, the management were fastidious in ensuring that they remained pristine always. As Fiona drew nearer to Benjamin she studied his face whilst he worked. He never stopped, but he never seemed to look tired.

"What's that you're working with?" she asked, noticing the different kind of material being worked by his hands.

"Clay," he said.

"Have they given us an order to start working with clay?"

"No."

"So then why are you doing it?"

Benjamin looked up at her and wiped his hands on the apron he wore. In that moment as his shoulders sagged, he finally looked tired. Fiona went to fetch her own apron from the peg on the wall knowing that he would speak in his own time, when he was ready to explain. Usually the staff worked with all different kinds of paper, so the aprons weren't exactly necessary, but the management ordered the staff to wear them, like a uniform. The management needed to know who worked for them and who didn't because they weren't the only group working in this warehouse. Every apron was made from the same thick material in a rather hard to define colour. A colour that was caught between shades of green, brown, and grey. They bore no logo or design, but they did have a large pocket on the front in which everyone kept their own secrets. Tying the cloth bands around her waist, Fiona came back to sit beside Benjamin who was still watching her, mulling over his words. She remained silent.

"I believe it is necessary to make little people," he said.

"Like dolls?"

"Yes, but also not quite dolls."

"But why do you think it's necessary?"

"Management haven't hired any new members of staff for years now, so I figured we needed some help."

He gestured to the table with his hand to show what he had been working on. There lay the very small figure of a person not quite formed. She could define the lump that was obviously the head, it was misshapen and bore the thumbprints of Benjamin from where he was moulding it into shape. The body was limbless, but the trunk seemed far smoother than the head, and she couldn't help but notice the detailing of the chest and the stomach. Given the size of the thing, barely longer than her hand, she wasn't sure how such a person was going to be able to help them but she knew

that Benjamin had a point. Every day for so many years that she had lost count, Fiona would come into the warehouse, don her apron, and begin to work. On either side of her for as far as the work stations stretched sat the same people with the same faces, folding the paper in the same way. Time after time they reproduced what they had been told to reproduce, they continued making the same structure over and over. Management had told them that the designs came from abroad, and they all felt a sense of wonder at the thought, but that wonder didn't last long. In fact, there was nothing foreign about the designs, they just looked the way that everything looked in this country. Yet still, they couldn't question management. Everyone there needed the work, and really Fiona knew they all harboured a love and a passion for the job.

"How are these little things going to be able to help us, though?" she asked.

"They will change the way we do things."

"I don't see how they'll be able to do that, they're only lumps of clay."

"They may well be that now, but if we were all to mould them, once cooked I'm sure they would be able to leave these walls, to see what's out there, and find even more designs from across the seas."

"You think they'll be able to leave this place?"

"That's why they must be so small, so management wouldn't see them."

"We don't even have a kiln, though."

"It may take some time, but they will dry under the sun."

"Do you think this will really make things better?"

"If anything, it will at least help us get out there, you know?"

The two of them sat in silence for a while, not quite looking at each other, lost in their thoughts. Fiona tried to remember what it was like outside, beyond the boundaries she now found herself in. Once upon a time, she would dream of all those places during the night, but now she wasn't even sure she dreamt at all. With deft fingers, Benjamin went back to his clay model and tried once more to smooth the shape of the head. As she watched him, she could begin to see the idea of a person taking form. With that she realised there was no harm in trying, management didn't bother them during these hours anyway.

"Okay, I'll help you, but I'm not sure that I know how to make a person," she whispered as if entering a conspiracy. In a way, she felt she was.

"Just make it in your own image," he replied.

"We are not gods though."

"No, not at all, but what else do we know besides ourselves?"

That caught her off guard, and it struck her then that really she didn't know anything but herself. There were the faces of all those who worked around her, but they had become so mundane, so everyday, that it was hard for her to concentrate on what they looked like. It was almost as if she couldn't hold the image of her colleagues in her head. But she could always remember the way she looked herself. How the curve of her nose drooped down her face in a way she never liked, how her eyes were shaped with smooth lines. But there was more to it than just the surface level, only she knew how her hands worked around the paper they folded day in and day out, only she knew of the way she imagined the foreign lands the designs had come from. And so, taking a lump of clay from the pile beside Benjamin, she started to shape her own self in miniature form. It was a different kind of work to what she was used to, but it felt good. She smiled.

<div align="center">*</div>

Having finished a handful of figures over a handful of days, Fiona and Benjamin had left them to dry outside on the hidden patio that was bathed in sun for days on end. Every morning and every afternoon, Fiona would wander over to where they lay inert wondering just how long it would take for them to dry properly. There was a fear that she carried, worrying that the bodies or the faces may crack, that the tiny people may not be perfect how she imagined them, but Benjamin was sure that everything would turn out fine. That calmed her. It was nearly two weeks since they had finished moulding the shapes when Benjamin finally whispered to her,

"they're ready."

In the early hours of the morning, both she and he walked to their hidden patio and looked down at the clay figures who still lay there. Fiona gasped as she saw their chests rising and falling, breathing. They had the look of being asleep, like resting angels, and she was overcome with a happiness she hadn't expected. It had worked, and now these little versions of herself were somehow alive. It was a joy to see the way they stirred, the way their eyelids fluttered as if dreaming. She wondered what it was that they saw in their little minds.

"Isn't it incredible," said Benjamin in a voice full of awe.

"Truly, but now what do we do?"

"We let them go."

"Let them go? But they seem so fragile…"

"They're probably stronger than we are, besides, if we can't be seen out there, then they must in our stead. How will we ever move forward, how will we ever know?"

"It just seems so unfair, we put in all that work, and for what? For them to leave us?"

"But if they stayed, they would truly just become living replicas of us, we don't want them to fall into the same traps that we fell into."

"Like butterflies emerging from their cocoons."

"Exactly, and butterflies must fly."

"I guess you're right."

Benjamin crouched down beside the little figures, they looked almost like little fairies gathered in a hollow, so calm and peaceful. With his finger, he gently tapped one and it's eyes shot open. With a smile, the little Benjamin stood up and its movement woke the others. One by one they all stood to attention, waving, smiling, bringing more joy to Fiona as she watched. Benjamin opened his palms and motioned for his figurine selves to clamber on. Fiona did the same. Their little limbs felt warm on her skin, she could feel their breath like a gentle breeze, but still she struggled to understand just how it was so. How little lump of clays could become little living creatures that looked almost identical to her. Almost identical. They may have been created in her own image, but they did each look slightly different.

One of the broken windows had been loosely fitted with cardboard and so Benjamin knew he would be able to let out the little people through the crack in the pane. Fiona followed him, looking around to make sure nobody was watching them as they set their selves free. With the cardboard easily pulled back, the little figures jumped off the two adults' hands and they climbed gracefully through the crack. Their small size made it an easy fit for them, and with that, they started to run across the gravel and into the lands that Fiona couldn't see. She felt a sense of relief, that they were out there, but within her sat a weight of worry, she hoped they would come back and find her, that they would be safe. She wanted to hear their stories of what life was like on the other side of the the warehouse's borders.

It felt like months had passed since they set the figures free, and Fiona had to remind herself daily that she and Benjamin had in fact done it. During the night she had caught glimpses of images in her sleep, like dreams trying to be heard, and it made her disoriented in the mornings. It was hard then to tell what was real and what wasn't, and she doubted that her making little people from clay had been the first dream she could remember. When she would ask Benjamin to confirm it had really happened he would nod his head but say very little. Wondering what he was thinking, she would sit and watch him fold the paper as they were told and hope that he wasn't feeling the same dread as she was.

One night, whilst Fiona was unsure if she were dreaming or not, she felt something warm pressed against her cheek. She turned her head as she opened her eyes, unsure of what was real, but then she sat up quickly. One of the little versions of herself was stood there, looking up and smiling. "You came back," said Fiona with a breathless voice. The little woman nodded and clambered off the bed pallet to bring forth what she had brought. It was a slip of rectangle card, almost the same size as the girl herself, and on one side it had a picture, on the other a blank space. With a mumbled thank you Fiona looked at it, trying to remember what exactly it was. It looked familiar, but it must have been so long since she held something like this. It wasn't like the things they made in the warehouse.

"A postcard," she said, gasping ever so slightly. She read the name of the place that it was from, but it was hard for her to conceive how it was pronounced, it was so different in its form. The picture was beautiful, a large body of water, vibrant green trees, a strikingly red building that looked nothing like the warehouse she was used to. As she stared at the picture, her hand slightly shaking, the little clay person left once more without a sound. If it hadn't been for the physical copy in her hand, Fiona was sure she would have doubted it had happened too. She rushed to find Benjamin, waking him up gently and quietly. He was as excited as she was when she showed him the card, but then she hesitated, unsure whether one of his had returned.

"One came this evening to me too," he said.

"And what did he bring?"

"A story."

"A story?"

"Yes, nothing written nor to touch like your postcard, but he came and whispered a story to me in my ear, when it was over he left, and I knew that this is what I had been waiting for all this time."

"Was it a beautiful story?"

"It was."

Every other night a little figure returned to Fiona and brought with them a new postcard of a different place. Fiona collected them, hid them under her mattress, and when everyone else was asleep she would stare at them and think about what it must have been like for her little selves to have visited these places, to have seen the pictures in the flesh. To have smelt the air of these other lands. Benjamin too was being told stories in his ear every other evening. Their worlds were broadening, and they grew more confident in their work. Something had set in motion, Fiona could feel it, but she wasn't sure what. When one evening, a little figure came with a new postcard, it

occurred to Fiona to ask where the place was. She had never thought about asking before, but now that she knew such places existed out there, she needed to know just where they were. The figure blinked at her then motioned to the door. *Out there,* it seemed to be saying. Fiona nodded, her mind racing with thoughts. She couldn't sleep that evening at all, and before the sun came up, she went out into the work area and found Benjamin sitting there, once more moulding clay.

"You're making more?" she asked.

"Yes, I think this is what needs to be done, I want to stay and help the others here to make their own little people, to experience what we've experienced."

"And then what?"

"And then things will change."

"Benjamin," she whispered, scared of what she was about to say. "I think I will leave. I'm going to open that door and just walk out, find these places from these postcards and see just what it's like out there for real."

"I thought you might."

"No one has even bothered to check the door before, what if it's really just as simple as opening it up and stepping out?"

"What if, indeed."

Experiencing the Imagination

What is represented in the above short story is the way that I note the imagination plays an important role in understanding other cultures that become embedded in the texts translators work with. Having outlined the leading theories of imagination in anthropology and how Claudia Strauss writes on blending them to create a more deep exploration of imaginaries, I will adopt an analysis that gives 'sufficient attention to the differing dynamics involved in individual fantasies and the collective representations of public culture.' (Strauss, 2006:336) The main characters of *Little Clay Figures* have already made appearances in this thesis during the previous chapter, however, now I would like to bring their stories forwards to highlight the routes that can be taken in producing imaginaries of the other.

In my short story, Benjamin and Fiona create little clay figures that leave the confines of the warehouse in which they work, to bring stories and pictures of what the world outside looks like. The way that the figures disseminate information of the outside world to the two characters varies, and the impact this has on their narrative arc also differs. In the end, where Fiona wants to leave the

warehouse to explore the world beyond herself, Benjamin wants to stay to help share his knowledge with others. This represents two leading dynamics I noticed in the individual fantasies of my participants, allowing me to create a more comparative analysis of the imagination that Strauss argues creates a stronger case for an anthropological approach to imagination. I will present here two quotes from two separate informants that highlight different experiences of imagining the other place from their work:

> I lived in Norway for a year and I visit each year. I read literature and news from the country, listen to radio programmes and watch Norwegian television programmes. In the past I've incorporated research into my visits - certain types of buildings were detailed quite specifically that I manage to go and have a look at.
>
> (Fiona)

> There are a number of countries I've translated books from and have never been to, so I don't always have - I sometimes do - but I don't always have a huge kind of cultural hinterland to draw on of my own, but I always want to convey the culture in so far as the culture is reflected, is contained, within the language which is always the case.
>
> (Benjamin)

These two perspective offer alternative descriptions to the processes behind gathering the material to aid the imaginary of the other place. The relevance here is that it provides a demonstration of how 'public culture can travel, and provide new understandings to individuals distant from its source.' (Strauss, 2006:340) I depicted this movement, and how my material describes two separate ways of doing so, by the actions that the little clay figures take in sharing information on the world outside.

In Fiona's case, her little figures bring back postcards from other places. These represent the image of different places that my participant Fiona gathers through watching television programmes and reading the news from Norway. The way that this then stirs the character Fiona to leave the warehouse and physically experience the places she has seen, also indicates the legitimacy that Fiona has in her translation through the embodied being in the country from which she translates from. Her ability to travel to Norway places her in a position of a cosmopolitan. According to Hannerz (1996) a cosmopolitan identity is constructed by a competence of something alien in both a

generalised and specialised way. Fiona demonstrates a competency through living in Norway for a year showcasing how she was able to slip in and inhabit the social world of the culture. Her ability to utilise the language is also a prime example of her competencies. Interestingly, Hannerz notes that the 'cosmopolitan may embrace the alien culture, but he does not become committed to it. All the time he knows where the exit is' (1996:104) which makes a clear separation between the cosmopolitan and other groups in movement, for example refugees. The cosmopolitan identity is one of privilege, it has a structure of power that allows for a freedom that may be denied to others, specifically since it is so intrinsically linked with the power of a passport. Fiona does embrace the culture of Norway, she partakes in cultural activities such as reading the literature and listening to the radio, but she does not become committed to it, she has not remained there and is able to leave as and when she pleases, knowing she can always return to her home in the UK. Yet it does appear that her competency with the place is not enough to provide her a security in imagining physical spaces of Norway.

There is a sense of distrust in the way that she imagines such things in her head, as can be read when she mentions the need to see specific buildings. Despite the great detail within the text, she struggles to visualise it. There is also potential that she is lumbered down with the idea of Norwegian buildings that groups are more exposed to as a collective, for example British perceptions of Norwegian buildings from TV shows and adverts. This poses an interesting disjuncture in the theory of the imaginary, which Strauss also feels is not explored enough. National representations of identity do not consider individual perceptions as entanglements which deviate from these collective ideas, and further than that, such large scale perceptions can then get warped from other collective nations' understandings of the images and concepts of the place. These are then, of course, also entangled with the individual's perceptions within those. For example, Fiona may on the one hand host the collectivised imaginary of Norway that she experienced by living in the UK, but she has also physically experienced living in Norway which then reconfigures her imagination.

On the other hand, some translators, like Benjamin, do not have such access to the countries from which they translate from. In the short story, Benjamin's little figures bring back stories, he says there is no written word or pictures which are brought to him, but instead spoken words whispered in his ears. This showcases the alternative way to learn about the other place, when access to the countries that texts come from is not easily managed. Here Benjamin demonstrates a lack of place-related competency that Fiona has, and as such he indicates that he is lacking a "cultural hinterland". This is an evocative image that he conjures. The hinterland is a space far

removed from the everyday realm, physically it is like the area of land beyond the coasts, rivers, and towns. In this context of a cultural hinterland, it represents a space removed from ones own, where a sense of culture and the other exists.

It becomes apparent that it is an important endeavour for him to portray the culture that the original text was created in, and so he mentions the presence of it in the text itself. To him, culture is "reflected" and "contained" within the language always. This is a mindset that appears similar to Nida (2003) who discusses the similar symbolic nature of language and culture, that 'to understand and appreciate better the related roles of language and culture as two interdependent symbolic systems, it may be useful to recognise some of their more relevant similarities' (2003:414). Another translator I interviewed also spoke about the text of the book having more authority on its own culture than the author who wrote it, which indicates how people working so closely with language are aware of the cultural weight it can carry.

There is a risk in this mindset that Benjamin becomes unaware of how his own social imagination which has been constructed within the context of the UK may impact his understanding of the culture within the text. When he reads the initial text, he will be creating images within his head of how the source culture is portrayed. This is part of the process that Appadurai explains as 'the fabrication of social lives [which] is inescapably tied up with images, ideas, and opportunities that come from elsewhere.' (1996:54) This shows that in his translation process, Benjamin may well be perpetuating the imaginary of the other that already exists within his home context, that he may be instilling these images onto the text and regurgitating them back through his translation. Benjamin does show an appreciation to the fact that he can never remain a neutral source from the text. He said "I have words that I just really don't like and won't use even if other people think they're really great words… so I'm completely limited by my language." With the way that Benjamin described the culture being reflected through the text, it is clear that he also realises how his own culture is embedded in the language that he uses. This poses the question though, to which imaginary, or in other terms "phantasy", do translators intend to translate for? This question then draws back to the previous chapter in regards to Venuti's notion of a "fluent" translation. Fiona and Benjamin must navigate their different imaginaries so as to accurately capture the imagination of the author, but then mediate the translation so that it doesn't particularly collide with the collective imagination of the English language readers. Their connection with the concept of the other countries are solidified by their lived or read-about experiences, however, as we know that their language is then measured by an editor, the affectations on the imaginary place that are translated are further moderated by the editor to suit the readership.

These two perspectives showcase the different ways imaginaries of foreign places are supplemented through experiential imagery and textual cues. They highlight the impact that the native imaginaries the translators have must also be addressed in the way they impact the understanding of the other place. This allows the ethnographer to manage a deeper, more person-centred analysis of the imagination that Strauss calls for in her argument. And so now I will explore how my participant Peter uses his imaginary of the other place to shape his work and create connections with countries in a dialogic nature that defines his identity in the global setting.

A Feeling of the Imaginary

I tried to embed my short story with a lingering sense of the imagination colouring its tone. I did this through allusions to management sharing designs from abroad that felt uncannily domestic, creating little figures in the image of oneself, or at least the perception of the self, and magical elements that make Fiona wonder if she had dreamt the events or not. This casts the imagination through concepts that are intangible, untouchable, something that can be questioned and never proved. As such, when my participants talked about engaging with the places they translated from, especially in the context of their imaginations, they used language which gave the sense of feeling as opposed to something concrete that can be measured. But by capturing these feelings into words, an ethnographer can analyse their statements as tangible answers. I shall analyse something interesting that Peter mentioned in his interview. It at first appeared like an inconsequential answer but upon closer examination I found an interesting pattern that presents a paradox in his imaginary understanding of places. He said:

> I have several foreign languages, the strongest being German and Swedish,
> but for professional reasons I only want to translate from Swedish texts,
> though in time I would not rule out Norwegian or Danish, depending on the
> text. My original degree was in Modern Languages: German and Swedish
> and I've lived and worked in the north of Sweden. I have an affinity with
> Scandinavia, it's my spiritual home. I also love Spain, it's the home of my
> heart, but I'd never translate from Spanish although I feel equally at home
> there.

From this excerpt it is possible to engage with the way that Peter allows his imagination to shape decisions in his professional life. Peter here demonstrates how he views other countries in accordance to his image or experience with them. When reading his bachelors Peter studied both

German and Swedish, culminating to his current strengths in those languages. He has curated an identity around these languages and subsequently located them to their specific national location. And despite having strength with these two languages, Peter prefers to translate solely from Swedish for "professional reasons". He mentions having an "affinity with Scandinavia", and how it is his "spiritual home", this demonstrates that something happened with his idea of Scandinavia that didn't happen with Germany.

In Marilyn Ivy's *Discourses of the Vanishing* (1995), an anthropological book examining Japanese culture which Strauss exemplifies its use of imagination theory, she writes '[r]epresentative value becomes a mobile sign, detachable from locale but dependent on perpetually evoking it' (1995:13). With Peter's representation of Scandinavia, particularly Sweden, as part of his spirit, we can see how this mobilises the essence of a represented place and its need to be constantly evoked as the local place it comes from. Ivy uses the example of a revived folk-festival in Japan as a way of reminding Japanese people of the significance this once had in Japanese culture, subsequently helping them to feel a greater connection to their sense of Japanese-ness. It can then be read that Peter's choice of translating Swedish texts into English is his revival method of the Swedish culture, reminding him of the significance of this culture to his own sense of having a spiritual home in this place. Books and literature then become the tangible representation of an imagined place and a tool for enacting connections with the national identities they represent.

Throughout his answers, Peter demonstrated a deep connection with books, and it becomes clear how these helped to shape his understanding of himself, but also his knowledge of the places where his multiple languages survive. Books are at their very core a mediascape. Fiction books on top of that are perfect example of how the mediascapes are shaped, act upon, and enhance the imagination. Appadurai discusses how this specific landscape is one defined by an image, going to mention that they give their audiences 'large and complex repertoires of images, narratives, and ethnoscapes to viewers throughout the world, in which the world of commodities and the world of news and politics are profoundly mixed.' (Appadurai, 1996:35) What becomes most interesting about the mediascape is the scope of mediation it aids in the construction of imagined worlds which are 'chimerical, aesthetic, even fantastic objects' (Appadurai, 1996:35).

This brings us back to Benjamin who also noted on how books as text were important to understanding the other place. He also then discusses translation in a similar vein, which helps to visualise how these different form of imaginaries help to shape the imaginaries of the readers who do not have the language capacity to read the original. Benjamin discusses this element of his work:

> If you are asking someone to read a translation already, you're asking them
> to make a certain imaginative leap. You're asking them to read this thing,
> which is not in Portuguese and be somehow persuaded that what they're
> doing is reading something in Portuguese… I have to be sensitive to what
> are the things different groups of readers will know.

This shows an interesting role that the translator plays in conveying imaginaries. Firstly, as pointed out previously, translators can understand places through the texts that they read and work on. Then they have to convey that place to a reader, whilst also balancing the perceived imaginaries that the reader already has and does not have. The entanglements of the different individual imaginaries become dense and hard to untangle. Yet, whilst we can trace how translators are affected by their own understandings of place through their imaginaries, we can see this quote as representative of the way that translators can then also have a role in shaping the imaginaries of their readers. Much like how Benjamin and Fiona design their own figures in their image, so translators remodel texts in accordance to their own subjective imaginaries. Not only can we find the way that these imaginaries create deep entanglements of meaning making, but they can also become intrinsically attached to the sense of identity creation that I discussed in the previous chapter. To close this last analytical chapter, I will explore through one participant, Lucas, how this sense of the other is deeply connected with the sense of the self. This demonstrates the importance in understanding the contexts within which translators work and what impact this can have on the role of the translator in the English language publishing industry,

I am the Imaginary

The idea for the little clay figures in my short story came from my imagining what the upcoming translators of the future could represent. Their presence in the story is one which is made in the image of already practicing translators, who mould these new characters in their own image as that is what they know, but also set them free to bring change to the industry. I chose to use this to represent how the already established literary translators in the field can have an impact on the next generation of translators, and how their imaginaries can have an affect on the construction of translator identities in the future. As the world becomes more connected and we face the challenges of globalisation, the publishing industry is already navigating issues on representation, diversity, and the need for own voice literatures. The participants we have already met in this thesis are all native English speakers, but as the language becomes more accessible worldwide, what would

happen if a translator was not a native speaker and actually one of the natives from the other culture?

Lucas is a Korean translator. His native language is Korean, but he translates from Korean into English. In the context of this chapter, Lucas poses and interesting disjuncture to the concept behind translators imagining the other as Lucas *is* the other (as in he identifies with a different national identity than the rest of my informants). In my interviews, I asked every participant how it was that they learn about the culture behind the text they are translating, and whilst I felt it was a rather redundant question to ask Lucas, I still felt compelled to see how he would answer. His reply did not disappoint.

> I'm a Korean citizen living in Korea (thirty years now! I'm thirty-eight) who went to Korea University and got a degree in Korean law after having served in the Korean army. Literally no one is more Korean than I am. I don't learn about Korean culture, I am Korean culture. Korean culture, c'est moi. That's how I carry it across in my work.

My initial reaction to this response was a shock at the brevity with which Lucas asserted his Korean identity. He mentioned Korea nine times in four sentences, really trying to instil the sense of his own Korean-ness which felt somewhat excessive. It made me wonder as to whether the confidence he made this statements with was a façade to hide his insecurity about those eight years in which he did not live in Korea, as if they were signifying a lack of being "born and raised" in your home country. I find it interesting that this is the way he chose to portray himself in the interview with me, particularly in opposition to the way he presents himself online on his website. His biography there reads:

> "A little too fluent"—South China Morning Post.
>
> I am a writer and translator working in Seoul. I was born in Stockholm, Sweden, and raised in British Hong Kong, Ethiopia, and Thailand, but mostly in Korea, where I've lived for thirty years.
>
> (Lucas' personal website)

What Lucas presents here provides interesting insights into how he negotiates his own identity in a personal sphere, and a professional sphere. I would suggest that the first quote is highlighting his sense of self in a personal sphere given the context of the exchange occurring between just the two of us. The latter quote however has a much larger reach to a variety of audiences, and is specifically presented to the publishing industry in support for his securing work as a translator. Whilst I am

aware that even within the context of the first quote, the sense of the personal sphere is still structured around a position of participant and researcher, and was still focused primarily on his work as a translator, the difference between what he said to me and what he presents online casts a strong sense of divergence between the two.

In the interview, Lucas embraced his otherness and persistently described all the ways that he is Korean. What I glean from this first insight is that Lucas has adopted a narrative in which his experience within Korea is a definitive narrative of Korean identity; as if by going through this process he has committed to the narrative that Koreans use to imagine their own national identity. Because of this, Lucas does not then have to learn, or rather imagine, what Korean culture is like. He simply *is* Korean culture. This poses a challenge to Strauss' call for studying 'real people [which] will help counter the tendency to see imaginaries as more homogeneous or fixed than they are.' (Strauss, 2006:339) The implications of Lucas' words are that what it means to be Korean *is* more homogenous for those who do not follow the same trajectory as him can not be as Korean as he is.

Of course, given the context of our interview in which he was made aware of my research topic, he could be referring to those who are not as Korean as him as the other literary translators working across the same languages. In this case, it is more likely to be an accurate representation given the tendency for translators to translate into their native language, suggesting having grown up specifically in an English speaking country. Either way, what we can ultimately see is how Lucas has developed an imaginary state of Korean-ness that can justify an embodied knowing of the culture that comes with it. As such, he doesn't necessarily have to imagine the culture because it is the reality that he lives every day. So then how does he have to imagine the culture(s) that his translations will then be received in? Especially if he is also privy to the machinations of fluency as discussed in the previous chapter.

Presenting himself on his website, one can get the sense of him trying to prove how international, perhaps even cosmopolitan, he is. The first line he used to present himself is with a quote from a review of his work from the South China Morning Post. The simple line asserting his fluency in English brings me back to the pressure translations face in creating fluent translations to fit the market. Lucas' own fluency then becomes one that not only makes his role as a translator invisible, but rather hides his otherness, casting his Korean identity, as a Korean native speaker, the thing that must be made invisible. Obviously, as a freelance translator working within the English language industry, he needs to be able to demonstrate why he is specifically suited for the work. He needs to be able to prove that his English is strong enough to warrant his work above that of a

native speaking translator. He is caught here in an opposition that he is constantly battling. He is proud of his Korean identity and strives to constantly raise awareness of it. However, it is risky to be too much of the other, for the other is what needs to be translated, not translating. Whilst he may be able to bring a more rich understanding of the cultural translation necessary in Korean to English literature, he is hindered by his otherness which may well foreignise his translation too much for the tastes of the English speaking markets.

Since different global imaginaries are penetrating more people's lives, 'standard cultural reproduction (like standard English) is now an endangered activity' (Appadurai, 1996:54). Following this, the reproductions of homogenised national imaginaries become equally as endangered as they become entwined with the imaginaries of other communities viewing them. Lucas may internalise a more rigid and homogenous imaginary of what it means to be Korean, but he is able to renegotiate this to warrant an identity that is more heterogenous, less standard, and can satisfy the image that alternative imaginaries create. In this case, when Lucas makes his otherness invisible, he is not aligning to a different national identity, he becomes unbound from such ties and instead becomes what publishers imagine a *translator* should look like. And it appears, that the translator should be cosmopolitan.

Where in his interview with me he repeated the name Korea over and over, on his website he chose instead to highlight the other places to which he feels connected. Sweden, Hong Kong, Ethiopia, and Thailand. In doing this, he is confirming a cosmopolitan identity, he is affirming the privileges of the freedom of movement that he has been able to have as a child. This international upbringing and the competency of other cultures through living abroad is something that connects him with other native English translators. He is able to share the freedom of movement, the ability to cross borders, and through this is able to legitimise his own strength of the English language. As such, he must adapt his identity across various social situations: in Korea he must adhere to the socialised collective imaginary of what makes a Korean person Korean, such as studying at a specific university, understanding the laws that they must all abide by, and serving in the army. Yet when portraying himself to perspective publishers he must also fit into the imagined concept of what a translator looks like; in touch with the other culture enough to have a knowledge, but with the freedom of movement between there and the home culture to warrant a smooth translational process. It must be a difficult finagling of imaginaries that Lucas hosts within himself and knowing when to be one thing and when he can be an other, and it poses the question that I dared not ask, why doesn't he just translate English literature into Korean?

Every translator I interviewed during this research presented the ability to move through places, languages, and cultures in a way that is representative of the modern cosmopolitan identity. Even when they may not have the ability to visit every country they translate from, they demonstrate a skill through the language to be able to read and interpret accurately the culture that is embedded in the text. As such the imaginaries of the other that the translators are recreating demonstrate a balance between imaginary as developed through media consumption, and imaginary as developed through physical experiences of places and their people. As the cosmopolitan identity becomes a benchmark of how translators are also being imagined by the industry they work in, then the norms around who can be a translator begin to change; Lucas is a prime example of how one does not necessarily have to be a native speaker living in the country they are producing the translations for. In many ways, this could provide the opportunity for a more heterogenous collection of voices to act as the translators of literature. A step in this direction could then proffer the opportunity for translators of more diverse voices to challenge the process of casting translators as invisible and create the space for less standard Englishes to be presented through the art of translation.

This disconnection with national identities and their imaginaries could provide a progression in the field of translation, but that does not mean it will come without risks. As Hannerz describes, cosmopolitans are an elite group of people who have the power and freedom to move across borders and gain competencies in different cultures. This is not a freedom that is awarded to everyone, however, and as such can have an unbalanced impact on what imaginaries are being shared, and how, through translated literature. When interviewing Leigh, I discussed how their first translation was contextualised by the publisher that produced it as European. The publisher focus solely on European literature, and in the current time of Brexit, this can help to forge a more open minded imaginary of what Europe can represent. Leigh, in the middle of our emailed interview was moving between the UK and Canada, demonstrating once more their own cosmopolitan privileges. When asked about what makes their translation of a book "European" and what that means to them, they said:

> Honestly, right now I don't know what that means to me anymore. I used to
> think of myself as European - I studied European languages and have lived
> in more cities in Europe than I have in the UK. There is a lot that is
> problematic about the EU and about Europe's history as a continent, but in
> general I support the idea of forging cultural and political ties between
> culturally diverse nations and I think that translation and literary exchange is

an important part of that. I suppose that a translated novel is in some ways a

transcultural work, but I don't know if that is enough to make [my book] a

European book.

If the translation they produced is not enough to be deemed a European book, despite being published specifically for that purpose, then here we can note the risk that a translator's disconnection from place can also create the book's disconnection from place. And if all books were to then become global medias impacted by a global imaginary as opposed to a diverse array of cultural imaginaries, then perhaps a translator will eventually translate themselves out of work. It could get to a point where translation is no longer needed. This is, of course, a speculation, as I firmly believe that the work of translators today is very much a necessity in not only translating across languages, but also fostering intercultural communication.

To summarise the chapter, having demonstrated how literary imaginaries work in developing perception of the world at large, and the role that translators play in this, I have laid out the groundwork upon which further research must be developed. Contextualising the global imaginaries on an individual level, and balancing with how this is intrinsically linked with the identity creation process of translators can then provide the spring board to examine specific situations on the development of world literature and publishing on a global scale. The analysis in this chapter and the one before presents the ethnographic capability of creating deep insights into individual experiences, which can then provide solid backing to research on a larger scale. It is necessary to continue rooting this kind of research at the individual level to showcase a multiplicity of experiences, but it can also be used to highlight issues that contemporary global flows present, especially if the field of translation does change to embrace a wider array of translatorial voices. I will go on to conclude my findings further in the following chapter, and discuss how ethnofiction as a methodology helped to present these findings. This will then finally showcase to whom and in which context this thesis becomes applicable.

Epilogue | *Imagining/Identifying the Ethnographer*

There is a very particular feeling that I am weighed down with upon finishing a book that I have enjoyed so much. It is difficult to describe; a whirlpool of emptiness, longing, nostalgia, and a fresh perspective on life. The finality of closing a book that you have spent hours involved in holds a poignancy at once ephemeral but also lasting. Now, having reached the final chapter of this thesis in which I am to conclude my months of research, I am left with a similar vague unease of emotions that culminates in the question: well, what next?

Where I started writing this thesis with having just finished reading *Crossing,* I have now reached a point of writing my conclusion after recently finishing Statovci's first novel *My Cat Yugoslavia* (2017) translated by David Hackston. This first book has some similarities to his second, but it also represents a much more ethnographic novel. With insightful scenes into Kosovan wedding traditions, explorations of the refugee experience in Finland, and an examination of gay culture in the Western world, it is a story constructed of scenes that feel almost like anthropological depictions of fieldwork. Yet where one character then forms a relationship with a talking cat, the book develops a magical realist narrative that helps to present an alterity to the experiences, one which highlights the burden a second generation immigrant may carry. Finishing this book as I ended my writing process with this thesis has helped me to reflect on my own analysis and methodology, and so this chapter shall trace the journey I took to end up here, and where my research can take a life of its own and move forwards.

On Imagination

The work of translation happens on a foundation of entangled imaginaries. In this thesis I presented material that showcased the way translators understand the world around them, and their place in it, through the imaginaries of the cultures behind the texts they translate. The experience of the other in translation is a many layered process that traverses multiple realms of reality: the written word, the physical place, the feelings attached to national imageries, and the embodiment, real or imagined, of the other. Aligning with Strauss' call for a more person-centred analysis of the imagination in the field of anthropology, I showcased the multiplicities of routes to imagining the other. This demonstrates the differences involved in the translation process which may impact the imaginaries that translators host and develop throughout their career. Noting on even the small pool

of differences through three participants highlights the need for qualitative explorations to enhance the sociological research on translation.

By examining how native English speaking translators learn to understand the other, this thesis also demonstrates how the other is subsequently impacted by these various imaginaries of the self. As people become more deterritorialised, and languages become more fluid to engage with the global space, the image of the other becomes more familiar and can then take on the role of the translator themselves. This poses an interesting train of thought in regards to how they are impacted by their own imagination, but also the imagination of the market they wish to break into, and how their identities are then portrayed across these different social fields. With this comes an unsettling of hegemonic practices in the field of literary translation, but also provides scope for philosophical discourse on authority and truth in the representation of the self as the other.

This reflection on the way the imaginary creates understandings of the other then helps to clarify how this is entwined with the self-constituting act of identity creation. By researching this specific theme this thesis has allowed me to demonstrate the opposition that translators work with during the defining of the self as a translator.

On Identity

Identity creation involves clashes in all their forms, and the translators identity is not safe from such disputes. To examine the identity of the translator as a professional means the ethnographer must negotiate all the many ideals and voices involved in this, and as such it becomes clear to see the precarious nature of the identity. In my second chapter, I explored how translators create their identities through the power of words, and how these are strengthened and weakened by the industry within which they work. To translate literary fiction is a journey of constant redefinition of the self to suit the market and a battle against a history that has scarred the landscape of the profession.

Venuti provided an historic account as to why he believes that literary translators have become invisible. Since this text was written, many things have changed to benefit the position of translation as a profession which has stabilised opportunities for equal pay and representation. Yet despite this, the "hangover" of this history still pervades today and within the community of translators there is continued discourse as to how best to define translators and what makes one. These disputes highlight the complexity of the identity and how the industry has been too slow to adapt to the new processes that are combatting this invisibility process.

The state of flux within which translator identities occur are typically defined by binaries, and this does not allow the space for a more enriched understanding of the multiplicities at play behind the identity construction process. Many of the issues that literary translators face are because of uncertain boundaries and borders created by words that have a sense of meaninglessness. The meaningless words are a symptom of the diversity that needs to be represented, but is instead controlled by homogenising machinations which render literary translators as periphery players in the publishing industry as a whole.

Contextualising these identities in the publishing industry has revealed the position that the contemporary literary translator has in their field. Through my examination of this theme in the style of ethnofiction I have been able to get a deeper insight into the identities of translators which has shown me the links between literary translation and ethnography, helping me to empathise with my participants in ways I had not expected.

On Ethnofiction

When starting this project, the role of ethnofiction seemed important to this thesis in the way it demonstrated the intimate links between storytelling, translation, and the power of the imagination. As the stories I had written became embedded into the research, I realised that the strength of this methodology also lay in the processes of realising a deeper understanding of my participants' experiences, and discovering the entwining meanings of translating and ethnography. Choosing to work in expanding the role of ethnofiction in cultural analysis, I placed myself on the periphery of the academic setting, working in a way that was different and risky to those who provided feedback on my drafts. In many ways, it became an isolating task in which my identity as an ethnographer was challenged. I felt uneasy, in a precarious position, and realised that my method as something outlying reflected the work of literary translators in the English language publishing industry.

In their most basic forms, my ethnofictions presented an opportunity to develop the idea of the imaginary within my research. Showcasing the role that imaginaries play in perceiving the world around us, I was able to simultaneously examine my own position and how my imagination shapes my understanding of the research, and also highlighting the personal natures that impact translator's imaginaries. The use of fiction also helped to thematise the research and its relation with literature without becoming a piece of literary examination. Through this, I could bring forward the underlying object of books and literary fiction as something that can be used as tools for analysis when understanding social ties created around their production.

Looking at the process that the publishing industry has exerted on translated literature through control of neutral language, negotiating differences through domestication, and rendering the translator invisible, I realised the links that could be found with my experience of using this method in the academic setting. A fair, and recurring, comment was that with the risk of using ethnofiction I had to apply a much stronger academic rigour to the other aspects of this thesis so as to ensure complete clarity whilst also working within the limitations of the academic genre of a masters thesis. Yet managing drafts to suit this feedback presented the challenge of mediating my language, domesticating something that was too "foreign", and subsequently quieting my own literary voice which felt like I would then lose my own visibility as a researcher. I had previously engaged in theories regarding writing ethnography as an act of translation, however, completing this thesis in this style helped to solidify the various ways in which this is true. This opened my eyes to just how applicable my research and the method behind it could be in the future.

On Applicability

The research of this thesis presents an area of academia that could benefit with a more critical cultural analytical perspective. Utilising qualitative data collection can help various social insights into the role of translators to develop a deeper look into the personal narratives that are constructed within the profession. I believe that this will help to enrich the sociology of translation in a way that can introduce an approach to the study that is grounded in the diverse range of literary translators currently working. The topic could be explored further to gather insights from a wider range of translator identities.

The thesis also creates an avenue in which the insights gathered can be utilised in the professional sphere of literary translation. Harnessing an understanding of the precarious identities of literary translators, the English publishing industry can implement infrastructure within itself that can create more defined and inclusive definitions. They can also assess the way that they treat translated fiction and examine the processes that domesticate it, and how this can be challenged to alleviate various social pressures that are becoming symptomatic in an ever globalising world. For example, as dialogue within the industry confronts problems of diversity, own voice writing, and representation, then these conversations should also be applied to translation to understand new ways of promoting positive change within. Literary translators themselves could also benefit from understanding the problems which cause their unstable identities and utilise the knowledge as a way of continuing to strengthen their collectivised identity.

Going further, I believe that the use of ethnofiction in this thesis is similar to a seed germinating. It has a lot of space to grow and bloom, and should be given the opportunity to do so. I would like to see how ethnofiction as creative writing can look in longer form, without the limitations of space that a masters thesis has. It would be interesting to also explore how ethnographic fiction writing can be developed collaboratively to capture the same essence that is caught when creating ethnofiction in film. In relation to the topic of translation, ethnofiction can not only be seen as a form of translation, but has potential to be explored through literal translation; part of the collaborative future of the method could be collaborating with translators to see what then happens to the text when multiple subjectivities shape it, and how does this reflect the work that translators do in their professional lives. I firmly believe that this methodology has potential and should be explored further, with freedom to deliver high quality writing in both the literary and the academic sense.

The End

It is with new eyes that I feel I shall be approaching translated fiction in the future, at the back of my mind I will always question the extent in which is can be read as ethnographic. Through grappling with the creative nature of writing and interpreting text, I have been able to realign my sense of self as a researcher and understand the blurred lines between imagining and identifying the ethnographer. A literary translator translates text, an ethnographer transcribes their material, a student writes a thesis. Pen to paper, fingers on keyboard, words fill a page and the act of writing is shared amongst all three. We write to be read. A literary translator produces a book, an ethnographer submits an article, and a student emails their thesis to be examined. There are entanglements within these written forms that connect us as wordsmiths. What once was a boundary between myself as a reader of a translated book and the person who brought the words into my native language becomes blurred as I step into the same territory of writing, of transcribing, of translating ideas and experiences. It is through literature that I, as a student and ethnographer, adopt the position of a translator and as such has a greater appreciation of the way that literature can connect us.

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[1] Author's Note: For anonymity purposes, I cannot reveal the link to the personal website of Lucas.